



8. The Necessity of Asking Allaah's Forgiveness

Delivered by His Eminence
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All All praise is due to Allaah. He is the One who brought the earth and the heavens into existence, and He raises the ranks of His obedient servants. I praise Allaah, as He is perfect in every way. He loves those who continuously repent to Him. He pardons their wrongdoing and replaces that with righteous deeds when they sincerely repent. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah alone, without any partner. He forgives sins, accepts repentance, and pardons wrongdoing. I further bear witness that our Prophet Muhammad is Allaah's worshipping servant and Messenger who brought many blessings and conveyed the noblest of messages. May Allaah grant an abundance of His commendation and protection to His Messenger, as well as to all of the Messenger's family and Companions, until the Day of Recompense.

Servants of Allaah, observe taqwaa of Allaah as He rightfully deserves and remember that He always sees you whether you are in public or private. Do not be deceived by life in this world. It is a temporary abode, not a permanent one; it is a place for work, not laziness; and it is a marketplace whose true commodity is obedience to Allaah, and whose true profit lies in being granted success on the Day of Resurrection.

Dear Muslims, one of the most important realities to be understood – and one which must not be obscured by people's inclinations or altered by their opinions – is that all parts of this world and all the creatures it contains continually remain in complete need of their Lord and they cannot do without Him for even the blink of an eye. Without Him, this world would not continue to function as it does, and there would be no life in it to begin with. Allaah, our Lord, is the Ever-Living Self-Sufficient Sustainer of all. He is the One who provides His creatures with what sets matters right for them and they can never have that without Him.

There are many ways in which we need Allaah, but one of them is the greatest and most important. It is one that is far above the mundane ways in which we need Allaah. It is the need we have for Allaah, the Most Exalted, to forgive our sins, conceal our faults, purify our hearts, enable us to repent, and accept that repentance from us.

It was that set of objectives which Allaah's Messengers constantly and tirelessly strove to achieve. They continuously beseeched their Lord for forgiveness, mercy, hearts that long for Him, souls devoted to Him, and eyes that remain humble.

Allaah's Prophet Aadam felt deep remorse about the error he made and, as a result, both he and his spouse beseeched Allaah by saying,

﴿ رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴾

“Our Lord, we have indeed wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will certainly be among those who lose everything.”¹

Allaah's Prophet Nooh had prayed for his son to be saved although the son was someone whom Allaah knew would perish. As a result, Allaah reprimanded Nooh.

¹ Soorah al-A'raaf (7):23.



﴿ قَالَ يَنْوُحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ ۗ ﴾

﴿ إِنِّي أَعْظُكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴾

“Allaah said, ‘Nooh, your son who drowned is certainly not one of your family members whom I promised to save. He continued to reject the truth I revealed and his deeds were certainly not righteous. Thus, do not ask Me about what you have no knowledge of. I admonish you lest you be among those who are ignorant by asking Me about this matter.’”² Nooh submitted to his Lord’s directive, repented, and sought forgiveness.

﴿ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَسْأَلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ ۗ ﴾

﴿ وَإِلَّا تَغْفِرْ لِي وَتَرْحَمْنِي أَكُنْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴾

“Nooh said, ‘My Lord, I seek refuge with You from asking You about what I have no knowledge of. If You do not forgive me and have mercy upon me, I will surely be among those who lose everything.’”³ Furthermore, since the Prophet Nooh knew the importance of seeking that from Allaah, he did not restrict the request to himself. Rather, he sought the same for all people of eemaan (i.e. those who have sound beliefs and perform righteous deeds). He said,

﴿ رَبِّ أَعْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِمَنْ دَخَلَ بَيْتِي مُؤْمِنًا وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۗ ﴾

﴿ وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا نَبَارًا ۗ ﴾

“My Lord, I implore You to forgive me, my parents, any person who enters my home having eemaan, and all the men and women who have eemaan. My Lord, with regards to those who wrong themselves by persisting in their rejection, I implore You to not increase them in anything except ruin and loss.”⁴

Allaah’s beloved Prophet Ibraaheem also constantly returned to Allaah and repented to Him. Ibraaheem made seeking forgiveness part of the supplications he would make while hoping for Allaah’s reward and fearing His punishment. Ibraaheem said,

﴿ رَبَّنَا عَفِّرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ ۗ ﴾

“Our Lord, forgive me, my parents, and all the people of eemaan on the day when reckoning will take place.”⁵ In fact, that very same objective remained at the forefront of his mind while he strove to acquaint his people with their Lord and called them to accept his message. He said to them, “Have you carefully considered what you have been worshipping – you as well as your ancient forefathers? Those things are indeed enemies to me except for the Lord of all creation. He is the One who created me, guides me, gives me to eat, gives me to drink, cures me when I am ill, will cause me to die, and will then restore me to life once more. He is the One whom I hope will forgive my faults on the Day of Recompense. My Lord, grant me knowledge and sound judgment, place me among the righteous. Grant me honourable mention among later generations, make me one of those who inherit gardens of delight in Jannah. Forgive my father since he is among those who are in error, and do not disgrace me on the day when all creatures will be resurrected: the day when no property or offspring will avail a person

² Soorah Hood (11):46.

³ Soorah Hood (11):47.

⁴ Soorah Nooh (71):28.

⁵ Soorah Ibraaheem (14):41.



unless he comes to Allaah with a pure and submissive heart.”⁶

Allaah’s Prophet ‘Eesaa had been distressed about the state of his people and he hoped that Allaah would grant them mercy when he supplicated Allaah by saying,

﴿إِنْ تُعَذِّبُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عَبْدُكَ وَإِنْ تُغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾

“If You punish them out of Your justice, they are indeed Your servants. However, if You forgive those who deserve to be forgiven, You are certainly the Almighty, the Most Wise.”⁷

Allaah’s Prophet Moosaa had returned to his people, upset by them worshipping the statue of a calf in his absence, and while in his state of distress he penitently supplicated saying,

﴿قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِإِخْوَتِي وَأَدْخِلْنَا فِي رَحْمَتِكَ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ﴾

“My Lord, forgive me and my brother, and envelop us with Your mercy since You are more merciful to us than anyone who could ever show mercy.”⁸ Additionally, when the Prophet Moosaa wanted to assist a man among his own people against an individual who was an opponent, Moosaa struck that opponent but then subsequently repented to his Lord and supplicated saying,

﴿قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي﴾

“My Lord, I have certainly wronged myself and I implore You to forgive me.” Allaah then forgave him, as He is truly the Most Forgiving, the Bestower of mercy.⁹

There was also Allaah’s Prophet Daawood who was granted immense strength, vast dominion, deep wisdom, and articulate expression. There was an instance when he realized he was incorrect concerning a judgment he gave to settle between two disputants. At that point, he was swift to seek Allaah’s forgiveness. Allaah said,

﴿وَطَنَّ دَاوُدُ أَنْمَا فَنَنَّهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ، وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَأَنَابَ﴾

﴿فَغَفَرْنَا لَهُ، ذَلِكَ وَإِنْ لَهُ، عِنْدَنَا لُزْفَى وَحُسْنُ مَتَابٍ﴾

“Daawood then realized that We had tested him. Thus, he sought forgiveness from his Lord, he bowed down in prostration, and he repented. As a result, We forgave him for what he did. He certainly has a means to Us which is near, and a fine abode to which he will return.”¹⁰

There was also Allaah’s Prophet Muhammad ibn ‘Abdillaah, may Allaah mention him with continuous commendation. He was the leader of all former and latter generations, and he was sent as a mercy to all of creation. He was the most devoted of people to his Lord, most desirous of His reward, and most fearful of His punishment. Allaah, who is perfect in every way, inspired him to seek forgiveness and repent. As a result, that was something he did constantly, just like how a person breathes. Aboo Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said, “I heard Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) say, “I swear by Allaah that in a single day, I most certainly ask Allaah’s forgiveness and repent to Him more than seventy times.” This was collected by al-Bukhaaree.¹¹ That was his practice throughout each day and night. ‘Aa’ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said, “I noticed that the Messenger of Allaah (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection)

⁶ Soorah ash-Shu’araa’ (26):75-89.

⁷ Soorah al-Maa’idah (5):118.

⁸ Soorah al-A’raaf (7):151.

⁹ Soorah al-Qasas (28):16.

¹⁰ Soorah Saad (38):24-25.

¹¹ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (6307).



was not in bed one night. I searched for him and my hand felt the bottom of his two feet. They were upright while he was prostrating in prayer, and he was saying,

اللَّهُمَّ أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ، وَبِمُعَافَاتِكَ مِنْ عُقُوبَتِكَ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ،
لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ، أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ

‘O Allaah, I earnestly seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your wrath, and in Your pardon from Your punishment. I seek refuge with You from Yourself. I cannot praise You sufficiently. You are as You have praised Yourself.’ This was collected by Muslim.¹² The mother of the people of eemaan, ‘Aa’ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) also narrated another remarkable instance of the Prophet’s worship and how he sought nearness to Allaah. She said, “I noticed that the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) was not with me one night and I thought he had perhaps gone to another one of his wives. I looked for him but then returned and found that he was bowing or prostrating and supplicating Allaah by saying,

سُبْحَانَكَ وَيَحْمَدُكَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

‘You are perfect in every way and I praise You. None has the right to be worshipped except You.’ I then said, ‘I would sacrifice even the dearest things I have for you. I was thinking about one thing and you were thinking about something completely different.’ This was collected by Muslim.¹³

She went towards one direction but he had gone towards the other, and there is a vast difference between the two.¹⁴

The aforementioned apprehension about sins will be felt by Allaah’s Messengers even on the Day of Resurrection when Allaah gathers all people from earlier and latter generations together on a single plain. “People will be in a state of unbearable anxiety and distress. Some will say to others, ‘Do you not see the state you are in? Do you not see how adverse circumstances have become for you? Will you not look for someone to intercede with your Lord on your behalf?’ Some will tell others, ‘Go to Aadam.’ They will go to him and say, ‘Aadam, you are the forefather of all people. Allaah created you with His own hand and blew into you the soul He created for you. He instructed His angels to prostrate to you and they did so. We request that you intercede with your Lord on our behalf. Have you not seen the state we are in? Have you not seen how adverse circumstances have become for us?’ Aadam will reply, ‘My Lord has become angry today. He has not been angry like this before and He will not be angry like this again afterwards. He had prohibited me from a certain tree but I contravened His prohibition. The one who deserves to be interceded for is me myself. Go to someone else. Go to Nooh.’¹⁵ The people will subsequently go to the Prophets Nooh, then Ibraaheem, then Moosaa, then ‘Eesaa and the same will occur as with Aadam. They will then go to the Prophet Muhammad (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) and he will intercede for them. This was mentioned at length in a hadeeth collected by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim from Aboo Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him).

The aforementioned describes the state of individuals whom Allaah favoured by sending them His revelation and commissioning them as Messengers. Among all of mankind, they were the individuals who had the most reverential fear of Him, had the most hope in attaining His forgiveness and mercy, and were the swiftest in returning to Him and repenting. A person’s reverence and fear of Allaah are in

¹² Saheeh Muslim (486).

¹³ Saheeh Muslim (485).

¹⁴ This paragraph is the meaning of Arabic poetry that was cited.

¹⁵ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (4712), Saheeh Muslim (194).



proportion to the person's knowledge about Allaah. "The only people who have true reverential fear of Allaah are those who have knowledge."¹⁶

May Allaah enable all of us to glean benefit from the guidance and evidences He revealed, and may He bless all of us by way of the Sunnah of the best individual among mankind. I beseech Allaah, the Most Magnificent, to forgive me and all of you for every misdeed. Thus, ask for Allaah's forgiveness since the people who do so will attain tremendous success.



All praise is due to Allaah. He made repentance one of the most virtuous stages along the journey of those who tread their path to Him. I praise Allaah, as He is perfect in every way. He loves those who constantly repent as well as those who keep themselves pure. I implore Allaah to grant commendation and protection to His Messenger who was the leader of the people of taqwaa, the seal of the Messengers, and a mercy to all of creation. I also implore Allaah to do the same for all the Messenger's family and Companions.

Dear Muslims, it is no wonder that repentance and seeking forgiveness played such a pivotal role in the lives of Allaah's Prophets and Messengers. The stage of repentance is one that comes at the beginning, middle, and end of one's path to Allaah. A servant of Allaah along that path must not neglect it. Rather he must continue adhering to it all the way until he departs from this world. Repentance must be a servant's start and finish. His need for it at the end is no less pressing than his need for it at the beginning. Repentance holds this rank because it is a form of worship that is among the most beloved to Allaah, and the most noble to Him. Allaah – who is perfect in every way – loves those who continuously repent to Him. If repentance was not beloved to Him, He would not test the most noble of His servants with sins. This is why Allaah becomes happy with His servant when that servant repents. The Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) provided an example for that by mentioning that Allaah's happiness with His servant's repentance is even greater than the extent of the happiness of someone who finds his mount carrying his food and drink after losing it while travelling through an area of barren wilderness, losing all hope of finding it, and despairing of having any further means of life. That happiness attributed to Allaah was not mentioned in connection with any act of obedience besides repentance. Furthermore, it is well known that the aforementioned happiness has a major effect upon the heart and overall circumstances of the person who repents. This is something that Allaah has decreed as it relates to sins that His righteous servants may commit. By repenting sincerely, a servant of Allaah may even attain the rank of being someone whom Allaah loves, since Allaah certainly loves those who consistently repent. Allaah's servant who is tested but constantly returns to Allaah and repents is beloved to Allaah because the servant's actions show his humility, submission, and desire to seek nearness to Allaah. Humility forms the core of worship and Allaah – who is perfect in every way – is nearer to His obedient servants the more humble they are towards Him. In short, goodness, favour, and blessings from Allaah descend upon the humble, and the sincerely penitent servant of Allaah has a large share of that.¹⁷

O Allaah, by Your might and our humility before You, we implore You to have mercy upon us. We implore you by Your might and our weakness, and by Your self-sufficiency and our complete need for You. Our unjust souls are here before You. Your servants besides us are many, and none of us have any true Lord besides You. There is none besides You to whom we can rightfully flee or take resort. We beseech You as must be done by those in need of You, we implore You as must be done by those

¹⁶ Soorah Faatir (35):28.

¹⁷ See Madaarij as-Saalikeen (1/196, 306-307) for much of the aforementioned paragraph.



who are humble to You, we supplicate You as must be done by those who have fear of You and are compelled to take resort to You; and we ask of You as must be done by those who are under Your control, who know that they must submit to You, whose eyes shed tears before You, and whose hearts are humbled before You. We call upon You concerning all that we hope for, and we seek refuge with You from all that we fear. None can restore a bone to completion if You make it stay shattered, and none can shatter a bone that You restore.