



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

THE SKELETON IN OUR CLOSET - HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH THEM?

INTRODUCTION

All of us are created imperfect and forgetful. We continuously disobey Allah on many levels. In fact prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) informed us in this interesting hadith:

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "By Him in whose hand is my soul, if you did not sin, Allah would replace you with people who would sin and they would seek forgiveness from Allah and he would forgive them."

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2749

Al-Tibi said, "It is a declaration of the forgiveness of Allah and his overlooking of those who sin, that they might find hope in repentance."

Source: Mirqat al-Mafatih 2328

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ
وَالَّذِي اللَّهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
تُذْنِبُوا لَمْ لَوْ بِيَدِهِ نَفْسِي
بِقَوْمٍ وَلَجَاءَ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ
فَيَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ فَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ يُذْنِبُونَ
لَهُمْ

ةبوتل ا باتك ملسم حي حص 2749 باب سقوط الذنوب بالا ستغفار توبة

HOW DID IT ALL BEGIN - OUR SINS AND DISOBEDIENCE

It all started from our forefather Adam (AS) whom Allah has even honoured him by asking the angels to prostrate to him. All the angels prostrated, according to Allah's Command, but Iblis refused to obey Allah. Iblis was then Cursed by Allah and Adam (AS) was Warned by Allah to treat Iblis as an enemy. Adam (AS) was given many Blessings by Allah, but Allah Forbid him to come near the tree. But alas, Adam (AS) and his wife succumbed to temptation, disobeyed Allah and Allah's Blessings were taken away

"And (remember) when We said to the angels: "Prostrate yourselves to Adam." They prostrated (all) except Iblis (Satan), who refused.

Then We said: "O Adam! Verily, this is an enemy to you and to your wife. So let him not get you both out of Paradise, so that you be distressed in misery.

Verily, you have (a promise from Us) that you will never be hungry therein nor naked.

And you (will) suffer not from thirst therein nor from the sun's heat.

Then Shaitan (Satan) whispered to him, saying : "O Adam! Shall I lead you to the Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that will never waste away?"

Then they both ate of the tree, and so their private parts appeared to them, and they began to stick on themselves the leaves from Paradise for their covering. Thus did Adam disobey his Lord, so he went astray.

Then his Lord chose him, and turned to him with forgiveness, and gave him guidance.

20: 116-122

"And O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in Paradise, and eat thereof as you both wish, but approach not this tree otherwise you both will be of the Zalimun (unjust and wrong-doers)."

Then Shaitan (Satan) whispered suggestions to them both in order to uncover that which was hidden from them of their private parts (before); he said: "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree save you should become angels or become of the immortals."

And he [Shaitan (Satan)] swore by Allah to them both (saying): "Verily, I am one of the sincere well-wishers for you both."

So he misled them with deception. Then when they tasted of the tree, that which was hidden from them of their shame (private parts) became manifest to them and they began to stick together the leaves of Paradise over themselves (in order to cover their shame). And their Lord called out to them (saying): "Did I not forbid you that tree and tell you: Verily, Shaitan (Satan) is an open enemy unto you?"

7: 19-22

So we can see that both Iblis and Adam (AS) disobeyed Allah, BUT the very big difference is how Adam (AS) reacted after he disobeyed:

With Iblis, he was very defiant and arrogant, and did not seek Forgiveness. Therefore, Iblis was Cursed by Allah until the Day of Judgment:

"(Allah) said: "What prevented you (O Iblis) that you did not prostrate, when I commanded you?" Iblis said: "I am better than him (Adam), You created me from fire, and him You created from clay."

(Allah) said: "(O Iblis) get down from this (Paradise), it is not for you to be arrogant here. Get out, for you are of those humiliated and disgraced."

7: 12-13

Adam (AS) immediately repented to Allah without offering any excuses:

"They said: "Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers." 7: 23

Iblis also threatened to mislead all of us:

"(Iblis) said: "Allow me respite till the Day they are raised up (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)."

(Allah) said: "You are of those allowed respite."

(Iblis) said: "Because You have sent me astray, surely I will sit in wait against them (human beings) on Your Straight Path.

Then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them as thankful ones (i.e. they will not be dutiful to You)."

(Allah) said (to Iblis) "Get out from this (Paradise) disgraced and expelled. Whoever of them (mankind) will follow you, then surely I will fill Hell with you all."

7: 14-18

All the above verses from the Qur'an set a platform of our present day situation:

1. We, sons of Adam, being forgetful and heedless

"And when harm touches man, he invokes Us, lying down on his side, or sitting or standing. But when We have removed his harm from him, he passes on his way as if he had never invoked Us for a harm that touched him! Thus it seems fair to the Musrifun that which they used to do." 10: 12

"He it is Who enables you to travel through land and sea, till when you are in the ships and they sail with them with a favourable wind, and they are glad therein, then comes a stormy wind and the waves come to them from all sides, and they think that they are encircled therein, they invoke Allah, making their Faith pure for Him Alone, saying: "If You (Allah) deliver us from this, we shall truly be of the grateful."

But when He delivered them, behold! They rebel (disobey Allah) in the earth wrongfully. O mankind! Your rebellion (disobedience to Allah) is only against your ownelves, - a brief enjoyment of this worldly life, then (in the end) unto Us is your return, and We shall inform you that which you used to do."

10: 22-23

Ibn Abbas reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "There is no believing servant but that he has a sin he habitually commits from time to time, or a sin abiding over him that he does not abandon until he departs the world. Verily, the believer was created to be tested, repenting and forgetful. If he is reminded, he will remember."

Source: al-Mu'jam al-Kabir 11810

Grade: *Sahih* (authentic) according to Al-Albani

2. Shaytan constantly watching and misleading us, catching us unaware

Allah Warned us many times in the Qur'an:

"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

Therefore, on the basis of these 2 factors – we end up with many sins, and therefore the skeleton in the closet!

However, we must not despair and there are things which we must remember:

1. Allah's Mercy
2. Allah Promises us Guidance
3. Allah Hides our sins

1. Allah's Mercy

Even when we recite the Al Fatihah at least 17 times a day, we always recite Allah's Beautiful Names - Ar Rahman, Ar Rahim.

"... and My Mercy embraces all things." [7:156]

It was reported from Abu Moosa that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Allaah spreads out His hand at night to accept the repentance of those who committed sins during the day, and He spreads out His hand during the day to accept the repentance of those who committed sins during the night. (He will continue to do this) until the sun rises from the West."

(Narrated by Muslim, 2759).

In Saheeh Muslim it is narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Allah has one hundred parts of mercy, of which He sent down one between the jinn, mankind, the animals and the insects, by means of which they are compassionate and merciful to one another, and by means of which wild animals are kind to their offspring. And Allah has kept back ninety-nine parts of mercy with which to be merciful to His slaves of the Day of Resurrection." (Muslim, al-Tawbah, 6908)

It was narrated that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "Some prisoners were brought to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and there was a woman among the prisoners who was searching (for her child). When she found her child she embraced him and put him to her breast. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to us, 'Do you think that this woman would throw her child in the fire?' We said, 'No, by Allah, not if she is able not to.' The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'Allah is more merciful to His slaves than this woman is to her child.'" (Agreed upon)

2. Allah Promises us Guidance

When Adam (AS) and his wife were commanded to leave Paradise, Allah Made a Promise:

"We said: "Get down all of you from this place (the Paradise), then whenever there comes to you Guidance from Me, and whoever follows My Guidance, there shall be no fear on them, nor shall they grieve.

But those who disbelieve and belie Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) such are the dwellers of the Fire, they shall abide therein forever." 2: 38-39

But we need to actively seek His Guidance through prayers, seeking knowledge, reciting the Qur'an. It all boils down to the sincerity of an individual. BUT Allah

Guides whomever He Wills, and we cannot question whom His Guidance and whom He Led astray.

"Verily! You (O Muhammad [Peace and Blessings be upon him] guide not whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He knows best those who are the guided." 28: 56

3. Allah Hides our sins

A man asked Ibn 'Umar [RadhiAllahu 'Anhu], "What did you hear Allah's Apostle [Peace Be Upon Him] saying regarding An-Najwa (secret talk between Allah and His believing worshipper on the Day of Judgment)?" He said, "(The Prophet [Peace Be Upon Him] said), "One of you will come close to his Lord till He will shelter him in His screen and say: Did you commit such-and-such sin? He will say, 'Yes.' Then Allah will say: Did you commit such and such sin? He will say, 'Yes.' So Allah will make him confess (all his sins) and He will say, 'I screened them (your sins) for you in the world, and today I forgive them for you.'" (*Sahih Bukhari Volume 8 Book 73# 96*)

Imaam al-Bukhaaree stated in his *Saheeh* (#6069), Book of Manners, Chapter: The Muslim's Screening of Himself, with his chain to Aboo Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him), who said: I heard the Messenger of Allaah (*sallallaahu 'alayhe wa sallam*) saying:

"All of my ummah (nation of followers) will be excused, except for the *mujaahireen* (those who make their sins known). And verily it is a kind of *mujaaharah* (exposing one's sins) that a man does something (sinful) at night, and then in the morning, when Allaah has screened his sin for him, he says, 'Hey So-and-So! I did such-and-such last night...' And the night passed with His Lord screening him, and he wakes up casting aside the screen of Allaah from himself." Imaam Muslim also reported it with a similar wording in his Book of *az-Zuhd war-Raqaa'iq*.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THE SKELETON IN OUR CLOSET?

1. Repent immediately and constantly repent – Allah Forgives all sins (39: 53)

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.

Make sure we fulfil all the conditions of a sincere repentance:

- Seeking forgiveness only for the sake of Allah
- Feeling regretful
- Attempt not to do it again.

2. Have haya' and don't expose it

Sahih Bukhari Chapter 2 Hadith No.9

Narrated Abu Huraira : The Prophet SAW said, "Faith (Belief) consists of more than sixty branches (i.e. parts). And Haya (This term "Haya" covers a large number of concepts which are to be taken together; amongst them are self respect, modesty, bashfulness, and scruple, etc.) is a part of faith."

This hadith teaches us that Haya is a part of Iman. Haya covers wide angle in our daily lives and we need to imply this aspect of Iman so that our Iman complete. On literally side, Haya means shy and the concept of Haya is modesty and always feel shy in every actions we done as Allah watches us every single moment of our lives.

We must always keep our sins secret, as Allah has Screened it from others.

From among the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is to keep sins a secret matter. If someone commits a sinful act, which is against the Commandments of Allah, or is against the moral character, or is such an act that may cause harm to one's honor, then he should keep it a secret and seek forgiveness from Allah in the darkness of night.

The Messenger of Allah said: "My entire nation is safe, except Al-Mujahirin (those who boast of their sins). Among the Mujaharah is that, a man commits an evil act, and wakes up in the morning while Allah has kept his sin a secret, he says: "O Fulan! Last night I did this and that." He goes to sleep while Allah has kept his sin a secret, but he wakes up in the morning and uncovers what Allah has kept a secret!" [Sahih Al-Bukhari].

Zayd ibn Aslam narrated, 'At the time of the Messenger of Allah, a man admitted that he had committed fornication, so the Messenger of Allah asked for a whip. He was brought a broken whip, so he said: "Better than this." Then he was brought a new whip, he then said: "Lesser than this.' So, he was brought a whip that was used and had thus become soft, and the Messenger ordered that he be whipped with it (a hundred times). He then said: "O People! It is time for you to refrain from transgressing Allah's limits. He who commits some of these filthy acts (such as fornication), let him hide under Allah's cover, for whoever admits what he has committed, we will establish Allah's Book as regards him (by applying the warranted punishment for this sin)." [Musnad Ahmad]

Abdullah Ibn Masoud related, "A man came to the Prophet and said: 'O Messenger of Allah! I have mingled with a woman in the far side of Al-Madinah, and I fulfilled my desire, short of actually having sexual intercourse with her. So, here am I, judge me according to what you decide.' Umar Ibn Al-

Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) then said: 'Allah had kept your secret, why did not you keep your secret'?' [Muslim].

3. Others who know about the sins must not expose your brothers' sins

If one becomes aware of somebody else's sin, he should keep it a secret. Allah's Messenger said: "He, who relieves a hardship of this world for a believer, Allah will relieve (from him) a hardship of the Day of Resurrection; he who makes easy an indebted person, Allah will make it easy for him in the world and the Hereafter; he who covers a Muslim (meaning his mistakes and shortcomings), Allah will cover him in the world and the Hereafter." [Muslim]

Abdullah Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) related, "The Messenger of Allah once rose above the podium and then said with a loud voice, "O those who have embraced Islam only with their tongue, while Iman has not yet entered their hearts, neither harm Muslims, nor mock them, nor try to expose their mistakes, for he who follows (searches for) the errors of his brother, Allah will follow his errors, and he whom Allah follows his errors, He will expose him even if he was in the middle of his home." [Saheeh Al-Jamee]

Imam An-Nawawi writes, "This Hadith indicates that, following and then exposing people's mistakes only occurs by the hypocrites and those whose Iman is so weak, that it did not yet fill their hearts."

Exposing sins lead to humiliation and embarrassment, which ceases the possibility that the sinner might someday regret his mistake, seek forgiveness from Allah and purify his soul from sins because one of the things that prevent one from committing sins is the fear of humiliation. However, if the sinner knows that the people are already aware of his sins, then he does not experience the shame and distraction which he used to feel before, and this might encourage him to commit sins openly!

Secondly, when sins are repeatedly mentioned in gatherings, etc., the fear of committing sins vanishes from the people's hearts. First the sin will become easy on people's tongue and gradually he, who does not feel any shame in mentioning the sin, will not find it difficult to even commit the sin. This is how, sins spread in the society!

So, if someone becomes aware of his brother's sins and realizes that nobody except him has seen him committing the sin, then he should keep the sin a secret. He should not encourage people towards sins by exposing his faults. Allah, the Exalted, has not only condemned committing sins, in the Qur'an, but He has also condemned those people who mention sins in public. Allah says in Surah An-Nisa (4): 148, "Allah does not like that evil should be uttered

in public except by him who has been wronged.”

Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) commented on this verse, “Allah does not like that anyone should invoke Him against anyone else, unless one was wronged. In this case, Allah allows one to invoke Him against whoever wronged him...Yet, it is better for one if he observes patience.” [Tafseer Ibn Katheer]

Today, sins have become widespread in the society because we have forgotten the teachings of Allah’s Messenger, who discouraged people from revealing one’s mistakes and sins as well as others. As a result, people have lost the fear of committing not only minor sins, but even major sins. Moreover, we find people proudly attributing sins to themselves!!

4. When others expose your sins, ignore them, as the sins are between you and Allah.

With the widespread use of social media – people may find out about your past and may spread things about you. Just ignore them. News will go away inshaAllah, especially when everyone knows that you are a better person today. What happens in the past is between you and Allah.

5. If sins are against others – you need to seek forgiveness from those whom you have wronged, and even compensate for any loss

6. Do more good deeds

Al-Bukhaari (6502) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Allah says: ‘Whoever takes a close friend of Mine as an enemy, I declare war on him. My slave does not draw closer to Me by anything more beloved to Me than that which I have made obligatory upon him, and My slave continues to draw closer to Me by doing naafil (supererogatory) deeds until I love him, and if I love him I will be his hearing with which he hears, his vision with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. If he were to ask of Me, I would surely give to him; if he were to seek refuge with Me, I would surely grant him refuge. I do not hesitate about anything that I want to do as I hesitate to take the soul of a believer, for he hates death and I hate to hurt him.” This hadith clearly and concisely highlights the way to become a close friend of Allah, may He be exalted, for the one who wants to be one of His close friends.

7. Have taqwa to Allah (remember surah 3 verse 135)

“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.”