

The Method and Conditions of Repentance

All praises be to Allaah, Lord and Sustainer of the worlds, and may the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and upon his family and companions.

One of the signs of an everlasting kindness, blessing and mercy of Allaah Subhanahu-wa-Ta'alaah is that He forgives the sins of His slaves, as Allaah says:

“And He it is Who accepts repentance from His slaves, and forgives sins, and He knows what you do.” [Ash-Shooraa: 25]

The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ***“Every son of Adam commits sin, and the best of those who commit sin are those who repent.”*** (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 2499; Ibn Maajah, 4251)

This of course does not mean that one should deliberately commit sins but when one does something out of ignorance or weakness then he should return to Allaah as soon he realise as Allaah says:

“Allaah accepts only the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and foolishness and repent soon afterwards; it is they to whom Allaah will forgive and Allaah is Ever All-Knower, All-Wise.” [An-Nisaa: 17]

“And those who, when they have committed Fahishah (shameful obscene acts) or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allaah and ask forgiveness for their sins; and none can forgive sins but Allaah And do not persist in what (wrong) they have done, while they know.” [Aal-‘Imraan:135]

Indeed, Allaah loves the repentance of His slave and He is the One Who enables us to realise our sins and gives us the ability and opportunity to repent while He is in no need of us as Allaah says:

“O mankind! it is you who stand in need of Allah. But Allaah is Rich (Free of all needs) , Worthy of all praises.” [Fatir: 15]

The door of repentance is open till the day of judgment. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ***“Repentance will not stop until sun would rise from west (day of Judgement).”*** (Narrated by Abu- Dawood)

There is no sin which is not forgivable. Allaah can forgive any sin one can commit as long as His slave turn to Him in repentance as He says:

“Say: O `My slaves who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allaah: verily Allaah forgives all sins. Truly He is OftForgiving, Most Merciful .” [Az-Zumar: 53]

It does not matter how great and grave the sin is. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ***“Allaah Tabaarak-wa-Ta'alaah say, O'son of Aadam even if your sins reach the clouds in the sky and you ask for forgiveness, I shall forgive you and shall no mind.”***(Narrated by At-Tirmidhi)

Conditions of repentance

The repentance is accepted as long as it is done with:

1. Sincerity,
2. Truthfulness,
3. Trusting in Allaah that He forgives sins,
4. Firm resolve never to go back,
5. Followed by persistence in righteous deeds.

As Allaah says: ***“And verily, I am indeed Forgiving to him who repents, believes (in My Oneness, and associates none in worship with Me) and does righteous good deeds, and then remains constant in doing them, (till his death).”*** [TaHa: 82]

And when a person repents Allaah replaces his evil deeds with good deeds, as Allaah says:

“Except those who repent and believe, and do righteous deeds; for these, Allâh will change their sins into good deeds, and Allâh is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [Al-Furqan: 70]

The best of prayers for forgiveness

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

“The best of prayers for forgiveness is: Allaahumma anta rabbiy laa ilaaha illa anta, khalaqtani wa ana ‘abduka wa ana ‘ala ‘ahdika wa wa’dika ma astata’tu. A’oodhu bika min sharri ma sana’tu, aboo’u laka bi ni’matika ‘alayya wa aboo’u laka bi dhanbi, faghfir li fa innahu laa yaghfir al-dhunooba illa anta (O Allaah, You are my Lord, there is no god but You. You have created me and I am Your slave and I am keeping my promise and covenant to You as much as I can. I seek refuge with You from the evil of what I do. I acknowledge Your blessing and I acknowledge my sin, so forgive me, for there is none who can forgive sin except You).” He said: ***“Whoever says this during the day, believing in it firmly, and dies on that day before evening comes, he will be one of the people of Paradise, and whoever says it at night, believing firmly in it, and dies before morning comes, he will be one of the people of Paradise .”*** (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5947)

The best times to pray for forgiveness

One should choose the best of times to pray for forgiveness, which is the last third of the night. Allaah says,

“...and those who pray and beg Allaah’s Pardon in the last hours of the night.” [Aal ‘Imraan 3:17]

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ***“Our Lord descends to the lowest heaven each night during the last third of the night, and He says: ‘Who will call upon Me, that I may answer him, who will ask of Me, that I may give him, who will ask My forgiveness, that I may forgive him?’”*** [Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1094; Muslim, 758]

And when one is in prostration, as the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: *“The slave is closest to his Lord when he is in prostration, so increase the supplication.”* (narrated by Muslim)

Repentance wipes all previous sins. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: *“the one who repents from sin is like the one who has never sinned.”* (narrated by Ibn-Majah)

And one should hide his sin and not tell others because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: *“cover your sins with the cover of Allaah”* (narrated by Malik)

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: *“Allaah does not cover a slave in this world except that he also covers him in the hereafter”* (narrated by Muslim)

Some practical points

- One should also cut off every connection and contact that leads him to sin.
- Get married if that is necessary, otherwise fast.
- Associate with people who are obedient to Allaah,
- Learn the religion because learning makes a person firm in obedience.

Conclusion

Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them both) said: *“There is no major sin if one asks for forgiveness, and there is no minor sin if one persists in repeating it.”*

Ibn Mas'ood (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: *“The believer sees his sin as a mountain beneath which he is sitting and which he fears may fall down upon him . The rebellious person sees his sin as a fly which passes in front of his nose and he swats it away ...”* (Reported by al-Bukhaari , 6308)

We pray that Allaah subhaanahu-wa-ta'ala forgives our sins and put our affairs right. May He guide us to do that which is pleasing to him and peace and blessings of Allaah be upon his last prophet.