

## Achieving Repentance

In order to achieve repentance, express his sincerity in return towards Allah, man should change his repentance into action and achieve his remoteness against his evil deeds; make for the better in himself; and prove his true love for Allah by fearing Him in all his decisions and actions. To achieve these, he should have:

First: Regret: It means that the repentant feels pain and sorrow about his past sins and have an urgent psychological desire to avoid them and fill the gaps resulting from his previous behavioral attitudes which become odious and disliked.

Second: To give up sins and evil deeds which he used to practise, in the past, and promises himself not to return to them again, i.e., by eradicating the impact of a deviated, psychological impulse which prevented him from expressing himself in any other way.

Third: To avoid what can be avoided of his sinful acts and fulfill what can be fulfilled of them. For instance, if he stole or transgressed against others or did an evil to others by oppressing them, it is obligatory for him either to give back what he stole to their rightful owners or to make an apology for his evils and compensate what can be compensated for the oppressed and the transgressed ... etc.

It is, also, obligatory for him to perform every neglected duty in case of being able to do so, at the time; such as, praying, fasting, pilgrimage (hajj) and filial devotion to parents..., otherwise his repentance is meaningless and there is no achievement in the realms of actions and intentions.

How delicately Imam Ali (a.s.) explains the concept of repentance. Once someone said before him: 'astaghfirullah' (I ask Allah's forgiveness), then Imam Ali (a.s.) said:

“Your mother may lose you! Do you know what 'istighfar'(asking Allah's forgiveness) is? 'Astighfar' is meant for people of a high position. It is a word that stands on six meanings.

1. To repent over the past.
2. To make a firm determination never to revert to it.

3. To discharge all the rights of the people so that you may meet Allah quite clean with nothing to account for.
4. To fulfil every obligatory which you ignored (in the past) so that you may now do justice with it.
5. To aim at the flesh grown as a result of unlawful earning, so that you may melt it by grief (of repentance) till the skin touches the bone and a new flesh grows between them.
6. To make the body taste the pain of obedience as you (previously) made it taste the sweetness of disobedience. On such occasion you may say: 'astaghfirullah' [1](#)

**Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds.**

[1](#). Muhammad Mehdi Al-Naraqī, Jami' al-Sa'adat (The Collector of Felicities), vol. 3, p. 78

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