

TAWBAH & ISTIGHFĀR

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It is from amongst the beliefs of Muslims that the Prophets of Allāh ﷺ are immune from committing sins. It was practically impossible for them to carry out the disobedience of Allāh Ta'ālā. This was one of their outstanding and distinguishing qualities which separated them from us regular people.

However, the Sahābah ؓ, as per their nature of observation, narrate a very regular practise of Nabi ﷺ. 'Abdullāh Bin 'Umar ؓ narrates, "We used to count the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ in a single gathering saying 100 times, "O My Lord, forgive me and accept my repentance, for you are the acceptor of repentance, the most merciful." (Abu Dāwud, Tirmidhi)

Not only this, Abu Hurayrah ؓ narrates, "I never saw anyone say Astagfirullāh Wa Atoobu Ilayhi (I ask Allāh for forgiveness and I repent to him) more than the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ." (Nasa'i)

A Lesson for the Entire Ummah

A practise so regularly implemented by a being who was in no need to carry it out in the first place only deduces one thing; Nabi ﷺ was very particular with repentance to set a practical example for his beloved Ummah. He wished to leave a prescription for the patients of his Ummah who had become spiritually ill by falling into the disobedience of Allāh. This prescription of repenting to Allāh would help them recover from this spiritual illness and bring themselves back on track to acquire the pleasure of Allāh.

Allāh Ta'ālā has also explicitly commanded in the Qur'ān, "O you who believe, turn to Allāh with sincere repentance..." (At-Tahreem: 8)

What is Repentance?

Repentance is more commonly known as Tawbah or Istighfār in our Shar'i terminology. Istighfār means to ask for forgiveness. And Tawbah means to turn. However, both are used interchangeably and now combine to create the perfect process in which a believer can end his series of sins and rectify himself by coming on to the right path.

How to Repent to Allāh Ta'ālā

'Allāmah Nawawi ؒ - in his famous compilation titled

'Riyādhūs Sāliheen' - has quoted some conditions which are necessary when carrying out Tawbah from any sin;

- 1) A person should immediately stop committing that sin.
- 2) A person should regret having committed that sin.
- 3) A person should make a firm intention not to ever commit that sin again.
- 4) Where applicable, a person must also redeem the effects of his sin. For example, perform Qadhā of his missed Salāh, return any wealth or property to its rightful owner when taken unlawfully etc.

Benefits of Tawbah

It is from the beauty of our Deen that the commands of Allāh Ta'ālā do not only bring reward and success in the Hereafter, but they also bring benefits and virtues in this worldly life.

Likewise is the case with Tawbah and Istighfār. Nabi ﷺ has mentioned, "He who holds fast to Istighfār, Allāh will create for him an exit from every form of distress, a relief from every worry and will provide for him from avenues that he did not even expect." (Abu Dāwud)

'The Golden Moment'

Therefore, through the commands of the Qur'ān & Hadith, we learn how important it is for every believer to hold fast to Tawbah and Istighfār. Not only this, but the regular practical example of Nabi ﷺ teaches us that a believer is not in need of any special place, time or occasion to make Tawbah & Istighfār. Many who stay in search of 'the golden moment' to mend their ways and turn to Allāh are actually in misconception. A believer is not in need of a new year, or to be in the Masjid, or to be on the journey of Hajj or 'Umrah. The reality is that Allāh has granted us the power to create this moment for ourselves, as whenever and wherever a believer repents to Allāh, that is in fact 'the golden moment' for him. For him, this marks the end of an era of disobedience and the beginning of an obedient one.

May Allāh Ta'ālā grant us the ability to utilise and benefit from Tawbah & Istighfār. And may he forgive all our sins and shortcomings. Āmeen.