

Turning to Allah

“And most surely I am most Forgiving to him who repents and believes and does good, then continues to follow the right direction.” Qur'an, 20:82.

Sins and the ability to repent

Mothers do not give birth to sinful children, and children do not come to this world defiled with sins.

When a baby comes to this life for the first time, his mind is empty of any knowledge, intellect and information. He is completely ignorant of what is around him. When he comes to this world, he does not know anything, save crying and suckling. At the same time when he cries or suckles his mother's breast, he is ignorant of that too. Gradually instincts, feelings and lusts move into the circle of his physiological being and these bodily activities enter into the field of his life. Then the baby begins to learn from the external environment and surroundings and from the conduct of the others what is necessary for him to survive in this life.

As for the body of a baby, it is liable to different kinds of diseases and calamities throughout his life. The same is said about his intellect, soul, spirit and heart. Concerning morals, he is also liable to commit sins and vices. Hence, sins are accidental to man just as diseases that attack his body. Sin is something accidental and not spontaneous.

Bodily diseases can be cured by following the instructions of a doctor but intellect, spirit and soul, when diseased, can be cured by following the instructions of Allah the Almighty and obeying His orders.

If as inner knows his state and notices his wrongdoing and he knows what he should do and what he should not do, he must get ready to repent, to turn to Allah and to follow the instructions of the “Spiritual Doctor” and then he will get out of the circle of sin to the circle of Allah's mercy. Thus, he gets free of sins and becomes pure, as he has been born.

A sinner cannot pretend that he is unable to repent because he, who is able to commit sins, is undoubtedly able to repent of those sins too.

Yes, if we who are able to eat, drink, come and go, talk, get married, work, play sports, travel and associate with other people will curb our appetites or activities if a doctor asks us to in order to avoid disease, then we should be able to avoid sins and falling into the abyss of corruption and disobedience.

If sinners make excuses for not repenting, Allah will not accept their excuses. If sinners and disobeyers refuse to repent now, Allah will not invite them to repent later.

Sinners must accept the fact that they are able to refrain from sin in any case and any condition. The Qur'anic verses show that Allah is kind to His people, and He accepts their repentance and forgives sinners even if their sins are as vast as the sands of deserts. In fact, Allah may recompense sins with good doings.

Sinners must perceive that if they do not hasten to stop committing sin and being disobedient, and they do not purify their inner beings from sin's dregs, then Allah will torture them severely and punish them for their sins and crimes with the worst punishment.

Allah talks about Himself in the holy Qur'an by saying:

“The Forgiver of the faults and the Acceptor of repentance, Severe to punish” (40:3)

Imam Ali (as) described Allah the Almighty in the Iftitah supplication by saying, “I have ascertained that You are the most Merciful of the merciful at the time of forgiveness and mercy, and You are the severest Punisher at the time of punishment and revenge¹.”

Allah declares to His sinful people His saying:

“Say: O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah; surely Allah forgives the faults altogether; surely He is the Forgiving the Merciful.” Qur'an 39:53

Hence, if we understand the verses of the Qur'an that gives us the good news that we have the ability to refrain from sins, and that Allah accepts our repentance and is forgiving and merciful, then we have no excuse if we delay repenting and keep on committing sins. Therefore repenting of sins is a prompt, moral, and rational obligation for all sinners.

If sinners do not hasten to repent, and they refuse to repair what they have committed and to purify themselves from the filth of sin and disobedience, then, in the afterlife, when they stand before Allah they will not be excused by appealing to reason, conscience or wisdom. The day of resurrection will come, when sinners will stand with deep regret, calling loudly:

“Were there only a returning for me, I should be of the doers of good.” Qur'an, 39:58

Allah will reply to them:

“Aye! My revelations came to you, but you rejected them, and you were proud and you were one of the unbelievers.” Qur’an 39:59

On that day, no excuses will be accepted from sinners. Faith and good deeds al one will save them from the torture. Allah emphasizes the inevitable end of such people when saying:

“And had those who are unjust all that is in the earth and the like of it with it, they would certainly offer it as ransom (to be saved) from the evil of the punishment on the day of resurrection; and what they never thought of shall become plain to them from Allah.” Qur’an 39:47

Imam Ali (as) stresses in Du’a Kumayl that there will be no excuse accepted from as inner when not repenting and turning to Allah and that Allah has completed His authority over people by saying, “You have the authority over me in all of that and I have no excuse before Your judgment against me².”

A wonderful tradition on the authority of Allah over people

Abdul A’la, the freed slave of aalsam³, narrated that he had heard Imam as-Sadiq (as) saying:

“On the day of resurrection a beautiful woman, who has been deceived by her beauty, will be brought to be tried. She will say, “O my Lord, You have made me so beautiful so that I did so and so.” Then the Blessed Virgin Mary (as) will be brought forward. It will be said (to the woman), “are you more beautiful than this one? We have made her so beautiful but she has not been deceived.” A handsome man, who has been deceived by his beauty, will be brought. He will say, “O my Lord, you have made me handsome until I got so and so from women.” Then Prophet Yousuf (Joseph) (as) will be brought forward. It will be said (to the man), “Are you more handsome than this one? We have made him so handsome but he has not been deceived.” Then a miserable man, who has been deceived by (has lost his faith because of) his calamities, will be brought forward. He will say, “O my Lord, You have afflicted me with so many calamities that I have been deceived.” Then Prophet Ayyoub (Job) (as) will be brought forward. It will be said (to the man), “are your calamities severer than this man’s? He has been tried but he has not been deceived (has not lost his faith)⁴.”

We have inherited repentance from our father Adam and mother

Eve

When Allah has created Adam as His caliph in the earth and when Adam’s body has become straight and the divine spirit has been breathed into it⁵, he has become fit to be taught the names and then Allah has ordered the angels to prostrate themselves before Adam to glorify him. Then Allah has let him and his wife live in paradise. Allah has permitted Adam and his wife to enjoy all the blessings of paradise except a certain tree. Allah has forbidden him and his wife from approaching this tree and if they did they would be unjust:

“And do not approach this tree, for then you will be of the unjust.” Qur'an, 2:35

But the Satan, who has refused to prostrate himself before Adam and has been driven out of paradise, has whispered evil to Adam and Eve because of his grudge against them until he could deceive them to commit the sin; eating from that prohibited tree. Then their hidden private parts appeared and they (Adam and Eve) lost their high position and honorable rank near Allah because of obeying the Satan. Thus, they have been exiled from paradise and driven away from the mercy of Allah.

The Satan has whispered evil to Adam and Eve out of his hidden complexes and in order to lead them to that prohibited tree to commit sin. He said to them, “O Adam and Eve, Allah has prevented you from this tree just because if you eat from its fruit, you will be two angels and then you will live in paradise forever.”

In order to compact his evil whispering and to fix his plot into their Hearts, the Satan took binding oaths that he wanted nothing save their goodness and advantage:

“And he swore to them both: Most surely, I am a sincere adviser to you.” Qur'an, 7:21

His evil whispering affected them and the fires of love of life broke out inside them. This desire made a thick screen between them and the prohibition of Allah and they fall in the trap of the Satan. They involved in disobedience and stretched their hands towards the prohibited tree after the Satan had seduced them. When they ate from the fruit of the tree, their private parts appeared to them and the dress of gravity, dignity and light had been taken off them. They began to cover their private parts with the leaves of trees. Then Allah called out to them:

“Did I not forbid you both from that tree and say to you that the Satan is your open enemy?”

Qur'an, 7:22

Thus, Adam and Eve had been driven out of paradise where the position of deputyship, knowledge and the prostration of the angels before Adam had no any use for them. They had come down from that exalted position to begin their life on the earth. But being away from the position of nearness (to the Lord), away from the angels, away from paradise, paying no attention to the order of Allah the Almighty and obeying the Satan, also getting her, had caused them a great sorrow, grief and regret; and hence they had got out of the horrible prison of selfishness and terrible suppression of desire because those selfishness and desire were the reason behind their becoming away from the mercy and care of their Beloved Lord and falling into the valley of deviation; therefore they could go out again to the horizon of the mercy, kindness and care of Allah; that horizon which was full of goodness and honor in the worldly life and deliverance and infinite success in the afterlife.

When Adam and Eve got out of paradise in this way, they cried loudly, (Our Lord, we have been unjust to ourselves) and fallen into the prison of inadvertence and selfishness and slipped into the darkness of greediness and pride.

This attention and awakening were as the first step towards freedom and the cause for their rescue from the traps of the Satan in order to return to the mercy of Allah after being humble and submissive. If the Satan himself had become humble and submissive before Allah, he would have not come to his eternal fate of misery and wretchedness and he would have not fallen under the divine curse and wrath forever.

We find that Adam and Eve, due to reason, sight and wakefulness and at the same time with regret, have not been impolite before Allah; they have not said to Him, “forgive us!” but they have said,

“And if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers.”

Qur'an, 7:23

After this advertence, humbleness, submissiveness, regret, crying, repenting and going out of the prison of selfishness to the wide horizon of Allah's mercy, the doors of mercy have been opened for Adam and Eve and the divine care has come to save them from that misery and terrible fate:

“Then Adam received (some) words from his Lord, so He turned to him mercifully; surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.” Qur'an, 2:37

The light of the Lord has entered into Adam's heart through some words he has received and the perfect repentance has been realized via the connection between these three facts; “the light of the Lord”, “the words” and “the soul of Adam”. Repentance that can repair what one has missed through his past age is the light that will illuminate the way of future to a repentant.

It has narrated from Imam al-Baqir (as) that the words that Adam had received from Allah were, “O Allah, there is no god but You. Glory and praise be to You. My Lord, I have been unjust to myself; forgive me for You are the best Forgiver. O Allah, there is no god but You. Glory and praise be to You. My Lord, I have been unjust to myself; have mercy on me for You are the best Merciful one. O Allah, there is no god but You. Glory and praise be to You. My Lord, I have been unjust to myself; accept my repentance for You are the Oft-Returning, the Most Merciful⁶”.

It has been narrated that Adam had seen honored names written on the Throne and when he had asked about them, it had been said to him that they had been the most honored names near Allah. The names were Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, al-Hasan and al-Husayn. Adam had begged Allah to accept his repentance and to high his position by the means of these names⁷.

When the rains of the divine inspirations fell as words to water the seed of love in Adam, confession of his sin and of being unjust to himself grew. Adam had nothing to do save to cry and to pray his Lord and then the tree of choice grew in the land of his soul and the flowers of repentance and turning (to Allah) bloomed:

“Then his Lord chose him, so He turned to him and guided (him).” Qur'an, 20: 122

Sins

Imam as-Sadiq (as), in a wonderful article as a “letter of repentance”, talked about the sins that must be repented of promptly as a moral and legal obligation; the sins that if had not been repaired by true repentance, they would not be removed or omitted from the book of the soul and heart and they would trouble man’s life in this world and subject him to the divine torment on the day of resurrection.

Imam as-Sadiq (as) said, “O Allah, I beg You to forgive me any sin that has been related to You and then I committed it again. I beg You to forgive me what I have wasted of your obligations and rights of prayer, zakat, fasting, jihad, hajj, minor hajj, perfecting wuDu’and ghusl, worshipping at night, glorifying You quite often, expiation for (breaking) oaths, returning to disobedience and every obligation I have neglected. I pray You to forgive me that and all what I have committed of major sins, minor sins, disobediences, bad deeds and lusts intendedly or by mistake, openly or secretly! I repent of that and of shedding blood, disobeying the parents, cutting the relation with the kin, fleeing from jihad, acc using honorable women, eating the monies of the orphans wrongfully, committing perjury, concealing true witnesses, buying your covenant for Alittle price, usury, ill-gotten properties, magic, divination, pessimism, polytheism, hypocrisy, thieving, drinking wines, giving short measure and short weight, dissension, breaking covenants, fabrication, treason, breaking protection, (false) swearing, backbiting, tale bearing, slandering, defaming, traducing, harming neighbors, insulting one another by nicknames, entering houses without permission, pride, haughtiness, stubbornness, exultancy, injustice in judgment, oppression when angry, fanaticism, supporting the unjust, helping others in sin and transgression, (littleness of family and of wealth and children), suspicion, following lusts, enjoining the wrong, forbidding the right, corruption, denying the truth, flattering the rulers, cheating, stinginess, talking about what I do not know, eating meat of dead animals, drinking blood, eating pork and any meat over which any other name than (that of) You has been invoked, envy, aggression, inviting to debauchery, wishing what You have granted to the others, self-deceit, reminding when gifting, intending to wrong, harming the orphans, c hiding the beggars, breaking oaths, wronging any of your people in his wealth, body and honor, what my eyes have seen, what myears have heard, what my tongue has uttered, what I have stretched my hands to, what I have moved my feet to, what my skin has touched, what I have talked to myself which is disobedience to you and every false oath⁸.”

In this tradition, Imam as-Sadiq (as) has mentioned different sins that one should repent of and turn sincerely to Allah.

The bad results of sins

There are many bad results of sins in this life and the afterlife as mentioned by the Qur’anic verses and the traditions of AhlulBayt (as), that if a sinner does not repent of his sins, he will, definitely, be involved in these bad effects.

Allah has said,

“Yea, whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side, those are the inmates of the fire; in it they shall abide.” Qur'an, 2:81

“Say: Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in (their) deeds. Those whose effort goeth astray in the life of the world, and yet they reckon that they do good work. Those are they who disbelieve in the revelations of their Lord and in the meeting with Him. Therefore, their works are vain, and on the day of resurrection, We assign no weight to them.” Qur'an, 18:103–105

The scale will be set to the persons, whose deeds can be weighed, but the resisting disobeyers and unbelievers will have no any weight on the day of resurrection because their deeds will become as scattered dust and so they will have no deed to be weighed.

“There is a disease in their hearts, so Allah added to their disease and they shall have a painful chastisement.” Qur'an, 2:10

“But you will see those in whose hearts is a disease hastening towards them”. Qur'an, 5:52

It means that the hypocrites hasten towards the enemies of Allah from among the Jews and the Christians.

“And as for those in whose hearts is a disease, it adds uncleanness to their uncleanness and they die while they are unbelievers.” Qur'an, 9:125

“(As for) those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and they shall enter burning fire.” Qur'an, 4:10

Some scholars think, according to this holy verse and other verses, that these criminals, on the day of resurrection, will be punished by their sins. It means that their sins will become on the day of resurrection as painful torment and their crimes as chains and fires by which they will be tortured severely.

“Surely those who conceal any part of the Book that Allah has revealed and take for it a small price, they eat nothing but fire into their bellies, and Allah will not speak to them on the day of resurrection, nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful chastisement. These are they who buy error for the right direction and chastisement for forgiveness; how bold they are to encounter fire!” Qur'an, 2:174–175

“The parable of those who disbelieve in their Lord: their actions are like ashes on which the wind blows hard on a stormy day; they shall not have power over anything out of what they have earned; this is the greater error.” Qur'an, 14:18

It is understood from the previous verses that the bad results of sins are much more than what has been mentioned before. They are as following:

Entering into hell on the day of resurrection, being in torment forever, losing the worldly life and the afterlife, loss of one's efforts and deeds, vanity of one's deeds on the day of judgment, (sinners) not being given any weight, increase of disobedience because of not repenting, hastening towards the enemies of Allah, cutting the connection with Allah, not being purified on the day of resurrection, changing guidance into deviation and changing forgiveness into torment.

Imam Zaynol Aabideen⁹ (as) has talked about the bad results of sins by saying, "The sins that remove blessings are: oppressing people, giving up doing good and favor, being ungrateful for blessings and giving up thanking Allah. The sins that cause regret are: killing innocent ones, breaking off relations with the kin until they feel in no need of each other, not offering prayer until its time elapses, being inadvertent to wills and to wronged people, not giving zakat until death comes. The sins that bring calamities are: disobedience of a knowing one by oppressing people, being rude to them and mocking them. The sins that keep blessings away are: pretending poverty, sleeping until after dawn and until the time of Fajr Prayer elapses, scorning blessings and complaining against Allah the Almighty.

The sins that disgrace honors are: drinking wine, gambling, joking and talking nonsense, mentioning the defects of people and accompanying sinful and bad people. The sins that bring calamities are: refraining from helping needy people, refraining from supporting oppressed people, not enjoining what is right and not forbidding what is wrong. The sins that cause the enemies to prevail are: doing injustice openly, spreading debauchery, violating prohibited matters, disobeying good people and submitting to evil people. The sins that hasten perishment are: cutting communications with one's kin, false oath, lying, adultery, blocking the ways of the Muslims and pretending to be an Imam falsely.

The sins that dispel hope are: being desperate of the mercy of Allah, relying on other than Allah and disbelieving in the Promise of Allah. The sins that darken the space are: magic, divination, believing in stars, disbelieving in fate and being undutiful to one's parents. The sins that uncover the curtain (of the unseen) are: borrowing with no intention of repaying, exceeding in spending on impermissible things, being stingy with one's family, children and relatives, impoliteness, impatience, laziness and making little of religious people.

The sins that reject supplication are: malevolence, ill-intention, hypocrisy with brothers, disbelieving in responding to supplication, delaying obligatory prayers until their prescribed times elapse, giving up approaching Allah via doing good and paying charities, and using bad and obscene sayings. The sins that prevent the rain of the heaven are: the injustice of rulers in judgments, perjury, concealing true witnesses, preventing zakat, preventing loan and helping the needy, hard-Heartedness towards the poor and the needy, being unjust to orphans and widows, chiding the beggars and turning away from them¹⁰."

Imam Ali (as), concerning sins, says, "Even if Allah had not threatened for disobeying Him, people must

not disobey Him in order to be grateful to His blessings¹¹.”

Therefore, we have to avoid any kind of sins as a matter of being grateful to Allah for His blessings and gifts, which can never be counted. In addition, we have to repent and regret the sins we have committed before. We have to apologize to Allah for our previous sins in order to gain His mercy, forgiveness, care and generosity.

The way of true repentance

Paying attention to the important consequences of repentance, that are gaining forgiveness, mercy and divine contentment and to be fit to enter into paradise, to be safe from the torment of hell, to be away from deviation and straying, to follow the right path and the way of guidance, to be pure from the darkness of sins and guilt we have to say that repentance is a great and important matter, a big program and a clear divine fact.

Repentance does not take place when one just says with his tongue “astaghfirullah–I ask Allah to forgive me” with a little shyness inside him or he sheds some tears secretly or openly for there are many people who repent in this way but after a little time they return to commit the same sins and disobediences they have committed before.

Returning to commit sins is the clearest evidence showing that the true repentance has not been realized and that the light of the actual turning to Allah has not penetrated one’s soul. True repentance and actual turning to Allah are so important that a great part of the Qur’anic verses and holy traditions have talked about.

True repentance in Imam Ali’s view

Once Imam Ali (as) heard someone saying, “I ask Allah to forgive me”. He said to him, “Woe unto you! Do you know what “asking for forgiveness “is asking for forgiveness is the position of “illiyeen¹²”. It includes six meanings; the first is to feel contrition for what one has committed before; the second is to determine not to commit it again forever; the third is to give people their rights until meeting Allah with no responsibility; the fourth is to perform every obligation that has been missed; the fifth is to melt the flesh that has been grown out of ill–gotten properties by regretting and sorrowing until the skin sticks on the bones and then new flesh grows, and the sixth is to make the body taste the pain of obedience as it has tasted the sweetness of disobedience and then it is possible to say “astaghfirullah–I ask Allah for forgiveness¹³”.

A repentant has to realize the meaning of repentance and to determine definitely to give up sins and not to commit them again forever. He should not think of repentance while he is still committing sins. Procrastination and hoping to repent in the future is no doubt one of the plots of the Satan. It has been narrated that Imam ar–Ridha’ (as) had said, “He, who asks for forgiveness with his tongue and does not

repent with his Heart, mocks himself.”

In fact, it is ridiculous or regrettable that man throws himself into disease hoping that he may find the medicine! How much man loses because of this false hope of repenting and how much he commits crimes and sins while he talks with himself that the door of repentance is always open and that he can commit sins now and then he repents!

If man, when intending to repent, determines seriously and the conditions of repentance realize inside himself, this will lead to purify his inners and refine his soul and heart and then the dregs of sins will be removed from his organs inwardly and outwardly.

Repentance should not be just as a habit because sin, in fact, is darkness while repentance is light and oft en going and coming between darkness and light confuse the soul. Hence, if we repent of a sin and then we commit it again, we are still in the circle of sin and our repentance is just a temporary sentiment.

A human soul is like hell. It does not become full at all. It does not satiate with sin and disobedience. It is always greedy to impermissible things. It is these things that make man keep on committing sins and not approach Allah the Almighty. Therefore, the door of this oven must be closed by repentance and this unruly beast must be tied with the chains of the real turning to Allah.

Repentance is the reversal of the present condition and the conscious movement of faith and piety and the internal change of the heart and soul. Then man’s connection with sins and their motives become weak and he is bound by a strong tie with the Truth and the means of purity and lightness.

Repentance at its beginning is a new life; a pure and heavenly life. In this life man devotes his heart to Allah the Almighty and his soul to the good deeds. He purifies his inwards and outwards from the effects of sins.

Repentance in its essence is the extinction of the fire of fancies. It takes man to the path of the Truth, obedience and submission to the Exalted Creator.

Repentance is the end of the control of the Satan over the inners of man. It prepares the tenacious psychological base that makes the truth rule over the inners of man and prevents him from slipping under the pressure of fancies and transient material pleasures.

Each sin has a special repentance

Some people think, after committing some sins and offenses, that their repentance will be accepted just by apologizing to Allah and saying “I ask Allah to forgive me and I turn to Him”

or by resorting to a mosque or one of the sacred places to recite some supplications and to shed some tears whereas the Qur’anic verses and prophetic traditions concerning repentance do not accept this

childish manner of repentance. A repentant should notice that repentance differs according to different sins and each sin has a special repentance. If repentance is not realized, one remains polluted with the effects of sin and his soul remains lacking morale; in fact it remains dark until the day of resurrection and this one will suffer the severe torment of that sin.

All the sins can be classified under three groups:

1. The sins that are committed by man when neglecting his obligations such as prayers, fasting, khums, jihad and the likes.
2. The sins that are committed when one disobeys Allah by committing impermissible things such as drinking wine, impermissible looking (at not mahram women)¹⁴, adultery, gambling, sodomy, masturbation, listening to impermissible music and the likes which do not concern the rights of other people.
3. The sins that, besides leading to disobeying Allah, violate the rights of other people such as killing, stealing, usury, rage, extorting orphans' properties, bribe, aggression against people in their bodies and properties etc.

Repenting of the sins of the first group is achieved by leaving these sins which means that one has to perform the missed obligations like prayers, fasting, hajj and paying khums and zakat of all the years that he has not paid.

Repenting of the sins of the second group is achieved by asking Allah for forgiveness, regretting and determining to leave these sins in away causing one's state to change at all and causing his organs to abstain from committing such bad deeds forever.

Repenting of the sins of the third group is achieved by giving the rights of people back to them; a killer should let himself under the option of the guardians of the killed one to punish him or ask him to pay them blood money or to forgive him. A usurer must pay back all the monies he has taken from people as usury. An extorter must give all what he has extorted back to their owners. The properties of the orphans must be given back to them. Bribes must be given back to their owners. An aggressor must pay blood money and must recompense the loss and damage in people's properties and so on.

In order to achieve the real repentance man has to be cautious of three things:

1. The Satan

The words "Satan" and "Iblis" have been mentioned in the holy Qur'an about ninety-eight times. This dangerous and malicious creature has no aim out of his devilish acts and insinuation except to cut the connection between man and his Creator and to involve man into sins and crimes. The holy Qur'an has warned man of a deviate and misleading invisible being living inside man which is called as "Satan".

Satan linguistically means vile, disobedient, mutinous, deviate and misleading whether this being is a human being or jinnee.

The holy Qur'an and the traditions that have interpreted and explained the words of the Qur'an have mentioned the aspects of the Satan whether of human beings or jinn in this way: (open enemy, he who incites people to do evil and atrocity, he who ascribes bad things to Allah the Almighty, he who frightens good people of poverty if they spend their monies on good, he who involves man in sins, he who incites man towards the valley of deviation, he who paves the way for man to slip into the circle of gambling and drinking wine, causes enmity and hatred among people, shows vices to them as good deeds, promises them of untruth, causes pride into man's Heart, involves man into lowness, puts obstacles in the way of the Truth, invites man to what leads to the torment of hell, encourages man to divorce and prepares the background for it, fills man with desire to disobey (Allah) and to spread debauchery among people, makes the worldly life appear beautiful before man, fills man with love to money and wealth, incites man to commit sins and convince him to procrastinate repentance, plants selfishness, stinginess, backbiting, and telling lies into man's mind, motivates lusts and incentives of anger, encourages man to declare sins and disobediences, etc)[15](#).

As long as man is still in the traps of the devils of the human beings and jinn, he remains unable to walk in the way of the real repentance because the prevalence of the Satan and the devils over man's heart paves the way for man to slip into the swamp of disobedience after repenting again and again because of the evil whispering of these devils and hence man breaks his promise and repentance and follows his desires and his Satan.

A repentant must pray Allah to grant him success to keep on his repentance, to keep on being away from sins and rebelling against the Satan and the devils and then he can be free from the control of the wicked Satan little by little and at last he can drive him away from his life and get rid of his rule over his soul and body. By doing this man prepares for himself a good base to repent and to turn to Allah with his deep heart and then this luminous covenant will not be broken by the darkness of sins and disobediences after that.

2. The worldly life

The worldly life in its religious meaning is the way of man's relation with all the constituents of nature and all what makes his life and survival continue.

If this relation is based on the truth and the divine system, no doubt this worldly life will be praiseworthy and it will lead man to (build) the afterlife too but if man's relation with this worldly life is based on one's tendencies and material pleasures, it will be dispraised and lead to the (destruction) of the afterlife.

Of course the relation that is based on worthless tendencies, pleasures and material lusts will be the first step leading to the mires of sin definitely.

Man in this wrong relation will be excessive lover to lusts and material pleasures and then he will commit what contradicts the commands of Allah. Such relation will deceive man to involve him in material pleasures and lusts and it will not bring him save loss and then to come on the day of resurrection with a back overburdened with sins, crimes and faults.

Imam Ali (as) says about such a worldly life, “The worldly life deceives, harms and passes away¹⁶”

In the Qudsi tradition it is narrated that Allah has addressed His messenger (Muhammad) describing to him the people of this worldly life who have been involved in its traps saying, “The people of the worldly life are those whose eating, laughing, sleeping and anger are much. They are of little contentment. They do not apologize to whom they do wrong to and do not accept the apology of that who apologizes to them. They are lazy when it is time to obey (Allah) and brave when they disobey (Him). Their hopes are too far whereas their ends are too near. They do not blame themselves. They fear Allah little and become too happy when eating foods. The people of the worldly life do not thank Allah at welfare and are not patient at misfortune. They belittle the great deeds of the others. They praise themselves with what they have not done themselves and they pretend to have what they do not have. They talk of what they wish, mention the defaults of the others and hide their (other people’s) good deeds.”

He (Prophet Muhammad) asked, “O my Lord! Is there any defects in the people of the worldly life other than these ones?”

Allah said, “O Ahmad¹⁷! The defects of the people of the worldly life are so many. Among them there are ignorance, stupidity They do not be humble before the one whom they learn from. They consider themselves as wise while they are stupid near the knowing people¹⁸.”

If one repents of his sins but at the same time still lives under the domination of the worldly tendencies and pleasures, he cannot achieve inside himself the real repentance because whenever he repents, those pleasures and lusts attack him and draw him towards sin and then he breaks his repentance.

3. Plagues

Strong adhering to the worldly life, excessive love to pleasures and lusts, changing according to tendencies, fancies and instincts besides the material and immaterial interests and pleasures all are considered as dangerous plagues that obstacle man’s way and behavior and prevent him from achieving the real repentance. So a repentant must purify himself from all these things and try to cure these diseases and plagues so that he can follow the way of repentance and turning to Allah the Almighty.

The gift of Allah to the real repentant

One of the infallible Imams (as) says, “Allah the Almighty has given the repentant three advantages. If He has given one of them to all the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth, they will be saved by it. Allah has said:

“Surely Allah loves those who turn much (to Him), and He loves those who purify themselves.”

Qur'an, 2:222

He, whom Allah loves, will never be tortured. Allah has said too:

“Those who bear the power and those around Him celebrate the praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask protection for those who believe: Our Lord! Thou embracest all things in mercy and knowledge, therefore grant protection to those who turn (to Thee) and follow Thy way, and save them from the punishment of the hell. Our Lord! And make them enter the gardens of perpetuity which Thou hast promised to them and those who do good of their fathers and their wives and their offspring, surely Thou are the Mighty, the Wise. And keep them from evil deeds, and whom Thou keepest from evil deeds this day, indeed Thou hast mercy on him, and that is the mighty achievement.” Qur'an, 40:7–9

Allah has also said,

“And they who do not call upon another god with Allah and do not slay the soul, which Allah has forbidden except in the requirements of justice, and (who) do not commit fornication and he who does this shall find a requital of sin. The punishment shall be doubled to him on the day of resurrection, and he shall abide therein in abasement. Except him who repents and believes and does a good deed; so these are they of whom Allah changes the evil deeds to good ones; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” Qur'an, 25:68–70

The holy Qur'an and repentance

The word “repentance” and its derivatives have been mentioned in the Qur'an about eighty–seven times. It has been mentioned so much and this shows the greatness of this fact near Allah the Almighty.

We can classify what has been mentioned in the Qur'an concerning the matter of “repentance” into five parts:

1. The command of repentance.
2. The way of the real repentance.
3. Accepting repentance (by Allah).
4. Turning away from repentance.
5. The reason of not accepting repentance.

1. The command of repentance

Allah has said,

“And ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him.” Qur'an, 11:3

“And turn to Allah all of you, O believers, so that you may be successful.” Qur'an, 24:31

Ar-Raghib al-Isfahani says in his book Mufradat al-Qur'an,

“Success on the day of resurrection is life without death, honor with no ignominy, knowledge with no ignorance and wealth with no poverty.”

Allah has also said,

“O you who believe! turn to Allah a sincere turning.” Qur'an, 66:8

From these Qur'anic verses it is understood that Allah the Almighty has ordered the believers and other than believers of repentance. It is well-known that obeying Allah is something obligatory and it leads man to the way of forgiveness and mercy and on the contrary that disobeying the order of Allah is impermissible and it leads to Allah's wrath and torment and brings disgrace in this life and in the afterlife and causes eternal perishment.

2. The way of the real repentance

Repentance is not an easy matter. It is not achieved except by certain and practical conditions.

Among the elements that form the basic adobes in building the real repentance are regretting, determining to give up sin forever, changing one's bad morals into good ones, repairing one's deeds and past and relying on believing in Allah and the day of resurrection in following the straight path and the way of perfection.

Allah has said,

“Except those who repent and amend and make manifest (the truth), these it is to whom I turn (mercifully); and I am the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.” Qur'an, 2:160

“Repentance with Allah is only for those who do evil in ignorance, then turn (to Allah) soon, so these it is to whom Allah turns (mercifully), and Allah is ever knowing, Wise.” Qur'an, 4:17

“But whoever repents after his iniquity and reforms (himself), then surely Allah will turn to him (mercifully); surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” Qur'an, 5:39

“And (as to) those who do evil deeds, then repent after that and believe, your Lord after that is

most surely Forgiving, Merciful.” Qur'an, 7: 153

“But if they repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, they are your brethren in faith.”

Qur'an, 9: 11

According to these verses we notice that the conditions of the real repentance are: believing in Allah and the day of resurrection, reforming one's faith, morals and doings, prompt turning (to Allah) without any delay, cutting one's relation with injustice and sin, offering prayers, paying zakat and giving the rights of people back to them. Whoever repents in this way his repentance no doubt is a real repentance and then it will definitely be accepted by Allah.

3. Accepting repentance

When a sinful one obeys the order of Allah concerning the matter of repentance, tries to act according to the conditions of repentance and to follow the way that the holy Qur'an has determined for the repentant, definitely his repentance will be accepted by Allah for Allah has promised sinful people who repent to accept their repentances. Such one is fit so that Allah purifies him from the consequences of sin and changes the darkness of his inners into light and brightness.

Allah has said,

“Do they not know that Allah accepts repentance from His servants” Qur'an, 9: 104

“And He it is Who accepts repentance from His servants and pardons the evil deeds.” Qur'an, 42:25

“The Forgiver of the faults and the Acceptor of repentance.” Qur'an, 40:3

4. Turning away from repentance

If turning away from repentance is due to despair of the mercy of Allah, then such a person should know that despairing of the mercy of Allah is one of the aspects of disbelief and the disbelievers¹⁹.

If a sinful turns away from repentance thinking that Allah is unable to accept his repentance and forgive him, he should know that this matter is from the morals of the stubborn Jews²⁰.

If a sinful turns away from repentance out of pride, defiance and impudence before his generous Lord, he should know that Allah is mighty and powerful and He does not like such pride and impudent persons to be in His sacred yard. A person, who lives outside the circle of the love of Allah, lives a dry spirituality and is stuffed inside his dark soul besides that he is saved neither in this life nor in the afterlife²¹.

A sinful one has to know that his turning away from repentance—in spite of that the door of repentance is always open and one is able to repent with the previous mentioned conditions and that Allah accepts

repentance from His people—is the very injustice against oneself and distorting and destroying the high divine facts. Allah has said,

“And whoever does not turn, these it is that are the unjust.” Qur'an, 49:11

“Surely (as for) those who persecute the believing men and the believing women, then do not repent, they shall have the chastisement of hell, and they shall have the chastisement of burning.” Qur'an, 85:10

5. There as on of not accepting repentance

When a sinful one finds the opportunity of repentance and he repents of his sins following all the conditions of repentance, definitely his repentance will be accepted by Allah the Almighty but if he wastes the opportunity of repentance and procrastinates it until the signs of his death come and then he announces repentance of his previous sins or his repentance is not according to the actual conditions or he disbelieves after his believing, his repentance will not be accepted. Allah has said,

“And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them, he says: Surely now I repent; nor (for) those who die while they are unbelievers. These are they for whom We have prepared a painful chastisement.” Qur'an, 4:18

“Surely, those who disbelieve after their believing then increase in unbelief, their repentance shall not be accepted, and these are they that go astray.” Qur'an, 3:90

The traditions and the matter of repentance

Imam Abu Ja'far Muhammad al-Baqir (as) has said,

“Adam has said, “O my Lord, You have empowered the Satan over me and made him as the flow of the blood in me. O my Lord, do me something!” Allah said, “O Adam, I have granted you that Whoever of your progeny intends to do an evil, it will not be written against him but if he commits it, it will be written as one evil and whoever intends to do a good deed without doing it, it will be written for him as one good deed and if he does it, it will be written for him as ten good deeds.” Adam said, “O my Lord, grant me more!” Allah said, “I have granted you that whoever of your progeny does an evil and then asks for forgiveness, his evil will be forgiven.” Adam said, “O my Lord, grant me more!” Allah said, “I have granted your progeny repentance until the moment of death.” Adam said, “O my Lord, this suffices me²².”

Imam as-Sadiq (as) narrates that the Prophet (S) has said, “Whoever repents a year before his death Allah accepts his repentance.” Then he said, “A year is too much. Whoever repents a month before his death Allah accepts his repentance.” Then he said, “A month is too much. Whoever repents a week before his death Allah accepts his repentance.” Then he said, “A week is too much. Whoever repents a

day before his death Allah accepts his repentance.” Then he said, “A day is too much. Whoever repents before (the moment) he sees the angel of death Allah accepts his repentance²³.”

The Prophet (S) has said, “Allah accepts the repentance of His servant even before he breathes his last. Turn to your Lord before you die and hasten to do good deeds before you become busy (with other things) and keep what is between you and your Lord by mentioning Him too much²⁴.”

It is narrated that Imam Ali (as) has said, “There is no intercessor more successful than repentance²⁵.”

And the Prophet (S) has said, “Repentance cancels all what is (committed) before it²⁶.”

Imam Ali (as) has said, “Repentance calls down mercy²⁷.”

He has also said, “Turn to Allah and enter into His love because Allah loves those who turn much (to Him), and He loves those who purify themselves. The believers turn much to Allah²⁸.”

Imam Ridha’ (as) has narrated from his fathers that the Prophet (S) had said, “A believer near Allah is like a close angel. A believer near Allah is greater than this and nothing is more beloved to Allah than a repentant believing man or a repentant believing woman²⁹.”

Imam Ridha’ (as) has also narrated from his father that the Prophet (S) had said, “A repentant of sin is like one who has not committed as in³⁰.”

It is narrated that Imam as-Sadiq (as) has said, “Sincere repentance is that one repents of a sin and determines not to come back to it again³¹.”

The Prophet (S) has said, “Allah is happier with the repentance of His servant than a sterile man when begetting a child, than a lost one when finding his destination and than a thirsty one when reaching a drinking fountain³².”

He has also said, “A repentant, if the effect of repentance does not appear on him, is not repentant. He should satisfy his litigants, offer his wasted prayers, be humble among people, keep himself away from lusts and emaciate his neck by fasting in the days³³.”

Ameerul Mo’mineen (Imam Ali) (as) has said, “Repentance is regretting in the heart, asking (Allah) for forgiveness by the tongue, giving up (sins) by the organs and intending not to come back (to sins) again³⁴.”

He has also said, “Whoever turns to Allah, Allah turns to him and his organs are ordered to cover his sins, the lands to conceal his sins and the guardians (angels) are made forget what they have written against him³⁵.”

Imam as-Sadiq (as) has said, “Allah the Almighty has revealed to His Prophet Dawood (David): if My faithful servant commits a sin and then turns and repents of that sin and becomes shy of Me when

mentioning Me, I will forgive him and make the guardians (angels) forget (what they have written against him) and I change his evils into good deeds and I am the most Merciful of the merciful ones³⁶.”

In an important tradition the Prophet (S) has said, “Do you know who a repentant is?” His companions said, “By Allah, no, we do not.” He said, “If one repents without satisfying his litigants, he is not repentant. Whoever repents without increasing his worship is not repentant. Whoever repents without changing his cloths (conducts) is not repentant. Whoever repents without changing his companions is not repentant. Whoever repents without changing his meetings is not repentant. Whoever repents without changing his bed and pillow is not repentant. Whoever repents without changing his morals and intent is not repentant. Whoever repents without opening his Heart and giving with his hand generously is not repentant. Whoever repents without repressing his wishes and controlling his tongue is not repentant. Whoever repents without gifting the further power of his body is not repentant. If he does these things, he will be repentant³⁷.”

What has been mentioned in this important tradition concerning the state of changing is something very important especially the things that one gains from unlawful sources or through unlawful relations.

The advantages of repentance

Repentance has very important advantages in the worldly life and the in afterlife mentioned in the Qur’anic verses especially the verses concerning repenting of sins and also the honorable traditions narrated from AhlulBayt (as). Here we mention some of these advantages:

Allah has said,

“Ask forgiveness of your Lord, surely He is the most Forgiving. He will send down upon you the cloud, pouring down abundance of rain and help you with wealth and sons, and make for you gardens, and make for you rivers.” Qur’an, 71:10–12

“O you who believe, turn to Allah a sincere turning; maybe your Lord will remove from you your evil and cause you to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow.” Qur’an, 66:8

Most of the verses concerning repentance end with the two attributes “Forgiver” and “Merciful”. It means that Allah grants a true repentant with His forgiveness and mercy³⁸.

“And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded (against evil) We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth.” Qur’an, 7:96

In Tafseer Majma’ul Bayan an important and attractive tradition has been mentioned that Once a man has come to Imam al-Hasan (as) complaining to him of barrenness. Imam al-Hasan (as) said to him, “Ask Allah to forgive you!” Another one came to him complaining of poverty. Imam al-Hasan (as) said to him, “Ask Allah to forgive you!” a third one came to him saying, “Pray Allah to grant me a son!” Imam al-

Hasan said to him, “Ask Allah to forgive you!” The people there said to Imam al-Hasan (as), “Some men came to you complaining and asking for different things but you ordered them all to ask Allah for forgiveness.” He said, “I have not said that out of myself but I followed the saying of Allah when mentioning the story of Prophet Noah (as) where he said to his people,

“Ask forgiveness of your Lord, surely He is the most Forgiving. He will send down upon you the cloud, pouring down abundance of rain and help you with wealth and sons, and make for you gardens, and make for you rivers.” Qur'an, 71:10–12³⁹

Anyhow what is understood from the holy Qur'an and the noble traditions is that the advantages of repentance are: omitting sins, the divine pardoning and forgiving, the divine mercy, being safe from the torment of the hereafter, deserving to enter paradise, safety of the soul, purity of the Heart and the organs, being away from scandal, falling of rains, abundance of wealth and children, growing of gardens and flowing of rivers, disappearance of barrenness and poverty

“In their histories there is certainly a lesson for men of understanding.” Qur'an, 12:111.

- [1.](#) Mafateeh al-Jinan, by Abbas al-Qummi, Iftitah Du'a.
- [2.](#) Mafateeh al-Jinan, Du'a Kumayl (Kumayl Supplication).
- [3.](#) Aal means “the family of”.
- [4.](#) Rawdhatul Kafi, p.228.
- [5.](#) Ibid., p.72.
- [6.](#) Majma'ul Bayan, vol.1 p.89.
- [7.](#) Majma'ul Bayan, vol.1 p.89.
- [8.](#) Biharul Anwar, vol. 97 p.328.
- [9.](#) He is the fourth infallible Imam of the Shia.
- [10.](#) Ma'ani al-Akhbar, p.270.
- [11.](#) Nahjol Balagha, maxim no.290.
- [12.](#) “Illiyen” is the high position of the prophets, saints, martyrs and great faithful people near Allah (in Paradise).
- [13.](#) Nahjol Balagha, maxim no.309.
- [14.](#) A mahram woman is a woman that a man cannot get married to.
- [15.](#) The Holy Qur'an, Wassa'il ash-Shia, vol. 11, Al-Khisaal, Biharul Anwar, Warram Collection, Nahjol Balagha, Ghurarul Hikam.
- [16.](#) Nahjol Balagha, maxim no.415.
- [17.](#) It is another name of Prophet Muhammad (S).
- [18.](#) Biharul Anwar, vol.77, p.23.
- [19.](#) Refer to the Qur'an, 12:87.
- [20.](#) Refer to the Qur'an, 5:64.
- [21.](#) Refer to the Qur'an, 16:23, 22:38, 28:76, 31:18, 57:23.
- [22.](#) Al-Kafi, vol.2 p.440, Biharul Anwar, vol. 6 p. 18.
- [23.](#) Al-Kafi, vol.2 p.440.
- [24.](#) Biharul Anwar, vol. 6 p. 19.
- [25.](#) Ibid.
- [26.](#) Mizan al-Hikma, vol.1 p.338.
- [27.](#) Ibid.
- [28.](#) Biharul Anwar, vol. 6 p.21.

- [29.](#) Uyoon Akbar ar-Redha, p.198.
- [30.](#) Biharul Anwar, vol. 6 p.21.
- [31.](#) Biharul Anwar, vol. 6, p.22.
- [32.](#) Mizan al-Hikma, vol.1 p.338.
- [33.](#) Jami'ul Akhbar, p.226.
- [34.](#) Biharul Anwar, vol. 78 p.81.
- [35.](#) Thawabul A'mal, vol.1 p.214.
- [36.](#) Ibid., p.125.
- [37.](#) Biharul Anwar, vol. 6 p.35.
- [38.](#) Refer to the Qur'an,3:89, 5:34, 7:153, 9:102, 24:5.
- [39.](#) Majma'ul Bayan, vol. 10 p.361.

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