



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF REPENTANCE

Allah Ta'ala relents towards those who repent (make Tawba) and He graciously bestows His Mercy upon those who turn away from sin. Hereunder we will Insha Allah learn about the significance and necessity of repenting for our sins.

Hazrat Jaabir ibn Abdullah (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) narrates that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) delivered a sermon one Friday, in the course of which he said, "O people, repent to Allah before you die. Set about the performance of righteous works without delay, before you are too preoccupied. Reconcile whatever differences you have with your Lord, for then you will prosper."

The Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also said, "When Iblees was sent down to the earth he said, "By Your Glory and by Your Majesty, I swear that I shall not cease to mislead the human being as long as he has a breath left in his body." The Lord then said, "By My Glory and by My Majesty, I shall not refuse to accept his repentance, as long as he has not made that gurgling sound with his last breath.""

Hazrat Muhammad ibn Mutrif (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) reports that Allah Ta'ala has said, "Woe unto the son of Adam! He commits a sin, then he begs Me for forgiveness, and so I forgive him. Woe unto him! He promptly repeats the sin, then begs Me for forgiveness, and so I forgive him. Woe unto him! He will not give up his sin, but neither will he despair of My mercy. I call you to bear witness to the fact that I have indeed forgiven him."

Hazrat Anas ibn Malik (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) narrates that after the revelation of the Qur'anic Verse, "And that you ask forgiveness of your Lord then repent to Him [*Surah 11, Verse 3*]," Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and his Blessed Companions would pray for forgiveness a hundred times every day, and they used to say, "We beg forgiveness of Allah, and we return to him in repentance (*Nastaghfirullaaha wa natubu ilaih*)."

Hazrat Anas (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) also reports that a man once came to Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and said, "O Messenger of Allah, I am guilty of a sin." When Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) told him, "You must ask forgiveness of Allah," the man said, "I do repent, but then I commit the same sin all over again." Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) then said, "However often you sin, you must always repent, so that Shaitaan will be the one who reaches the point of sheer exhaustion." The man said, "O Prophet of Allah, in that case my sins are likely to be very numerous," to which the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) replied, "Allah's readiness to pardon is greater than your sins."

Hazrat Hassan Basri (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) once said, "You must not entertain the wishful expectation of forgiveness without repentance (Tawba), nor of spiritual reward without good work."

As Allah Ta'ala states in the Glorious Qur'an, "And undoubtedly, I am the Most Forgiving to him who repents and believes and does good deeds, then remains on guidance [*Surah 20, Verse 82*]. The ambitious desire for Divine Mercy and the Garden of Paradise, without repentance and without devotion to piety, is therefore nothing short of folly, ignorance and delusion, because repentance and devotion to piety are both stipulated in the above verse of the Holy Qur'an.

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said, "The true believer looks upon his sins as if he were standing at the foot of a mountain, afraid that it might topple down upon him. As for the shameless sinner, he looks upon his sins as if they were merely flies that had settled on his nose, so he assumes that they will buzz off as soon as he tells them to do so."

Once, Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "It may happen that the servant of Allah commits a sin, and that sin enables him to enter the Garden of Paradise." The Blessed Companions then asked, "Ya Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), how can it possibly enable him to enter the Garden of Paradise?" The Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) then replied, "The sin keeps staring him in the eye, so he begs forgiveness for it. He feels remorse over it, and repents, so it actually enables him to enter the Garden of Paradise!"

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also said, "I have never seen a remedy that is more appropriate, or that takes effect more rapidly than a new good deed applied to an old sin." As Allah Ta'ala has stated in the Holy Qur'an, "No doubt, good deeds obliterate evil deeds. This is admonition for the persons accepting admonition [*Surah 11, Verse 114*]."

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "When the servant of Allah commits a sin, it takes the form of a black stain inside his heart. Then, if he repents, seeks refuge and begs for forgiveness, his heart will be cleansed of that stain. But if he does not repent, does not resort to humble entreaty and does not beg for forgiveness, sin will be added to sin, and blackness to blackness, until his heart becomes blind and he must die."

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has stated, "Remorse is a form of repentance." He also said, "When someone commits a sin, then feels remorse over it, his remorse becomes his expiation (kaffarah) for the sin."

Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) has stated, "These words were inscribed around the Heavenly Throne (Arsh) four thousand years before Adam (Alaihis Salaam) was created: "And undoubtedly, I am the Most Forgiving to him who repents and believes and does good deeds, then remains on guidance." [*Surah 20, Verse 82*]"

From this narration we can see the importance and significance of repenting, that the words relating to it are even inscribed on the Arsh of Allah Ta'ala.

According to a report transmitted by Hazrat Yunus ibn Ubaidullah (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) once said, "There is not one servant of Allah who does not have two angels watching over him, and the guardian angel of the right side is in command of the guardian angel of the left side. Whenever the servant does a bad deed, the guardian angel of the left side asks his commander, "Shall I write it down?" The guardian angel of the right side responds to this by telling him, "Leave it until he has committed five bad deeds." Then, when the servant has in fact committed five bad deeds, the guardian angel of the left side will ask again, "Shall I write them down?" This time the other angel will reply, "Leave it until he does a good deed." Then when the servant has in fact performed a good deed, the guardian angel of the right side will say to his subordinate, "We have been informed that one good deed should be multiplied by ten, so let us proceed to cancel five bad deeds with five good deeds, and then make sure that five of the good deeds are definitely recorded in his favour." At this point Shaitaan will cry out in dismay, "When shall I ever catch up with the son of Adam?"

This Hadith is in harmony with the words of Allah, “No doubt, good deeds obliterate evil deeds. This is admonition for the persons accepting admonition [Surah 11, Verse 114].”

In another narration Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, “If the servant of Allah does a good deed, the guardian angel of the right side records ten good deeds in his credit column, and if he does a bad deed, the guardian angel of the left side is ready to record it in his debit column, but before he has time to do so, the guardian angel of the right side says, “Don't do that just yet!” He is then obliged to restrain himself for six or seven hours of the day. During that time the servant may beg forgiveness of Allah, in which case the angel will not record anything against him, or he may fail to beg forgiveness, in which case the angel will record one bad deed in his debit column.”

Hazrat Ibn Abbas (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) reports that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, “When the servant repents, and when Allah relents towards him, Allah causes that servant's angelic custodians to forget the bad deeds he has committed. He also causes his physical limbs and organs to forget the sinful actions they have committed. So when he comes forth on the Day of Resurrection there will be nothing whatsoever to bear witness against him.”

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has stated, “He who repents his sin is like someone who is guiltless of that sin even if he has repeated it seventy times in a day.”

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also said, “What is meant by sincere repentance is that one repents and then does not go back to committing the sin he has repented for.”

Hazrat Ibn Mas'ood (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) is reported as having said, “When a person first examines his record book on the Day of Resurrection, he will see his sinful acts of disobedience inscribed in the front part, and his good deeds towards the end. But when he turns back to the early pages of the book, he will see nothing but good deeds recorded there.”

This is in keeping with the words of Allah, “But he who repents and believes and does good deeds, then Allah will change the vices of such persons with virtues. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” [Surah 25, Verse 70] The recipient of this favour will be the repentant upon whose repentance Allah has set the seal of acceptance.

It is mentioned in the Hadith-e-Qudsi that Allah Ta'ala has stated, “O son of Adam, even if you came to meet Me with sins as huge as the earth itself, I would come to meet you with a correspondingly enormous measure of forgiveness.”

From this we learn how important repentance is and how ready Allah Ta'ala is to forgive us. Allah Ta'ala is Most Merciful and wants to forgive us. He is so Merciful that he even wants the angels to delay recording our bad deeds so that we may have time to repent. It is we who need to make the effort in turning to Allah Ta'ala and repenting for our sins. Do we not want Allah Ta'ala to bestow His Gracious Mercy upon us? We should take heed of the above narrations and try to repent as much as possible so that Allah Ta'ala may forgive us and convert our sins into good deeds. Insha Allah with this practice we will start having hatred for sins and will eventually stop committing those sins.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq to continuously repent for our sins to attain the Mercy and Forgiveness of Allah Ta'ala, Ameen.

[Compiled from Ghunyalit Taalibi Tareeqal Haqq by Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh]