



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

SEEKING ALLAH'S FORGIVENESS

We are specifically looking at the following verse:

"And those who, when they have committed Fahishah (illegal sexual intercourse etc.) or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins; - and none can forgive sins but Allah - And do not persist in what (wrong) they have done, while they know."

Qur'an surah al Imran (3) verse 135

`Abdur-Razzaq recorded that Anas bin Malik said, "I was told that when the Ayah,

(وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ)

(And those who, when they have committed Fahishah or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins,) was revealed, Iblis (Shayatan) cried."

Allah Reminded us in other verses of the Qur'an:

(And whoever does evil or wrongs himself but afterwards seeks Allah's forgiveness, he will find Allah Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.) ﴿4: 110

(Know they not that Allah accepts repentance from His servants) ﴿9:104

Imam Ahmad recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said,

(A man once committed an error and said, 'O Lord! I committed an error, so forgive me.' Allah said, 'My servant committed an error and knew that he has a Lord Who forgives or punishes for the error. I have forgiven My servant.' The man committed another error and said, 'O Lord! I committed an error, so forgive me.' Allah said, 'My servant knew that he has a Lord Who forgives or punishes for the sin. I have forgiven My servant.' The man committed another error and said, 'O Lord! I committed an error, so forgive me.' Allah said, 'My servant knew that he has a Lord Who forgives or punishes for the error. I have forgiven my servant.' He then committed another error and said, 'O Lord! I committed an error, so

forgive me.' Allah said, 'My servant knew that he has a Lord Who forgives or punishes for the error. Bear witness that I have forgiven My servant, so let him do whatever he likes.')
A similar narration was collected in the Sahih.

BUT WHY ARE WE CONSTANTLY SINNING?

1. Lack of knowledge

- about the Greatness of the One Whom we are sinning against
- not aware/forget of Allah's numerous Blessings
- on Allah's command and prohibitions

"It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, Oft-Forgiving." (35: 28)

2. Allah Guides whomever He Wills

"He whom Allah guides, is rightly guided; but he whom He sends astray, for him you will find no Wali (guiding friend) to lead him (to the right Path)." (18:17)

3. Our Nafs

- always prone to evil
- we are created as forgetful
- we are created weak

"...Verily, the (human) self is inclined to evil, except when my Lord bestows His Mercy (upon whom He wills). Verily, my Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (12:53)

"And indeed We made a covenant with Adam before, but he forgot, and We found on his part no firm will-power." (20: 115)

"Allah wishes to make clear (what is lawful and what is unlawful) to you, and to show you the ways of those before you, and accept your repentance, and Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise..

Allah wishes to accept your repentance, but those who follow their lusts, wish that you (believers) should deviate tremendously away from the Right Path.

Allah wishes to lighten (the burden) for you; and man was created weak (cannot be patient to leave sexual intercourse with woman)"

[an-Nisa' 4:26-28].

With regard to what is meant by human weakness, there are three views:

1. That it refers (in general terms) to man's inherent weakness. Al-Hasan said: It (refers to the fact that) he was created from semen of worthless water (32:8).
2. That he is weak and lacks patience in the face of the temptation of women. This was the view of Tawoos and Muqaatil.
3. That he is weak in resolve when overwhelmed by emotions and desires. This is the view of az-Zajjaaj and Ibn Keesaan.

End quote from *Zaad al-Maseer* (1/395)

4. Shaytan

"O Children of Adam! Let not Shaitan (Satan) deceive you, as he got your parents [Adam and Hawwa (Eve)] out of Paradise, stripping them of their raiments, to show them their private parts. Verily, he and Qabiluhu (his soldiers from the jinns or his tribe) see you from where you cannot see them. Verily, We made the Shayatin (devils) Auliya' (protectors and helpers) for those who believe not." 7: 27

5. Lack of Taqwa

"...Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqwa..." (49: 13)

"O you who believe! If you obey and fear Allah, He will grant you Furqan a criterion [(to judge between right and wrong)...]" (8: 29)

6. Abandon or heedless of the salat

"...and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat). Verily, As-Salat (the prayer) prevents from Al-Fahsha' (i.e. great sins of every kind, unlawful sexual intercourse, etc.) and Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil wicked deed, etc.) ..." (29: 45)

7. Our culture/tradition

"And when they commit a Fahisha (evil deed, going round the Ka'bah in naked state, every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse, etc.), they say: "We found our fathers doing it, and Allah has commanded us of it." Say: "Nay, Allah never commands of Fahisha. Do you say of Allah what you know not?" (7: 28)

8. We like to follow the majority

When Umar bin al-Khattab radi allahu `anhu (may God be pleased with him) was walking in the market, he passed by a man who was supplicating, "O Allah, make us of Your 'few' servants! O Allah make us of Your 'few' servants!"

اجعل لاني ال لهم نم كداب ع ليلقلا مهللا ينلعجا نم كداب ع ليلقلا
..)

So 'Umar said to him, "Where did you get this du`a' (supplication) from?" And the man said, "Allah in His Book says 'And few of My servants are grateful.' (Qur'an 34:13)" So 'Umar wept and admonished himself, "The people are more knowledgeable than you, O Umar! O Allah make us of Your 'few' servants."

Sometimes when you advise someone to leave a sin, they respond with "But most people do it, it's not just me!" But if you look for the words "most people" in the Qur'an, you will find that most people "do not know" (7:187), "do not give thanks" (2:243) and "do not believe" (11:17). And if you look for "most of them", you will find that most of them are "defiantly disobedient" (5:59), "ignorant" (6:111), "turning away" (21:24), "do not reason" (29:23), and "do not listen" (8:21).

So be of the "few", whom Allah says about them:

"And few of My servants are grateful." (34:13)

"But none had believed with him, except a few." (11:40)

"In the Gardens of Pleasure, A [large] company of the former peoples, And a few of the later peoples." (56:12-14)

Ibn al-Qayyim (ra) said, "Go on the path of truth and do not feel lonely because there are few who take that path, and beware of the path of falsehood and do not be deceived by the greatness of the perishers."

9. Wrong companions / awliya

It is reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:"A person acquires the same religion of his beloved ones, so let everyone observe whom they befriend." Reported by Ahmad, Al-Tirmidhy and others.

Nothing more defining for a person than his friend. Old saying goes:

*Do not ask about a person and ask about his friend *** for each person imitates his friend*

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) gave two examples; one for the good companion and one for the bad:

Abu Musa Al-Ash`ary (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:The example of a good companion (who sits with you)

in comparison with a bad one, is I like that of the musk seller and the blacksmith's bellows (or furnace); from the first you would either buy musk or enjoy its good smell while the bellows would either burn your clothes or your house, or you get a bad nasty smell thereof." [Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

10. Attractions of the dunya

"And the life of this world is nothing but play and amusement. But far better is the house in the hereafter for those who are Al-Muttaqun (the pious). Will you not then understand?" (6:32)

"Verily! We have made that which is on earth as an adornment for it, in order that We may test them (mankind) as to which of them are best in deeds." (18:7)

Many people compromised Islam and are therefore sinning in order to enjoy the comforts of this world. For eg - Working in an environment which does not allow one to pray, or involving riba, alcohol, etc.

11. We think we are still young - death is far away

"Verily, Allah! With Him (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour, He sends down the rain, and knows that which is in the wombs. No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die. Verily, Allah is All-Knower, All-Aware (of things)" [31:34].

On the authority of Abdullah ibn Umar (RadhiyAllahu 'anhuma), who said: The Messenger of Allah (SallaAllahu 'alayhi wasallam) took me by the shoulder and said,

"Be in this world as though you were a stranger or a wayfarer."

And Ibn Umar (RahiyAllahu 'anhuma) used to say, "In the evening do not expect [to live until] the morning, and in the morning do not expect [to live until] the evening. Take [advantage of] your health before times of sickness, and [take advantage of] your life before your death."

[Reported by Bukhari]

Brief Commentary

- This is a very important hadith as it governs how we should be in this life and how we should look at it. This life is a trial, and this hadith reinforces and guides a person in how to deal with the trials of this life
- Ibn Rajab said, “And this hadith is a foundation in having short hopes of this life, for the believer should not take this life as a home for him that he feels tranquil in. Rather, he should be in it like he is about to leave, preparing himself for his departure, and the advice of the Messengers (‘alayhim assalam) and their followers are all in unison with this idea”
- We see in this hadith how the prophet (SallaAllahu ‘alayhi wasallam) used to nurture his followers and not just teach them academically
- Ibn Umar (RadhiyAllahu ‘anhuma) was young, yet he remembered exactly how the prophet (SallaAllahu ‘alayhi wasallam) relayed the hadith to him, and this is a testament to the teaching style of the prophet (SallaAllahu ‘alayhi wasallam)
- Dunya (life) is derived from the word *دنيا*, which is to be close/very lowly
- This is something that the prophets (‘alayhim assalam) used to teach their people. The prophet (SallaAllahu ‘alayhi wasallam) said, “What is the dunya for me. An example of me and the dunya is that of a traveller who naps under the shade of a tree, then departs and leaves it” [Reported by Ahmad and Al-Tirmidhi]
- Ibn Rajab said, “And if the dunya to a believer is not a place of abode, nor a home, then a believer should be with regards to the dunya, in one of two states. Either he is like a stranger living in a land strange to him, and his main aim is to gather what he requires to return to his home, or like that of a traveller who does not stay in one place; his night and day is spent in travelling towards his homeland”
- Qualities of a stranger
 - His main concern will be on focusing his efforts in getting to his homeland, Jannah
 - Is not content with residency in this life because it is not his home. This doesn’t mean he should be sad, but a believer’s apparent sadness (due to hereafter matters) is in fact his happiness. We are content with the decree of Allah, but are not content with staying in this dunya
 - Does not compete with others in worldly matters
 - Is not grieved over worldly matters, even loss of loved ones. Being sad due to losing someone you love is fine, but it shouldn’t affect our worship
 - Nurtures strong love and yearning for the hereafter, which is done by learning about it. This also decreases love for the dunya, so we should use this remedy when we feel attached to the dunya
- Ibn Rajab said, “When Allah created Adam (‘alayhi assalam), he placed him and his wife in Jannah. Then, they were taken down from Jannah, and promised to return to it along with the righteous from their offspring. Hence a

believer is always longing and yearning to return to his first (and original) home”

- A wayfarer is more not at home than a stranger
- Scholars say the “or” here means but i.e. a wayfarer is a higher position than a stranger
- A stranger is a settler, so may buy things to settle, but a wayfarer only buys what is necessary to maintain himself
- A wayfarer is more concerned with taking the wrong path or getting lost, even if they were on the right path, so is more alert
- The statement of Ibn Umar (RadhiyAllahu ‘anhuma) is his explanation and understanding of the hadith
- The statement does not contradict high aspirations. It is saying we should not expect to live long, but we should plan for it, just in case we do live longer. Scholars say this is an example/ definition of asceticism
- Being ill acts as a barrier between us and doing good deeds so we need to take advantage of our health
- The prophet (SallaAllahu ‘alayhi wasallam) said, “Two blessings people are aggrieved by them, Health and free time” [Reported by Bukhari]
- The thing that deceives people is free time. Productive people usually don’t have a lot of free time, whilst unproductive people have a lot of free time which then causes them to procrastinate. Hence a believer should always try and keep himself busy so that he can also be productive
- The best way to deal with the trials of the dunya is with knowledge and righteous deeds

Benefits and Action points:

- Understand the reality of this life and that it is very lowly
- Do not seek to be a stranger, but it comes naturally to whoever is following teachings of the Quran and Sunnah correctly
- Living as if you will die tomorrow and having high aspirations are not contradictory, but are two different things. A believer should live as if he will die tomorrow but plan as if he will live for long
- Look at the ill people around you and take heed from their illness and focus on doing more good while you are still healthy
- Understand that your true home is Jannah and you are now here on a trip towards Jannah so ensure you follow the right path so you can reach your goal, and do not waste your time taking with you unnecessary items that will only slow you down and push you further away from home

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE SIN?

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Verily, when the servant commits a sin a black spot appears upon his heart. If he abandons the sin, seeks forgiveness, and repents, then his heart will be polished. If he returns to the sin, the blackness will be increased until it overcomes his heart. It is the covering that Allah has mentioned: No, but on their hearts is a covering because of what they have earned." (83:14)

Source: Sunan al-Tirmidhī 3334

Grade: *Sahih* (authentic) according to At-Tirmidhi

This hadith reveals that when a faithful believer commits a sin it leaves a black spot on his heart. If he repents and be ashamed of that sin, then this spot is removed, and if he does not, then this spot increases and covers his heart as a whole. This does not mean that the heart turns black in real, but it means that the evil of the sins covers the heart and put the believer away from the mercy of Allah.

As it is said 'To err is human and to forgive is Divine, so the believer should stop himself from committing sins as it is possible, but if committed, then he should repent and intend not to do again. So that his heart may be clear and blessing of Allah be over him.

ALLAH INFORMED US OF HIS FORGIVENESS:

Firstly, we know of His Names:

i. **Al-Ghafoor: The Most Forgiving.** This name occurs in the Quran more than seventy times. There are other names from the same root, such as *Ghafir* and *Ghaffar*. The meaning of the Arabic word "*ghafara*" is to cover, to hide and from it comes the meaning "to excuse," "to pardon," "to remit" and "to forgive." God does all these things. In the Quran, it is mentioned that God does not forgive the *Shirk* (without repentance) but He may forgive every other sin for whomsoever He wills. (Al-Nisa' 4:116) We must turn to God to seek His forgiveness.

ii. **Al-'Afuw:** This has another part of forgiveness. This name occurs in the Quran five times. Literally the word '*Afw*' means "to release," "to heal," "to restore, to remit." Thus in relation to God it means "to release us from the burden of punishment due to our sins and mistakes," "to restore our honor after we have dishonored ourselves by committing sins and making mistakes." Sometimes in the Quran both names: '*Afuw*' and *Ghafoor* come together.

i. **Al-Tawwab: The Acceptor of Repentance.** This name of God is mentioned in the Quran about 11 times. God accepts the repentance of those who sincerely repent and turn to him. The word "*tawwab*" gives the

sense of “oft-returning” which means that God again and again accepts the repentance. We make sins and mistakes then we repent, He accepts our repentance. Then again we commit sins and make mistakes and when we repent, He again very kindly accepts us and gives us another chance

- ii. **Al-Haleem: The Clement.** This name is mentioned fifteen times in the Quran. This means that God is not quick to judgment. He gives time. He forebears and is patient to see His servant return to Him.
- iii. **Al-Rahman and Al-Rahim: The Most Merciful and Compassionate.** These names are the most frequent in the Quran. Al-Rahman is mentioned 57 times and al-Raheem is mentioned 115 times. Al-Rahman indicates that God's mercy is abundant and plenty and Al-Raheem indicates that this is always the case with God. God is full of love and mercy and is ever Merciful.

Say: "O *'Ibadi* (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, verily Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (39: 53)

O you who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance! It may be that your Lord will remit from you your sins, and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise) the Day that Allah will not disgrace the Prophet (Muhammad) and those who believe with him, their Light will run forward before them and with (their Records Books of deeds) in their right hands they will say: "Our Lord! Keep perfect our Light for us [and do not put it off till we cross over the *Sirat* (a slippery bridge over the Hell) safely] and grant us forgiveness. Verily, You are Able to do all things (66: 8)

Repentance from all sins is obligatory on every adult Muslim. This is emphasized by Allaah is His saying: “And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful.” (An-Noor 24:31)

The meaning of ‘Tawbah’ is to turn back to Allaah by abandoning all major and minor sins and to repent to Allaah from all known and unknown sins. Al-Agharr Al-Muzanee narrated that the Messenger of Allaah saws said:

“O people! Repent to Allaah and seek for His forgiveness. I repent to Him in a day 100 times.” (Reported by Muslim)

CONDITIONS OF REPENTANCE

A sincere repentance according to the scholars has conditions:

1. To discontinue the sin.
2. To regret over its occurrence.

3. To determine never to go back to that sin again.
4. To give back the right to whom it is due if the sin involves a man.

Allaah has also promised the best reward and good abode for the repentant when He says

: “(The believers whose Allaah has purchased are) those who repent to Allaah (from polytheism and hypocrisy, etc.), who worship Him, who praise Him, who fast (or go out in Allaah’s cause), who prostrate themselves (in prayer), who enjoin (people) for Al-Ma’ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all what Islam has ordained) and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism of all kinds and all that Islam has forbidden), and who observe the limits set by Allah (do all that Allah has ordained and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which Allah has forbidden). and give glad tidings to the believers.” (At-Tawbah 9:112)

To emphasize Allaah’s love for the repentance of His servant, the Prophet saws said: “Allaah is happier when a servant of His repents to Him than a man who was on his camel in a waterless desert and the camel escaped from him with his food and water. When he has lost hope of finding it, he retired to a tree and lied down under its shade. As he was there, the camel suddenly appeared in front of him. He took hold of its halter and said in his state of excessive joy: ‘O my Lord You are my servant and I am Your Lord’. He uttered this erroneous statement as a result of his being over-joyed.”(Muslim)

Repentance is an act of worship done by the Prophets, Messengers and pious people. Allaah says:

“Allah has forgiven the Prophet, the Muhajirun (Muslim emigrants who left their homes and came to A-Madinah) who followed him (Muhammad) in the time of distress (Tabuk expedition, etc.), after the hearts of a party or them had nearly deviated (from the Right Path), but He accepted their repentance. Certainly, He is unto them full of Kindness, Most Merciful.” (At-Tawbah 9:117)

Muslim as a matter of necessity needs repentance every second of his life; he needs it after performing righteous deeds or after perpetrating forbidden acts. The Almighty says:

“Seek the forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him in repentance, tahat He may grant you good enjoyment, for a term appointed, and bestow His abounding Grace to every owner of grace (i.e. the one who helps and serves needy and deserving, physically and with good words). But if you turn away, then I fear for you the torment of a Great Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection).” (Hood 11:3)

Brothers in faith! Fear Allaah that you may attain His Pleasure and Paradise and be saved from His wrath and punishment. Allaah says:

“ But as for him who repented (from polytheism and sins, etc.), believed (in the Oneness of Allah and His Messenger Muhammad), and did righteous deeds (in the life or this world), then he will be among those who are successful.” (Qasas 28:67)

The Prophet saws also said:

“Indeed, Allaah accepts the repentance of man as long as he hasnt started gargling (i.e. dying).”

Hasten to repentance and be consistent on that after every good deeds and bad ones. Allaah says:

“And turn in repentance and in obedience with true Faith (Islamic Monotheism) to your Lord and submit to Him (in Islam), before the torment comes upon you, then you will not be helped. And follow the best of that which is sent downto you from your Lord (i.e. this Qur’an, do what it orders you to do and keep away from what it forbids), before the torment comes on you suddenly while you perceive not.” (Az-Zumar 39:54-55).

BEAUTIFUL HADITH QUDSI

On the authority of Anas, who said: I heard the messenger of Allah say:

Allah the Almighty has said: “O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as its.”

BEST TIMES OF SEEKING FORGIVENESS

Immediately – don’t delay