

## Lesson 23: Sins And Disobedience

### Kinds of Sins

{الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ}

***Those who avoid the major sins and immoralities, only [committing] slight ones. Indeed, your Lord is vast in forgiveness. (An Najm 53:32).***

Every sin is referred as an immorality, such as adultery. For the term “slight ones”, اللَّمَمَ, different meanings could be derived. Such as:

1. Sins that are heedless and not consistently committed.
2. Sins that have been decided upon, but not acted on.
3. Sins that have been committed but then forgiveness and repentance is sought for.
4. Sins that have no punishment promised for them.
5. Sins that have not had a punishment assigned to them.

Disobedience of Allahﷻ, no matter how small, is significant, however by the same token, not all sins are equal. Some sins such as lying and back biting are considered more obscene and have higher severity in punishment assigned to them. Likewise, the time the sin is committed, the place the sin is committed, the intention of the sinner who committed the sin, their knowledge or ignorance with regards to the sin, insistence upon its commitment or otherwise, all have implications.

Imam Ali (pbuh) stated that the worst of sins is one that considered small or light.

Imam Redha (pbuh) indexes sins in the following manner:

Killing a soul, adultery, theft, consuming alcohol, dissatisfaction of and disownment of parents, running away from the battlefield, acting oppressively with the wealth of an orphan, consuming meat of a dead animal (not slaughtered in the Islamic manner), consuming blood and pig, and anything not slaughtered in the name of Allahﷻ, taking usury, taking bribery, gambling, selling items with less weight than stated, throwing allegations at virtuous women, homosexuality, false testimonies, losing hope in the mercy of Allahﷻ, considering oneself hell-bound with certainty, despair from the Divine Mercy, assisting and relying on oppressors, lying under oath, withholding the rights of others, lying, arrogance, squandering, wastefulness, treason, shortcomings in performing the pilgrimage (when one was able to), enmity towards the Divinely Guided Guardians, being engaged in entertainment and play, and insistence upon sin.

Some factors and conditions will change “minor” sins in to “major” ones, such as:

Consistency in the committing of minor sins, considering the sin minor and light, feeling of joy or satisfaction while committing the sin, committing the sin out of rebellion, making ones sins apparent to others, sins of those who have a high status in society.

## The Effects of and Consequences of Sin

Sin and disobedience has an effect on the soul and psychology of an individual, their family and society, place, time and the generations that follow will be greatly affected. For example, the Holy Qur’an and narrations tell us that some of the effects of sin and disobedience are: The bringing of Divine Punishment (considering sin is contrary to intellect and natural instinct), hardening of the heart, the stripping of blessings, the rejection of supplication, the changing of provisions granted, being deprived of the ability to pray the Night Prayers, sudden calamities, lack of rain, the destruction of homes, disgrace, shortening of one’s life, earthquakes, poverty, illness, being dominated by evil.... etc.

## The Path to Restitution

1. Repentance and compensation to make up for sins:

{إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا}

***Save him who repents, and believes, and does a righteous deed; those they shall enter Paradise, and they shall not be wronged anything; (Maryam 19:60).***

2. Faith and good deeds:

{وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَحْسَنَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ}

**And those who believe, and do righteous deeds, We shall surely acquit them of their evil deeds, and shall recompense them the best of what they were doing. (Al Ankabut (29:7)).**

3. Seeking forgiveness for one's own self and for others:

{فَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ وَأَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ}

**And prayed forgiveness of God, and the Messenger had prayed forgiveness for them (An Nissa 4:64).**

4. Prayers:

{وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ ... إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ذَلِكَ ذِكْرَى لِلذَّكِرِينَ}

**And perform the prayer... Surely the good deeds will drive away the evil deeds. (Hud 11:114).**

5. Avoiding major sins:

{إِن تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرَ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلَكُم مَدْخَلَ كَرِيمٍ}

**If you avoid the heinous sins that are forbidden you, We will acquit you of your evil deeds, and admit you by the gate of honour. (An Nissa 4:31).**

6. Joining struggles and martyrdom:

{وَقَاتِلُوا وَقُتِلُوا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ}

**And fought, and were slain -- them I shall surely acquit of their evil deeds (Al Imran 3:195).**

7. Paying alms and helping those in need: [1](#)

صدقة السر تكفر الخطيئة

*Charity given in secrecy covers the mistakes.*

8. Solving the problems of others:

من كفارات الذنوب العظام اغائة الملهوف

*From the atonement of the great sins are coming to the aid of the heart broken.*

9–11. Greeting with a “Salam” (Peace be Upon you), giving food and Night Prayers:

ثلاث كفارات: افشاء السلام و اطعام الطعام و الصلاة بالليل و الناس نيام

*Three atonements: The giving of greetings (Salam), the feeding of food, and the Prayers of the Night while people are asleep.*

12. The recitation of praise upon Mohammad and his Purified Household:

فانها تهدم الذنوب ذنباً

*For it destroys the sin of all sins.*

## Seeking Forgiveness

{رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ}

***Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers, who preceded us in belief. (Al Hashr 59: 10).***

Forgiveness is the coming out of the pit, while repentance is the movement.

Forgiveness is the cleansing of the sin; repentance is to return to a pure heart.

The Prophet was himself amongst those who sought forgiveness as well as one who advised *Seek forgiveness from your Nurturer and then repent to him.*

استغفروا ربكم ثم توبوا اليه

We should not only seek forgiveness for ourselves, but should also ask the Divine Guardians to seek intercession on our behalf.

{يَا أَبَانَا أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا}

***Our father, ask forgiveness for us (Yusuf 12:97).***

The Prophet stated that my life and death for you is to your benefit. In my life, Allahﷻ will take punishment away from reaching you and after my death, with your deeds being presented to me, with your requests of forgiveness and pardon through me, will also be to your benefit.

{وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ}

{وَأَسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا}

***If; when they wronged themselves, they had come to thee, and prayed forgiveness of God, and the Messenger had prayed forgiveness for them, they would have found God turns, All-compassionate. (An Nissa 4:64).***

Just as seeking forgiveness through the Prophet is of benefit (Ayah 4:64 above), so is seeking it through the pious and the angels. In the Holy Qur'an, each of these has been proposed.

{وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِمَن فِي الْأَرْضِ}

***And when the angels proclaim the praise of their Lord, and ask forgiveness for those on earth. (Ash Shura 42:5).***

{وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا}

***And they ask forgiveness for those who believe (Ghafir 40:7).***

The visitation of the Divine Guards and appealing and begging through them, is supported through the Holy Qur'an.

Of course, the Prophet (pbuh) is not who forgives the sins, but is rather an intermediary to Divine Forgiveness. Therefore, for those who have erred, they must at first be regretful and return to the path of truth, thereafter for the strengthening of their relationship with Allahﷻ, request help from the Prophetic Mission.

{وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ}

{وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ}

***But God would never chastise them, with thee among them; God would never chastise them as they begged forgiveness. (Al Anfal 8:33).***

The above Ayah indicates the reservation of the unleashing of the wrath of Allahﷻ upon the Muslims by the grace of the presence of the Prophet amongst them, just as in the delaying of punishments of previous nations, despite there being certain people deserving of Divine Punishment.

Disobedience and committing of some sins are the cause of the deliverance of Divine Punishment and the way towards restitution is repentance and seeking forgiveness.

{وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ}

***God would never chastise them as they begged forgiveness. (Al Anfal 8:33)***

And

{وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ لِيُهْلِكَ الْقُرَىٰ بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلِهَا مُصْلِحُونَ}

***Yet thy Lord would never destroy the cities unjustly, while as yet their people were putting things right. (Hud 11:117).***

We also have in the narrations that until such time that amongst the people are virtuous and pious individuals, Allahﷻ would withhold punishment and the delivery of hardship to the others. Such as the eradication of the Nation of Lot(pbuh), where Prophet Abraham(pbuh) asked the angels to deliver their punishment that amongst them is Prophet Lot(pbuh), meaning would they deliver the punishment while he was amongst them? The angels replied that they are aware of his presence, and have ordered him to leave that area.

Or such as Imam Ali (pbuh) after the passing of the Prophet, stated that one of two of your security has passed, so keep the second, which is forgiveness, well protected.

Or Imam Redha(pbuh) when he said to Zakaria son of Adam, that you should remain in Qom so that just as the Divine Punishment did not fall upon the people of Baghdad for the sake of Imam Kadhim(pbuh), based upon your presence, calamities upon that city will be distanced.

Seeking forgiveness pushes away calamities. Repentance and seeking forgiveness has significance and value with Allahﷻ, so much so that the final destination of a nation may be rewritten – *God would never chastise them as they begged forgiveness.*

Sinners must not despair; seeking forgiveness, repentance and visitations of Divine Guardians is a route to spiritual return and upliftment. Of course, seeking forgiveness for disbelievers and hypocrites has no

value or effect.

{سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ}

***Equal it is for them, whether thou askest forgiveness for them or thou askest not forgiveness for them. (Al Munafiqun 63:6).***

1. Translators note: See also Holy Qur'an 2:271

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