

Repentance

Like the physical diseases that are treated by swallowing drugs and stopping eating delicious meals, sins should be treated by suffering repentance and turning to God and abstaining from the sweeping desires and the unruly whims so that the worldly and religious tragedies of the commitment of sins will not be encountered.

Reality of Repentance

True repentance can be achieved after it passes through three stages:

The first stage is the conscious awakening the guilty feels sorry for his acts of disobedience to God. When the soul is full of this aware feeling, it moves to:

The second stage, which is turning to God and the true intention to cling to the obedience to Him. When this feeling covers the soul, it moves to:

The third stage, which is self-purification from sins, remedying the sins by acting righteous deeds and avoiding evildoings. Thus, true repentance is achieved.

Repentance however is not a play or an utterance. It is the true turning to God and the real avoidance of acts of disobedience to Him.

Imam ar-Rida (a) said: “He who seeks Allah’s forgiveness from a sin that he keeps on committing is deriding his Lord.”

Merits of Repentance

The merits of repentance are greatly numerous. They are pictured in the holy Quran and pointed out in the texts of the Prophet and The Ahul-Bayt (a). The Divine Care has refused to neglect the disobedient floundering in the glooms of sins without surrounding them with high sympathy and noble amnesty. The

Lord therefore has drawn their attentions to the turning to Him and paved the way of repentance to them:

“When the faithful come to you, say to them, ‘Peace be upon you. Your Lord has decreed for Himself to be All-merciful. Anyone of you who commits a sin out of ignorance, then repents, and reforms himself will find that Allah is All-forgiving and All-merciful.’ (6:54)”

“(Muhammad), tell my servants who have committed injustice to themselves, “Do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Allah certainly forgives all sins. He is All-forgiving and All-merciful.” (39:53)”

“Ask forgiveness from your Lord; He is All-forgiving. He will send you abundant rain from the sky, strengthen you by (providing) you wealth and children, and make gardens and streams for you. (71:10-2)”

“Allah loves those who repent and those who purify themselves. (2:222)”

The Prophet (S) said: “The repentant from a sin is as same as him who did not commit it.”

“Nothing is more favorable to Allah than a male or female repentant believer¹.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “When a servant repents to Allah truly, He loves him; hence, He covers him up in this world as well as the world to come To cover him up means that Allah makes the two angels (who recorded his deeds) forget the ill deeds that they knew about him. He then reveals to the servant’s limbs to conceal the sins that he had done and reveals to the areas of this earth (on which he had committed sins) to conceal his sins. That servant therefore will meet Allah as if he had done no single offense and nothing will testify against him².”

“Adam supplicated to Allah saying, ‘Lord, You have made the Shaitan over me and made him run in my soul like blood. Give me something in opposite of this.’ The Lord answered, ‘Adam! If any of your descendants intends to do a wrongdoing, I will not allow to be recorded against him unless he practices it. If he does it, I will order to be recorded as a single evil deed. If he intends to do a good deed, I will order to be recorded for him as a single good deed. If he practices it, I will order to be recorded as ten good deeds.’ Adam asked for more, and the Lord said, ‘Any of your descendants commits a wrongdoing then seeks My forgiveness, I will forgive him.’ Adam asked for more, and the Lord said, ‘I will accept the repentance of any of your descendants even if his soul reaches his nose (i.e. in the very final hours of his life).’ ‘That is enough,’ said Adam³.”

“Allah gives the believer who commits a sin seven hours as respite before he records that sin. If the believer seeks the Lord’s forgiveness during these seven hours, his sin will not be recorded. If he does not, a single evil deed will be recorded against him. The true believer remembers his offense twenty years after its commitment and seeks Allah’s forgiveness, and he is forgiven. The disbeliever forgets the offense that he commits very soon after its commitment⁴.”

“Any believer who commits forty grand sins on a single day and seeks Allah’s forgiveness, by uttering

the following statement, with deep feeling of sorrow, Allah will forgive his sins. He who commits more than forty grand sins on a single day is hopeless. The statement is:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ وَأَسْأَلُهُ أَنْ يُصَلِّيَ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ
وَأَلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَأَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيَّ.

astaghfiru (a)llah allathi la ilaha illa huwa (a)lhayyu (a)lqayyoumu badee'u (a)ssamawaati wa (a)l-ardhi
thu (a)ljalaali wa (a)l'ikraami wa as'aluhu an yussalliya ala muhammadin wa aali muhammad wa an
yatouba alayy(a).

I seek the forgiveness of Allah; there is no god but Whom, the Everlasting, the Eternal, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and the Lord of Glory and Grace, and I implore to Him to send His blessings to Muhammad and his family and accept my repentance.)⁵

Obligation and Immediateness of Repentance

The obligation of repentance is something beyond doubt, because logic and texts support it. Regarding logic, it is self-evident that protection against causes of harms is something logically necessary. On that account, it is obligatory to seek the guard of repentance against the bad results of sins in this life as well as the life to come. Regarding texts, the instructions of the Quran and hadith called unto repentance through various pictures of attraction and simplification.

The Prophet (S) said: “Anyone who repents a single year before death, his repentance will be accepted by

Allah. A year is very much. He who repents a month before his death, his repentance will be accepted by Allah. A month is also very much. He who repents a week before his death, his repentance will be accepted by Allah. A week is very much. He who repents a day before death, his repentance will be accepted by Allah. A day is very much. He who repents before he closes his eyes for death, his repentance will be accepted by Allah⁶.”

“Allah possesses surpluses of His sustenance that He gives to whom he wills. With the rise of every dawn, Allah extends His hands for those who commit sins at night so as to accept their repentance (if they show repentance). With the sunset of every day, He extends His hands for those who commit sins in day so as to accept their repentance⁷.”

Repetition of Repentance

Some people find the right path after deviation and straighten up after aberrance. So, they try to make right the sins that they had committed by means of repentance and turning to God. Others, however, are

deceived by the joys and seductions of this life; therefore, they commit new sins after repentance as they drift in the violent currents of offenses. Thus, they live in the midst of a brutal conflict between the intellect and desires. Once, they overcome their desires, but their desires prevail on them in other situations. This fact is the main reason that prevents many from repeating repentance, because they anticipate that they will anew return to the commitment of sins.

Such individual must understand that everyone is the subject of the seductions and sinful inspirations of the Devil, and that none may be saved totally from such inspirations except the Sinless (a). Accordingly, they should have turned and repented to God purely whenever such devilish inspirations attacked them, even if they go astray several times. They, finally, should have put before their eyes the saying of God:

“(Muhammad), tell my servants who have committed injustice to themselves, ‘Do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Allah certainly forgives all sins. He is All-forgiving and All-merciful.’ (39:53)”

In view of that, the Prophet and The The Ahlul-Bayt (a) affirmed the repetition of repentance and the incessant turning to God so as to save the victims of sins from plunging more in their offenses and to push them to put a new beginning to an honest life:

Mohammad Ibn Muslim narrated that Imam al-Baqir (a) said to him: “Muhammad Ibn Muslim, all the sins of the believer who repents to Allah will be forgiven. He therefore should put a new beginning for himself after his repentance and Allah’s forgiveness to him. By Allah I swear, this is peculiar for people of faith.” “What if one commits sins from which he had repented and then repeat his repentance?” I asked.

The Imam (a) wondered: “Muhammad Ibn Muslim, do you think that Allah does not accept the repentance of the believing servant who feels sorry for his sinning and seeks forgiveness and repents to Him?” I said: “What if that servant commits a sin repeatedly and repents to Allah repeatedly?” The Imam (a) answered: “Whenever a believer seeks forgiveness and repents, Allah accepts his repentance again. Allah is surely All-forgiving and All-merciful. He accepts the repentance and pardons the sins. You should never make the believers feel desperate of the mercy of Allah⁸.”

Abu Bassir related: I asked Imam as-Sadiq (a) about the exegesis of God’s saying: ‘Believers, turn to Allah in repentance with pure intention. (66:8)’ He (a) said: “The pure repentance is to repent from the sin and decide not to commit it any more.” I wondered: “None of us can give up a sin completely.” The Imam (a) commented: “Abu Muhammad, Allah does love the servant who commits sins frequently and repents to Him very frequently⁹.”

[Courses of Repentance](#)

The repentant must know the courses of repentance so that he can expiate each sin properly.

Sins, however, take various forms; some concern a servant and his Lord. These are classified into two parts:

- Negligence of the obligatory rites, and
- Commitment of forbidden acts.

As examples on the first, we cite the negligence of the obligatory prayer, fasting, hajj, zakat, and the like rites. The course of repentance from such sins is to work hard for settling them. Examples on the second are fornication, drinking of wines, gambling, and the like forbidden acts. The course of repentance from such acts is to feel sorry for committing them and intend truly to leave them.

Some sins concern an individual and people, such as usurpation of properties, killing respectful souls, and dishonoring the believers by means of revilement, beating, talebearing, and backbiting. These sins are the most dangerous and the most difficult in treatment. The course of repentance from such sins is to satisfy the other parties and give the usurped and seized properties back to their owners. If this is impossible, it is necessary to seek the forgiveness of God urgently, raise the balance of good deeds, and implore to God for making such wronged people be pleased with the wrong party on the Day of Judgment.

Acceptance of Repentance

The true qualified repentance is admissible. This fact is proved through many texts from the Quran and hadith:

“It is He who accepts the repentance of His servants, forgives their evil deeds and knows all about what you do. (42:25)”

“This Book is a revelation from Allah, the Majestic and All-knowing who forgives sins, who accepts repentance, whose punishment is severe, and whose bounty is universal. He is the only Lord and to Him all things proceed (40:2-3).”

The Prophet (S) said: “Had you not committed sins and sought the forgiveness of Allah, He would have created others who commit sins and then seek His forgiveness so that He will forgive them. A believer commits sins frequently, but repents to Allah very frequently. Listen to Allah’s saying:

“Allah loves those who repent and those who purify themselves. (2:222)”

- [1.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 3/98 (as quoted from Uyounu Akhbar ir-Ridha).
- [2.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 168 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [3.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 184 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [4.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 3 page 103 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [5.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 182 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [6.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 182 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [7.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 3/100 (as quoted from as- Saduq’s Thawab ul-A’mal).
- [8.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 183 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [9.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 183 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

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