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**Subject:** Returning to Allah

**Innal-Hamdalillah was-Salaatu was-Salaamu Alaa Rasoolillah**

**As-Salaamu Alaikum wa-rahmatullahi wa-barakaatuh**

Abuz-Zubair and I wish you a very blessed `Eid Taqaballahu minna wa minkum May Allah accept (righteous deeds) from us and from you.

We are also very pleased to announce to our subscribers a new, specialised Islamic search engine, the first of its kind [www.bilalphilips.com/hamza/index.html](http://www.bilalphilips.com/hamza/index.html). Hamza's searchable database has a growing index of over 15 000 webpages related to Islam and Muslims, free of any haram material. It features a website directory, software downloads, Islamic e-cards and webmaster resources. It is currently available in English but insha Allah an Arabic version will soon follow.

Whilst the blessed days of Dhul-Hijjah have sadly drawn to an end, this should not signify a decrease in our righteous actions and or a slackening in our efforts for the sake of Allaah. So what follows is a reminder of a great act that we bi idhnillah increased upon in these days of Mercy, but which we should strive to keep constant in our lives, regardless of what time of year it is, and whatever situation we are in that of, returning to Allaah and repenting to Him.

Ummuz-Zubair

Submitted by: Muhammad al-Shareef ([muhammad@alhuda.org](mailto:muhammad@alhuda.org))

# Returning to Allah

By Muhammad al-Shareef

Musa - alayhis salam - led the elders and men, the women and children of Bani Israa eel to the mouth of the raging sea. With nothing to defend themselves, they turned back to see Fir own, furious, and his henchmen - blades sheathed - racing towards them. They cried to Musa - as recorded in the Qur an:

They companions of Musa said, Indeed, they shall catch us! (Surah Shu'araa 26:61)

But Musa knew that Allah would not allow the Da'wah to be wiped away and annihilated. Allah recorded Musa's - alayhis salam - reply which radiated with the Iman of a Prophet and Messenger:

(Musa) said, Nay! Indeed my Lord is with me, and He will guide me!

Immediately, Allah ta'ala commanded Musa:

Then We inspired Musa: Strike with your staff the sea, and it parted - each portion like a great towering mountain.

And We advanced thereto the others (i.e. the pursuers).

And We saved Musa and those with him, all together. Then We drowned the others...

When Fir'aon slipped out of the sea and ached with the pangs of death, he said: I believe that there is no deity except that in whom Banu Israa'eel, and I am of those that submit.

Ibn Abbas narrates: On the day that Fir'aon slipped out of the sea, and knowing that death loomed, Jibreel came to him and began kicking dirt into his face and mouth, for fear that Fir'aon would plead for the Mercy of Allah, and he would be granted it.

But as Allah revealed to Fir'aon and those who would wait till the gargling of the soul to do Tawbah:

Now?! And you had disobeyed (him) before and were of the corrupters?

(Surah Yunus: 91 - From Tafseer At-Tabaree)

Istighfaar means to seek forgiveness from Allah ta'ala with ones tongue and heart. Allah - subhaanahu wa ta'ala - informs us:

And whoever does a wrong or wrongs himself but then seeks forgiveness of Allah will find Allah Forgiving and Merciful (Surah Nisa 4: 110)

And from the authority of Abu Hurayrah, Allah's Messenger - sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam - said, "**(I testify) by He who holds my soul in His Hands, were you not to err, Allah ta'ala would have taken you (all) away. After which He would have brought a people that would err, then ask Allah for forgiveness - then He would forgive them.**" - Sahih Muslim

Today, in sha'Allah, we shall take a tiny glimpse of the Ayat that speak about Istighfaar, the seriousness of sin in the eyes of the early generations, the conditions of an accepted repentance, and what are some of the etiquettes when making dua.

Istighfaar is a characteristic of those whom Allah shall grant success:

(The evil dwellers of Hell shall say) Our Lord, remove us from it (Hellfire), and if we were to return (to evil), we would indeed be wrongdoers / He will say, "Remain despised therein and do not speak to Me / Indeed there was a party of My servants who said, "Our Lord, we have believed, so forgive us and have mercy upon us, and You are the best of the Merciful." But you took them in mockery...

Then Allah says:

Indeed, I have rewarded them this Day for their patient endurance,  
that they are the winners (the successful)

(Surah al-Mu'minoon 23: 108-111)

Istighfaar opens the doors of all goodness, in this life and the next

During the Khilaafah of Ameer ul-Mu'mineen Umar ibn Al-Khattab - radi Allahu 'anhu - a drought befell the Muslims of Madinah. Calling for the congregational rain prayer (Istisqaa), Umar ascended the minbar and during his Khutbah recited no more than those verses that dealt with Istighfaar.

He recited that day the words of Allah, speaking of what Nuh - alayhis salam - said to his nation:

So I said, Ask forgiveness (Istighfaar) of your Lord, Indeed He is ever a  
perpetual Forgiver  
He will send upon you (rain from) the sky in showers  
And give you increase in wealth and children.  
And provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers. (Surah Nuh 71: 10-12)

Istighfaar is an indication of those most beloved to Allah

Abu Hurayrah - radi Allahu 'anhu - narrates: I heard Allah's Messenger - sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam - say, "**By Allah, I ask Allah for forgiveness and return to Him in a single day more than seventy times.**"

And in the story of Ayyub, Allah describes him:

(We said) "And take in your hand a bunch (of grass) and strike with it and do not  
break your oath."  
Indeed We found him patient, an excellent servant.  
Indeed, he was one who repeatedly turned back (to Allah).  
(Surah Saad 38: 44)

The seriousness of sin

I remember in Madinah University when we were studying Islamic criminal law and the Hadith of Maa'iz was the topic of discussion for the day. It was such a dramatic moment, leaving many students reflecting on Istighfaar and how sincere Maa'iz must have been.

What happened was that Maa'iz had committed Zina (fornication) and had come to the Prophet saying, "O Messenger of Allah, I have committed Zina!" Rasul Allah - sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam - avoided him, perhaps Maa'iz would desist and save himself from the punishment, but Maa'iz kept stepping in the face of Allah's Messenger and repeated, "I committed Zina! I committed Zina!"

When Maa'iz had said it again and again, Allah's Messenger - sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam - asked him a series of questions. "**Are you mad?**" No. "**Are you intoxicated?**" (and he requested someone to smell his breath) No. "**Did you enter her?**" Yes.

Allah's Messenger then asked him slowly, "**What do you want from all this?**" And Maa'iz said, "I want you to purify me!"

It is people like Maa'iz whose repentance to Allah was so blessed that the Mercy from it could have extended to all the inhabitants of Madinah.

Hilaal ibn Sa'd said, "Don't look at the meagerness of your sin, look at who it was that you disobeyed.

Conditions of a sincere repentance

Anas - radi Allahu 'anhu - narrates: Allah's Messenger - sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam - said, **All the children of Adam make mistakes, and the best of those that make mistakes are those that repent the most.** - a hasan hadith narrated by Tirmidhi

Imam Nawawi - rahimahullaah - writes: Repentance (towbah) is required from each sin. If that disobedience only concerns the slave and Allah - not concerning anyone else - then there are three conditions for the repentance's acceptance...

[a] That he desists from the sin

[b] That he feels sincere regret from what happened

[d] That he feels determination to never return to that sin.

If one of these three were missing, his towbah would be deficient.

A fourth condition is added if the sin involves the right of another human being:

[e] That he frees himself from the right of that human.

Thus if he stole something, he should return it. If he physically hurt someone, he should give that person the opportunity to hurt him back or ask forgiveness. If he slandered someone, he should ask that person for his pardon ... all this so long as a greater evil does not result in him informing the other party.

A final word

After a heavy rainfall, Hisham ibn Hasan was walking behind Al- Alaa ibn Ziyaad through the sloppy muddy streets of their village. He noticed Ibn Ziyaad avoiding all the treacherous puddles, until someone bumped him and his sandal slipped into the puddle. Forced by the momentum, Ibn Ziyaad had to carry through to the other end of the unforgiving mire.

After they had reached their destination, Ibn Ziyad turned to Hisham and said,

Just like we avoided all those puddles on our way to this destination,  
So should the Muslim avoid the disobedience of Allah throughout his journey to the hereafter.  
And just as you saw the momentum of falling into the puddle,  
Such is the similitude of sin -  
when someone falls into it, it carries him deeper and deeper.

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