

Catatan Ta'lim

UMMU AMIR

Forgiveness & Repentance

Returning to Allah The Door That Never Closes

Delivered by Ustadh Ismail Bullock hafizhahullahu ta'ala

Taklim Cipete × The Lightify Project



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المقدمة Introduction

All praise belongs to Allah. We praise Him, seek His help, and seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil of our own souls and the consequences of our deeds.

These notes summarise the lecture on Forgiveness and Repentance delivered by Ustadh Ismail Bullock hafizhahullahu ta'ala as part of the TLP Online Series by Taklim Cipete and The Lightify Project. The lecture carries an apt subtitle: Returning to Allah The Door That Never Closes. Every human being, regardless of their level of faith or knowledge, is in desperate need of one thing: forgiveness from Allah. These notes aim to preserve the key lessons and reflections from this session.

May this knowledge be a source of benefit, and may Allah accept it as a means of drawing us closer to Him.

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن
رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا

Say: O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.

QS Az-Zumar: 53

Chapter One

What Every Human Being Needs Most

Before exploring repentance, we must first ask a fundamental question: *what is the one thing that every single human being needs, regardless of their level of faith, knowledge, or practice?*

It is not wealth. It is not status. It is not even knowledge alone for a person may possess great knowledge yet fail to attain what they truly need if they do not act upon it. What every human being desperately needs is forgiveness from Allah.

Our Salvation Depends on Allah's Mercy

On the Day of Judgement, our success will not depend on how perfect we were for none of us are perfect. It will depend on whether Allah chose to forgive us. The Prophet ﷺ himself made this profoundly clear:

لَنْ يُدْخَلَ أَحَدًا مِنْكُمْ الْجَنَّةَ بِعَمَلِهِ
“None of you will enter Paradise by his deeds alone.”

The companions asked: “Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied: “Not even me, unless Allah covers me with His mercy.” Even the best of creation the Prophet ﷺ teaches us that our salvation is tied entirely to Allah's mercy and forgiveness.

Our aim in this life is not to be perfect it is to always be returning. The door of forgiveness is always open.

Chapter Two

Understanding the Nature of Sin

Before we can truly understand repentance, we must understand something important: *why do we sin in the first place?* If we misunderstand sin, we will misunderstand repentance.

Sin is Part of Human Nature

Allah created us with desires. The Prophet ﷺ said:

كُلُّ بَنِي آدَمَ خَطَّاءٌ وَخَيْرُ الْخَطَّائِينَ التَّوَّابُونَ
"Every son of Adam commits sin, and the best of those who
commit sin are those who repent." (Ibn Majah)

The Prophet ﷺ did not say "some people" he said every person commits sin in some way at some time. This is not a license to sin; rather, it is a reminder that sin is not the end. Persisting in sin without repenting is the problem.

The Believer is Defined by Returning, Not by Never Falling

A believer is not someone who never sins. A believer is someone who never persists in sin without turning back to Allah. Even if they fall again, what defines the believer is that they keep returning they do not continue without making tawbah.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said: The believer sees his sin as if he is sitting under a mountain, fearing that it will fall upon him. The persistent sinner sees his sins like a fly that lands on his nose he simply brushes it away.

It is not the number of sins that defines us it is how seriously we take them. When we sin, we must feel the weight of it, not brush it aside as if it means nothing.

Beware of Minor Sins

We often focus only on major sins, forgetting the danger of minor sins that accumulate. The Prophet ﷺ warned:

*Beware of minor sins, for they gather upon a person until they destroy him.
Just like drops of water, each one small and harmless, but if they keep
falling and falling, they eventually form a flood.*

The scholars mentioned that a connection of small sins, persisted in over time, can eventually become equivalent to a major sin. Do not make the mistake of saying “it’s just a small sin” and continuing for years.

*It is not about the size of the sin alone. It is about the attitude
towards it. Never trivialise a sin, no matter how small.*

Chapter Three

The Traps of Shaitan

If repentance is the path back to Allah, then Shaitan's entire mission is to block that path. He uses two primary tactics:

Tactic One: Making the Sin Look Small

Shaitan whispers to us: *"It's just one time. Everyone does it. It's not that serious."* He minimises the weight of sin in our eyes so we do not feel compelled to repent. He makes disobedience seem trivial, normalised, and harmless.

Tactic Two: Making Allah's Mercy Seem Far Away

Once we have sinned, Shaitan switches strategy. He now whispers: *"You've done too much. You're a hypocrite. You'll never change. You're not worthy."* He tries to make us despair of Allah's forgiveness because if we stop repenting, we lose.

Allah responds to this directly in the Quran:

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا

Indeed, Shaitan is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy.

QS Fatir: 6

Despair itself is a trick from Shaitan. He has two strategies: one, to get you to sin; and two, to convince you that you are beyond forgiveness so you stop turning back.

Chapter Four

The Vastness of Allah's Mercy

Against every lie of Shaitan, Allah answers with a truth far greater. The mercy of Allah is greater than all our sins combined. This is not wishful thinking it is what Allah Himself declares.

The Most Hopeful Verse in the Quran

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا

Say: O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.

QS Az-Zumar: 53

Ibn Kathir said this is the most hopeful verse in the entire Quran. Allah is not speaking to the righteous here. He is speaking to those who have transgressed, those who have sinned, those who have wronged themselves. No matter what you have done, no matter how many times you have done it Allah says: do not despair.

Hadith Qudsi: Sins Reaching the Clouds

O son of Adam, if your sins were to reach the clouds of the sky, then you sought My forgiveness, I would forgive you. (Tirmidhi)

Picture that. Sins reaching to the sky yet still forgiven. *Why?* Because you sought forgiveness and turned back to Allah.

The Parable of the Lost Camel

The Prophet ﷺ described how much Allah is pleased by our repentance with a powerful parable:

Allah is more pleased with the repentance of a servant than one of you who loses his camel in the desert and then finds it.

Imagine you are in the desert. No food. No water. No way out. Your camel your only means of survival is gone. Then suddenly it returns. What level of relief, of joy, of happiness would you feel? Allah is more pleased than that when we repent.

Allah does not merely tolerate our repentance. He is pleased by it. He loves those who repent. He is waiting for us to ask so He can forgive.

Chapter Five

The Beautiful Names of Allah Related to Forgiveness

To truly internalise the reality of forgiveness, we must know and reflect upon the Names of Allah that relate to it.

Al-Ghafoor The Ever-Forgiving

Al-Ghafoor means the One who constantly and continuously forgives again and again and again. This is not a one-time forgiveness. It is a Name that speaks of perpetual, ongoing forgiveness.

Ar-Raheem The Most Merciful

Ar-Raheem speaks of a mercy that is continuous, sustained, and active. Allah's mercy does not run out and does not diminish.

At-Tawwab The Acceptor of Repentance

At-Tawwab means not only that Allah accepts repentance He facilitates it, welcomes it, and invites it. Consider this Hadith Qudsi:

A servant committed a sin and said: O Allah, forgive me. Allah said: My servant knows he has a Lord who forgives sins. I have forgiven him. Then he sinned again, and Allah forgave him again. (Muslim)

You sin. He gives you time. He invites you back. He forgives you. You sin again. He opens the door again. This is At-Tawwab.

Think about that. You sin, He gives you time. He invites you back. Then He forgives you. And then you might sin again. And Allah still opens the door. The door is always open.

Chapter Six

The Many Doors of Forgiveness

Allah did not make forgiveness dependent on one action alone. He opened many doors, many avenues, many ways for us to return and be cleansed.

Door One: Seeking Forgiveness (Istighfar)

اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ

"I seek Allah's forgiveness."

The Prophet ﷺ said: Whoever says Astaghfirullah O Allah, I seek Your forgiveness Allah will make for him a way out of every distress. (Abu Dawud) The Prophet ﷺ himself, whose sins were already forgiven, used to say Astaghfirullah more than 100 times a day. *What then about us?*

Door Two: Good Deeds Erase Bad Deeds

إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ

Indeed, good deeds erase bad deeds.

QS Hud: 114

The Prophet ﷺ said: Fear Allah wherever you are, and follow up a bad deed with a good deed it will remove it.

Door Three: Hardships and Trials

Even the difficulties and pains of life are a form of expiation. The Prophet ﷺ said: No fatigue, no illness, no anxiety, no sorrow, no harm, no distress not even a thorn that pricks a Muslim except that Allah expiates some of his sins because of it.

Door Four: The Five Daily Prayers

The Prophet ﷺ described the prayer as a flowing river:

The prayer between each prayer removes the sins in between. From one Jumu'ah to the next Jumu'ah removes the sins between them. From one Ramadan to the next removes the sins between them as long as the major sins are avoided.

Even washing the face for wudu every sin committed with the eyes is washed away. The five daily prayers are continuously cleansing us.

The scholars note that these avenues of expiation cover minor sins. For major sins, we must specifically and sincerely turn to Allah and seek His forgiveness directly.

Chapter Seven

The Conditions of True Tawbah

Tawbah repentance is not merely words. It is a state of the heart. And it has conditions that must be met for it to be sincere and accepted.

Condition One: Stop the Sin Immediately

You cannot repent while continuing the sin. The act of repentance requires that you stop right now. Not tomorrow, not after one more time. Now.

Condition Two: Feel Genuine Regret

النَّدَمُ تَوْبَةٌ

"Regret is repentance." (Ibn Majah)

That feeling in your chest the discomfort, the guilt, the heaviness after sinning is actually a sign of your iman. When you feel bad after doing something wrong, that is your heart responding with the sensitivity of faith. Do not dismiss it. Let it move you.

Condition Three: Firm Resolve Not to Return

At the moment of repentance, you must sincerely intend not to return to the sin. If you fall again later, that does not invalidate your previous tawbah what matters is the sincerity of your intention at that moment. As one scholar was asked: *I keep repenting and keep falling back into the sin is this tawbah?* He replied: *Yes. That is the very definition of proper tawbah.*

Condition Four: Return Rights to Others (if applicable)

If the sin involves another person their wealth, their reputation, their rights then true repentance requires returning what was taken and seeking forgiveness from that person.

Ibn Al-Qayyim said: A sin that leads you to humility is better than an act of obedience that leads you to arrogance. Sometimes a sin breaks you and brings you closer to Allah than years of worship without sincerity.

Chapter Eight

Allah Descends He is Waiting for You

One of the most powerful realities we must hold in our hearts is that Allah Himself descends every night, calling out to His servants, waiting for them to turn to Him.

The Hadith of the Nightly Descent

Our Lord descends every night to the lowest heaven and says: Who is calling upon Me so I may answer him? Who is asking Me so I may give him? Who is seeking My forgiveness so I may forgive him?
(Bukhari and Muslim)

This is Allah Himself inviting you, inviting me, to seek His forgiveness so He can forgive us. He is wanting to forgive. He is waiting for us to ask. And those private moments alone at night, hands raised, tears falling, speaking to Allah with sincerity these are among the most powerful moments a person can have.

The best of worship is often done when no one sees you alone in the night, in tears, with sincerity. That is where the heart truly meets its Lord.

Chapter Nine

Signs That Your Tawbah Has Been Accepted

After making tawbah, the scholars mention certain signs that may indicate it has been accepted:

- ♦ You feel lighter after repenting a sense of relief and peace
- ♦ You hate the sin more than you did before
- ♦ You begin to avoid situations and environments that previously led you to sin
- ♦ You increase in good deeds as a result
- ♦ You remain humble and fearful of falling again, never becoming overconfident

A Warning: Never Be Overconfident

Some of the scholars used to say: If I knew Allah had accepted just one deed from me, I would wish for death because Allah says He only accepts from the righteous. This teaches us to never feel we are definitively “good now”. We are always in a state of returning, always repenting, always humble before Allah.

We know that the Prophet ﷺ whose past and future sins were forgiven still used to say Astaghfirullah more than 100 times a day. *What then about us?*

Do not despair, but do not be overconfident either. Stay between fear and hope this is where the believer lives.

Chapter Ten

Allah Loves Those Who Repent

Forgiveness from Allah is already extraordinary. But Allah goes even further:

He Does Not Just Accept He Loves

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ
*Indeed, Allah loves those who constantly repent
and loves those who purify themselves.*

QS Al-Baqarah: 222

He Transforms Sins into Good Deeds

Beyond forgiveness, Allah can actually transform your evil deeds into good deeds for those who sincerely repent, believe, and do righteous deeds:

*...except for those who repent, believe, and do righteous deeds for
them Allah will replace their evil deeds with good.*

QS Al-Furqan: 70

The scholars said: this is not just forgiveness. This is forgiveness and transformation. Allah is not merely erasing the record He is replacing your evil deeds with good deeds because you sought His forgiveness. Subhanallah.

*This is Allah's generosity beyond what any human mind could
expect. Not just forgiveness, but transformation.*

Chapter Eleven

Practical Steps to Stay on the Path of Tawbah

Knowing about repentance is not enough. We need practical habits that keep us returning to Allah consistently.

One: Increase Your Istighfar Daily

The Prophet ﷺ used to seek forgiveness over 70 to 100 times a day. Use the time in the car, on the bus, walking fill those moments with Astaghfirullah, Subhanallah wa bihamdihi, Subhanallah al-Azim. These phrases are light on the tongue but heavy on the scale of good deeds.

Two: Pray Two Rak'ah of Repentance (Salat al-Tawbah)

The Prophet ﷺ said: Make wudu, pray two rak'ah, and sincerely ask Allah for forgiveness. This can be done at any time after the sin, whenever the person repents. For specific serious sins that one keeps falling into, making this prayer each time one repents is highly encouraged.

Three: Stay Away from the Triggers of Sin

Identify what leads you to sin certain places, certain people, certain environments, certain times when you are alone. Stay away from those triggers. You cannot fight a battle you keep walking into.

Four: Keep Good Company

The Prophet ﷺ gave us the famous parable:

The example of a good companion is like a perfume seller: either he gives you perfume as a gift, or you leave smelling like perfume. The example of a bad companion is like a blacksmith: either your clothes get burnt from the sparks, or you leave smelling of the smoke.

Good company constantly encourages you toward goodness, toward remembrance of Allah, toward righteous deeds. Bad company does the opposite.

Five: Make Du'a for Guidance Constantly

In every prayer, when you say “*Ihdinas-siratal-mustaqeem*” guide us to the straight path mean it. Focus on what you are asking. We are asking Allah for guidance in every rak'ah. Let the heart be present in that request.

A man once came to a scholar and said: I keep committing a sin, I feel regret, I pray two rak'ah but then I find myself doing it again. Is this proper tawbah? The scholar said: Yes. What you are doing is the very definition of tawbah.

الخاتمة Closing

The Door That Never Closes

Imagine a person alone at night. No one sees them. No one hears them. They raise their hands and say: *O Allah, I have wronged myself. Forgive me.*

That moment for you, for me could be the moment that saves us on the Day of Judgement. So ask yourself honestly: *if this were your last night, would you delay repentance?* We wouldn't. So let us not delay.

Let us end with the hadith that summarises everything:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ
*Indeed, Allah loves those who constantly repent
and loves those who purify themselves.*

QS Al-Baqarah: 222

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِالصَّوَابِ

And Allah knows best.