



Repentance as a Way of Life: Islam, Spirituality, & Practice

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Abstract

While the general notion of repentance may be familiar to most, the Islamic concept of repentance is far less familiar and is often the subject of misconceptions and doubt. Repentance plays a central role in Islam and is comprehensive in nature. Deeply rooted within the belief system, it manifests in multiple dimensions—as the core of Islamic theology (*aqeedah*), as a subject of jurisprudence or rulings (*fiqh*), and ultimately in practice as an act of worship (*ibadah*). Equally important are the spiritual and self-purification (*tazkiyah*) aspects of repentance which reside in the heart. This paper specifically addresses *how* to repent, with a focus on two key dimensions of repentance (*tawba*)—the spiritual and the practical. It describes the necessary steps to *tawba*, its many benefits, and a number of commonly faced obstacles. The paper discusses the symbiotic relationship between the spiritual and practical components. It further emphasizes the holistic nature and distinct features of *tawba* as a source of optimism for every sinner and believer alike, and as a way of life, necessary for success in this world and in the Hereafter.

Introduction

In order to appreciate the central role of *tawba* (repentance in Islam) and its powerful impact on society as a whole, we need look no further than the methodology and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ who personified Islam to a level of excellence we strive to emulate. Chosen by Allah, he ﷺ was guided to meticulously convey to us the final Revelation which commands, “...*And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed.*”¹ In my previous paper on this topic, I presented core beliefs and distinct features of repentance from a creedal (*aqeedah*) perspective.² This paper served as an introduction to the topic of *tawba* with a discussion of its origin with the advent of man, the nature of human fallibility, accountability before Allah, and the obligation upon humans to repent to Him. It highlighted the pivotal role of *tawba* in one’s

¹ Qur’an, 24:31, *Sahih International*

² <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/en/roohi-tahir/repentance-redemption-salvation-an-islamic-framework/>

moral growth, redemption, and salvation, and the immense mercy of Allah toward His servants. It was in essence a response to the question “*Why* repent?”

Given the centrality of *tawba* in one’s life, it naturally follows that we also address *how* to repent. This paper focuses on two key aspects in the implementation of *tawba*, both of which must be present and working in tandem with one another. The first consists of the inner spiritual dimension of *tawba* which is sought and nurtured within the believer’s heart, and second consists of the subsequent outward actions that must accompany that spiritual state. The balance and symbiotic relationship between these two components beautifully illustrate the holistic nature of *tawba* and the numerous benefits we derive from it as a prescription for living a purposeful, productive, and content life, both in this world and the eternal one to come.

***Tawba* is initiated within the heart**

What was it about the *tawba* of the man who the Prophet ﷺ informed us had murdered ninety-nine people (and eventually one more) that enabled him to obtain forgiveness?³ No doubt it was the manner in which it was sought. The answer may at first seem apparent in his having traveled in search of pious company on his quest for personal reform—but even more importantly, it lies in his having reached within his heart the spiritual stations of sincerity, remorse, and a firm resolve to repent. In Islam, the heart plays a crucial role far beyond its physiological function; the sacred text refers to it as the very control center of the human psyche and behavior. Hence, the heart is the gauge of one’s spiritual well-being from which one can ascertain and treat moral deficiencies or spiritual diseases pertaining to one’s true motives, desires, and doubts. These include a number of negative emotions such as arrogance and anger which, when left unchecked, have the capacity to adversely influence one’s actions. The Prophet ﷺ described the profound effects of sinning and repentance on the heart thus:

³ *Sahih Muslim* 2766 a, In-book reference: Book 50, *Hadith* 54, USC-MSA web (English) reference: Book 37, *Hadith* 6662, <https://sunnah.com/muslim/50>

Verily, when the slave (of Allah) commits a sin, a black spot appears on his heart. When he refrains from it, seeks forgiveness and repents, his heart is polished clean. But if he returns, it increases until it covers his entire heart. And that is the ‘Ran’ [rust] which Allah mentioned: ‘Nay, but on their hearts is the Ran [rust] which they used to earn.’”⁴

The corroded heart is further described in the Qur’an as the heart of one who is spiritually blind and this heart eventually may become lifeless with no hope of return to Allah. This deterioration is diagnosed as a spiritually “diseased” heart—its disease stemming from insincerity, arrogance, and hypocrisy among other human vices that lead one to sin, eventually becoming a slippery slope toward disbelief and damnation of the one who does not repent.

Renowned scholar Ibn Al-Qayyim (d. 1350 CE) recounts the many dangers of sinning. Among them is that the sinner becomes distanced from Allah, his heart then experiencing anxiety and sorrow, until eventually his sins lead him deeper into spiritual demise. Sinning can become the basis of losing one’s honor, wealth, and blessings. Not countering the dire effects of sin with *tawba* consequently leads the sinner to waste time. In doing so, denial of God and truth eventually takes root and leads to one being deprived of the very knowledge and consciousness needed to successfully return to Allah.⁵ Ibn Al-Qayyim’s assessment resonates to this day in the increasing secular discourse expressing doubts about God and religion.

*And be not like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.*⁶

*In their hearts is disease, so Allah has increased their disease; and for them is a painful punishment because they [habitually] used to lie.*⁷

⁴ Jami’ At-Tirmidhi, Grade: *Hasan*, English reference: Vol. 5, Book 44, *Hadith* 3334, Arabic reference: Book 47, *Hadith* 3654, <https://sunnah.com/urn/680450>

⁵ Al-Qayyim, Ibn. *Al-Fawa'id: A Collection of Wise Sayings*. Al-Mansura, Egypt: Umm Al-Qura, 2004. 158-160, 235

⁶ Qur’an, 59:19, *Sahih International*

⁷ Qur’an, 2:10, *Sahih International*, also see 2:6-9

The fire of regret

Tawba begins with regret over one's behavior as taught by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who said: "*Regret is repentance.*"⁸ This narration is one of numerous examples one can take from the Qur'an and *Sunnah* to understand the core requirements of *tawba*. Thus, the first step scholars have outlined in the process of polishing the heart is remorse. It can be described as a feeling of guilt and deep regret one experiences while acknowledging one's sin. It is noteworthy that remorse is not a requirement for repentance in all belief systems. Some, even to this day, maintain a focus on public confession and cathartic rituals of penitence, at times extreme and demeaning, to absolve the sinner and serve as a deterrent to future sin—with little to no regard to sincerity. Such beliefs rely at least in part on a fear of humiliation and misfortune as the driving factor.⁹ In contrast, Islam places unparalleled emphasis on one's direct connection to Allah. The believer is acutely aware of Allah's presence in his life and strives to please Him with a sense of devotion and accountability. Hence, remorse becomes the spiritual and moral catalyst for one to sincerely repent to Allah and then to actively strive to reform and attain His forgiveness and pleasure. Furthermore, genuine remorse can only be brought about in one who is both self-aware and mindful of Allah. These are two key attributes of spirituality that are not apparent as outward traits or actions—rather they direct one to seek the path of self-purification (a polished heart) and actions consistent with sincere *tawba*.

Al-Ghazali (d. 1111 CE) added a prerequisite to remorse—that of faith and certainty (*yaqeen*) when he said, "...knowledge is prerequisite and is the starting point of these blessings. By this knowledge I mean faith and certitude. To have faith is to accept as true that sins are a deadly poison. Certitude consists of the assurance of the acceptance of this truth, the removal of all doubt about it and finally its mastery over the heart, so that whenever the illumination of this faith shines upon the heart it produces the fire of regret."¹⁰ He elaborates that only then

⁸ *Sunan Ibn Majah*, Grade: *Hasan*, English reference: Vol. 5, Book 37, *Hadith* 4252, Arabic reference: Book 37, *Hadith* 4393, <https://sunnah.com/urn/1293550>

⁹ <http://www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/repentance>

¹⁰ Stern, M.S. *Al-Ghazzali on Repentance*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1990. 31

is one able to develop a natural aversion to one's sins, much like the person who consumed what he assumed to be uncontaminated honey not realizing that it contained poison until it made him ill. Al-Ghazali considers this to be the level of sincere repentance—one that only a few attain and are able to maintain without returning to and persisting in sin.¹¹

*But as for he who feared the position of his Lord and prevented the soul from [unlawful] inclination, then indeed, Paradise will be [his] refuge.*¹²

Ironically, the modern world is witnessing the rapid growth of industries advocating the need for purity and enhanced quality in all things consumed, even the air we breathe, as part of the push toward healthy living and the preservation of natural resources. This is evident in the \$16 billion spent last year by Americans alone on bottled water,¹³ in the growing global demand for organic non-GMO food products, and the rise of “go green” campaigns. While there is an undeniable need to safeguard our physical well-being and environment, Islam additionally mandates that we apply the same zeal to counter the harm of spiritual pollutants often hidden from view.

Arguably, the call to secularism in our times aims to distance us from God, further enabling spiritual diseases to take root and flourish. These diseases are so dangerous that they can easily overcome the spiritually weakened heart. Left untreated, one is no better off than a newly painted facade concealing a cracked foundation. These diseases in turn contribute further to the faith crisis, immorality, and injustice that are prevalent today. As Al-Ghazali so aptly put it, “Sins are to faith what toxic foods are to the body.”¹⁴ Furthermore, a distinction must be made between the increasingly popular trend of spirituality grounded in non-religious concepts and the traditional understanding of spirituality associated with God and religion. A recent study in *The Journal of Nervous Disease* found a third greater risk of depression in people who considered themselves more spiritual than religious. The author attributed his findings to these participants' focus on

¹¹ Ibid. 86

¹² Qur'an, 79:40-41, *Sahih International*

¹³ <http://www.bottledwater.org/bottled-water-nations-healthiest-packaged-beverage-officially-americas-favorite>

¹⁴ Stern, M.S. *Al-Ghazzali on Repentance*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1990. 41

“self-directed internal searches for meaning” which he labeled a “lonely search” that results in dissatisfaction and an increased risk of depression.¹⁵ These results further support the need for the perfect divinely decreed holistic approach of *tawba* that embodies interdependence between spirituality and practice. In this approach, the believer is in a constant state of self-exertion to diagnose and eradicate spiritual diseases in order to realize the pure and balanced life Islam prescribes. The Quranic verse, “He has succeeded who purifies it [his soul]”¹⁶ is understood by scholars to mean purification from disbelief and sin, and rectification through righteous deeds.¹⁷ *Tawba* is the means to achieving purification or spiritual wellness, which then guides one to sound actions; each dependent on and enabling the betterment of the other such that the outcome is the overall well-being and moral consciousness of both individual and society.

*...and as a king would not accept a dirty garment as his attire, so God does not admit a darkened heart into His proximity. And, just as the use of a garment for vile labor will soil it, and certainly, to clean it one needs to wash it with soap and warm water, so exposure of the heart to the desires fouls it, and to clean, purge and purify it, one needs to wash it in the flow of tears and the burning of regret. Every clean and pure heart is well received, just as every clean garment is. The purification and cleansing, however, are up to you.*¹⁸

“Deeds are considered by their intentions...”

One of the inner dimensions of *tawba* and, for that matter, any conscious and deliberate action, is the intention (*niyyah*) behind it. As the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “*The deeds are considered by the intentions, and a person will get the*

¹⁵ Vittengl, J. R. (2018). A lonely search?: Risk for depression when spirituality exceeds religiosity. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 206, 386-389.

¹⁶ Qur'an, 91:9, *Sahih International*

¹⁷ Taymiyyah, Ibn. *Obstacles That Prevent One from Making Repentance*. Taken from the Book, *At-Tawbah*. SalafiManhaj, 2005. <https://ebooks.worldofislam.info/ebooks/Repentance/Obstacles4Repentance.pdf>

¹⁸ Stern, M.S. *Al-Ghazzali on Repentance*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1990. 50

reward according to his intention.”¹⁹ In order to attain forgiveness from Allah, one must approach *tawba* with sincerity. Ibn Al-Qayyim described sincerity in *tawba* as having three elements—sincerity in terms of including *all* of one’s sins in one’s repentance, sincerity within the heart of the one repenting, and sincerity toward Allah to Whom alone one must repent. Sincerity requires being free of ulterior motives such as the preservation of one’s social standing, family, or wealth.²⁰ Repentance can only be actualized once the feeling of remorse is followed by the intention to seek forgiveness, to desist from the sin and make amends, with the resolve to refrain from sinning in the future. These were the very steps taken by the murderer who redeemed himself. It was the awakened sincerity within him that led him to embark on a journey he was physically unable to complete, a journey that still secured his forgiveness. It is this inner struggle and endurance in upholding one’s commitment that we understand to be our test. Whenever one sins one is to return to Allah, who forgives human weaknesses, setbacks, and even falling into sin again—as long as one’s *tawba* is sincere. Furthermore, it is undoubtedly from the sheer Mercy of Allah and His Love for His servants that *tawba* is so beloved to Him. This is beautifully illustrated in the words of the Prophet ﷺ “*If you were to commit sin until your sins reach the heaven, then you were to repent, your repentance would be accepted.*”²¹

*O you who have believed, repent to Allah with sincere repentance. Perhaps your Lord will remove from you your misdeeds and admit you into gardens beneath which rivers flow [on] the Day when Allah will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believed with him. Their light will proceed before them and on their right; they will say, “Our Lord, perfect for us our light and forgive us. Indeed, You are over all things Competent.”*²²

¹⁹ Al-Bukhari and Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 1, <https://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/1/1>

²⁰ Farid, Ahmad. *The Purification of the Soul According to the Earliest Sources*. London: Al-Firdous, 1996. 157-8

²¹ Sunan Ibn Majah, Grade: Hasan, Vol. 5, Book 37, Hadith 4248, <https://sunnah.com/urn/1293510>

²² Qur’an, 66:8, *Sahih International*

The Prescription

Allah chose as Prophets the most noble among mankind to deliver His message to guide their respective nations. As the final messenger, the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ teachings, his impeccable character, and his mannerisms serve as *the* exemplary model for all of humanity in all aspects of life.²³ This is understood from his explicit and authoritative instruction regarding obligatory (*wajib*) acts of worship to the detailed recording of the most mundane acts such as eating and sleeping—many of which fall into either recommended and rewarded (*mustahabb*) acts, or simply permissible (*mubah*) actions left to one's personal preference. Allah repeatedly reassured the Prophet ﷺ of his noble status and the promise of Paradise, yet he ﷺ not only taught us how to seek forgiveness (*istighfar*) from Allah, but he ﷺ made doing so an essential component of his own daily life, leaving us with the most efficacious prescription to follow.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Turn you people in repentance to Allah and beg pardon of Him. I turn to Him in repentance a hundred times a day.”

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Why would one who is guaranteed Paradise seek forgiveness? First and foremost, to express gratitude and humility. Thus was the demeanor of the Prophet ﷺ and he taught us how to inculcate and express the same characteristics.²⁵ Gratitude for one's blessings, for the gifts of faith and guidance, is demonstrated, though impossible for us to perfectly express, through verbal acknowledgment and obedience to Allah in acts of worship and good deeds—*tawba* being one of the most significant acts of worship. Furthermore, though we emulate him, none of us can attain the lofty status of the Prophet ﷺ; we will inevitably falter, sin, and need to repent. An immediate benefit of adopting this prophetic daily practice is that it necessitates frequent *istighfar* on the part of the believer, and with it, the

²³ “There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern [example] for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.” [Quran, 33:21]

²⁴ *Sahih Muslim*, Arabic/English book reference: Book 1, *Hadith* 14, <https://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/1/14>

²⁵ The Prophet ﷺ stood (in prayer at night) until his feet swelled up, and it was said to him: Allah has forgiven your past and future sins. He said: “Should I not be a thankful slave?”, *Sunan an-Nasa'i*, Grade: *Sahih*, 1644, In-book reference: Book 20, *Hadith* 47, English translation: Vol. 2, Book 20, *Hadith* 1645

remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*). Both of these keep one in a constant state of *tawba* and fuel the spiritual conditioning of one's heart, thereby safeguarding it from further sin, doubt, and despair. This is other side of the equation—that the practical aspect of *tawba* enhances its spiritual aspect. Thus, one who is mindful of Allah, sincerely acknowledging fallibility, and actively seeking forgiveness attains not only forgiveness but also the spiritual fortitude to do good and to achieve the higher ranks of those with whom Allah is pleased.

*And when those come to you who believe in Our verses, say, "Peace be upon you. Your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy: that any of you who does wrong out of ignorance and then repents after that and corrects himself—indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful."*²⁶

The Prophetic method of seeking forgiveness goes beyond the recommended daily litanies²⁷ in other forms of ritual worship which incorporate supplications (*du'a*) for forgiveness, such as formal prayer (*salah*),²⁸ fasting, as well as the pilgrimages of *Hajj* and *'Umrah*. Additionally, one attains forgiveness simply through the sincere performance of these acts of worship as indicated by the Prophetic traditions which explicitly declare them to serve as expiation for sins.²⁹ This is illustrated for example in the *hadith* describing ritual ablution (*wudu'*) in which sins are forgiven with every drop of water falling from each limb as it is washed.³⁰ This also holds true for the performance of various types of good deeds.³¹ For

²⁶ Qur'an, 6:54

²⁷ *Fortress of the Muslim, Invocations from the Quran and the Sunnah* by Darussalam Publications is a recommended source of authentic supplications, many of which include *istighfar*, <https://islamawareness.net/Dua/Fortress/>

²⁸ Includes the daily five obligatory prayers, the Friday prayer, and all recommended prayers, especially the night prayer and even two units of prayer legislated in the *Sunnah* solely for the purpose of *tawba*.

²⁹ Abu Huraira reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: The five [daily] prayers and one Friday prayer to [the next] Friday prayer are expiations [for the sins committed in the intervals] between them. *Sahih Muslim* 233b, In-book reference: Book 2, *Hadith* 18, <https://sunnah.com/muslim/2/18>

³⁰ Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "When a bondsman—a Muslim or a believer—washes his face [in course of ablution], every sin he contemplated with his eyes will be washed away from his face along with water, or with the last drop of water; when he washes his hands, every sin they wrought will be effaced from his hands with the water, or with the last drop of water; and when he washes his feet, every sin towards which his feet have walked will be washed away with the water or with the last drop of water with the result that he comes out pure from all sins." *Sahih Muslim* 244, In-book reference: Book 2, *Hadith* 44, <https://sunnah.com/muslim/2/44>

³¹ And establish prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night. Indeed, good deeds do away with misdeeds. That is a reminder for those who remember. [Qur'an, 11:114]

example, forgiveness accompanies the giving of charity,³² whether it be monetary, the warmth of a smile or a handshake,³³ or a visit to the sick—an act so pleasing to Allah that one is accompanied by seventy thousand angels invoking Allah’s forgiveness on one’s behalf.³⁴ Illness and hardship result in expiation of sins.³⁵ Invoking blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ is also a means to forgiveness, among its many other virtues.³⁶ Gatherings of *dhikr* and awaiting *salah* in the mosque invoke supplications of forgiveness for the believer from the angels present in these places.³⁷ More avenues are open to forgiveness from Allah through serving one’s mother and forgiving one another.³⁸

A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: “O Messenger of Allah! I have been afflicted by a tremendous sin. Is there any repentance for me?” He said: “Do you have a mother?” The man said: “No.” He said: “Do you

³² The Prophet ﷺ said, “...*sadaqah* (charity) extinguishes sins just as water extinguishes fire.” *Jami’ At-Tirmidhi* 614, Grade: *Hasan*, In-book reference: Book 6, *Hadith* 71, English translation: Vol. 2, Book 1, *Hadith* 614, <https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/6/71>

³³ Hudhaifa ibn Al-Yaman reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Verily, when the believer meets another believer and greets him with peace and shakes his hand, the sins of both will shed like the shedding of the leaves of a tree.” *al-Mu’jam al-Awsat* 253, Grade: *Sahih* (al-Albani), <https://abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline/2014/08/28/hadith-on-greetings-shaking-hands-will-shed-the-sins-of-the-muslims/>

³⁴ ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying, “When a Muslim visits a sick Muslim at dawn, seventy thousand angels keep on praying for him till dusk. If he visits him in the evening, seventy thousand angels keep on praying for him till the morning; and he will have [his share of] reaped fruits in *Jannah*.” *At-Tirmidhi*, Grade: *Hasan*, Book 7, *Hadith* 6, Arabic/English book reference: Book 7, *Hadith* 899, <https://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/7/6>

³⁵ Abu Sa’id and Abu Huraira reported that they heard Allah’s Messenger ﷺ say: “Never is a believer stricken with discomfort, hardship or illness, grief, or even with mental worry that his sins are not expiated for him.” *Sahih Muslim* 2573, In-book reference: Book 45, *Hadith* 66, <https://sunnah.com/muslim/45/66>

³⁶ It was narrated that Ubayy ibn Ka’b (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, I send a great deal of blessings upon you; how much of my *du‘aa*’ should be sending blessings upon you?’ He said: ‘Whatever you wish.’ I said: ‘One quarter?’ He said: ‘Whatever you wish, and if you do more, that will be better for you.’ I said: ‘One half?’ He said: ‘Whatever you wish and if you do more, that will be better for you.’ I said: ‘Two thirds?’ He said: ‘Whatever you wish and if you do more, that will be better for you.’ I said: ‘I will make all of my *du‘aa*’ for you.’ He said: ‘Then your concerns will be taken care of and your sins will be forgiven.’” *At-Tirmidhi* 2457, Grade: *Sahih Hasan*, <https://islamqa.info/en/128455>

³⁷ It was narrated that Abu Huraira said: The Messenger of Allah said: “When one of you enters the mosque, he is in a state of prayer, so long as the prayer keeps him there, and the angels will send prayer upon anyone of you so long as he remains in the place where he prayed, saying: ‘O Allah, forgive him; O Allah, have mercy on him; O Allah, accept his repentance,’ so long as he does not commit *Hadath* nor disturb anyone.” *Sunan Ibn Majah* 799, Grade: *Sahih*, Book 4, *Hadith* 65: Vol. 1, Book 4, *Hadith* 799, <https://sunnah.com/ibnmajah/4/65>

³⁸ Umar was heard to say, “Anyone who does not show mercy will not be shown mercy. Anyone who does not forgive will not be forgiven. Anyone who does not turn in repentance will not be turned to nor will he be protected or guarded.” *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad* 372, Grade: *Hasan* (Al-Albani) In-book reference: Book 20, *Hadith* 1, English translation: Book 20, *Hadith* 372, <https://sunnah.com/adab/20/1>

have any maternal aunts?” The man said: “Yes.” He said: “Then be dutiful to them.”³⁹

Furthermore, the Qur'an and *Sunnah* assign specific compensation (*kaffara*) as exoneration for a select group of sins which violate the rights of Allah and/or people. For example, deliberately breaking an obligatory fast and accidental killing (i.e., manslaughter) fall into the category of sins that require *kaffara*. Compensation is of three types and typically calls for either freeing a slave, feeding the needy, or fasting for a specified number of days as legislated specifically for each sin. Also noteworthy is that any instance in which the legal code (*hadd*) is exercised necessitates the individual be absolved of the sin thereafter.⁴⁰ This illustrates another important aspect of *tawba* in that Islam places emphasis on the separation between the sin itself, as a violation, from any ill-judgment and invalidation of the sinner whose sincerity, spiritual journey, and repentance can be known in reality only to Allah. This safeguards one from doubts about Allah's capacity and willingness to forgive, and from the extremes of despair and self-condemnation—it also prevents injustice toward others. It is one's humility before Allah alone that is paramount in the successful moral transformation of individual and society—and it is Allah alone who chooses to forgive whom He wills.⁴¹

On the authority of Jundub (may Allah be pleased with him), who said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ related: A man said: By Allah, Allah will not forgive so-and-so. At this, Allah the Almighty said: Who is he who swears by Me that I will not forgive so-and-so? Verily I have forgiven so-and-so and have nullified your [own good] deeds.⁴²

³⁹ *Jami` at-Tirmidhi* 1904, In-book reference: Book 27, *Hadith* 9, English translation: Vol. 1, Book 1, *Hadith* 1904, <https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/27/9>

⁴⁰ Philips, Abu Ameenah Bilal. *Salvation through Repentance: An Islamic View*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: International Islamic Pub. House. 53-64

⁴¹ ...And if not for the favor of Allah upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have been pure, ever, but Allah purifies whom He wills, and Allah is Hearing and Knowing. [Qur'an, 24:21]

⁴² 40 *Hadith Qudsi* 31, *Muslim*, <https://sunnah.com/qudsi/40/31>

Reparation

Reparation is a practical aspect of *tawba* that applies in cases where a sin was committed that violated another's rights—and in those instances where it is actually possible and advisable to make amends. To elaborate, one is to directly compensate the wronged party, or to provide compensation to the victim's family members, or to simply supplicate for that person (in the case where the one who was wronged is either no longer living or reachable).

Scholars have differed as to whether it is obligatory to make amends in the case of backbiting; some have considered it obligatory to do so for *tawba* to be valid. Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328 CE) held the opinion that this could cause further damage between the sinner and the one he wronged if the victim was unaware of what had been falsely stated about him. In such a situation, *tawba* would include rectifying the matter with speaking words to the opposite effect to the same people in whose company the backbiting took place originally.⁴³ If the violation involves theft of wealth or property, it is to be returned—and if no longer possible, that amount must be given in charity.⁴⁴ The establishment of justice becomes the basis and motivation for one to make amends whenever possible. Making amends serves to safeguard one from the ultimate transfer of good deeds from one's scale of deeds to that of one's victim in the Court of Allah where retribution and justice will prevail. Al-Ghazali held the opinion that it is injustice among people that will be the most common reason for being condemned to the Hellfire.⁴⁵ This serves as consolation to those who were wronged in this world and did not receive reparations. It is also a source of tremendous fear in the heart of every believer who sincerely yearns for Allah's forgiveness and thereby strives to rectify their situation before it is too late. The Prophet ﷺ said:

Whoever has wronged his brother, should ask for his pardon (before his death), as (in the Hereafter) there will be neither a dinar nor a dirham. (He should secure pardon in this life) before some of his good deeds are taken

⁴³ Farid, Ahmad. *The Purification of the Soul According to the Earliest Sources*. London: Al-Firdous, 1996. 153-154

⁴⁴ Ibid 154.

⁴⁵ Stern, M.S. *Al-Ghazzali on Repentance*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1990. 78

and paid to his brother, or, if he has done no good deeds, some of the bad deeds of his brother are taken to be loaded on him (in the Hereafter).⁴⁶

Reparation when it comes to sins involving disobedience and deficiency in regard to obligatory acts involves making up for what has been missed of those acts (e.g., missed fasts) and with increased supererogatory or recommended acts of worship to accompany one's *tawba*.⁴⁷ Al-Ghazali also mentions a number of sins for which the antidote is to treat them with the effective opposite in good deeds to counter and replace the evil of those sins. For example, if one is in the habit of listening to sinful speech, this act should be replaced with that which is rewarded in its place such as listening to something beneficial like the recitation of the Qur'an.⁴⁸

Obstacles to repentance

One may question why so many choose not to seek forgiveness from Allah given the ease and obvious benefits of doing so. The story of the creation of Adam—and of Satan's promise to mislead him and obstruct him from the path to righteousness as part of God's test—provides answers to this question. In essence, there are multiple obstacles, some quite subtle, that come between sinners and repentance. Ibn Taymiyyah has outlined a number of obstacles (explored below) that play a significant role in preventing the sinner from the act of repentance.⁴⁹

Disregard for one's sins

Belittling one's sins leads one to think they need not repent at all; it also contributes to persisting in those sins. When sinners view their sins as trivial, they do not experience true remorse and lack even the slightest motivation to engage in *tawba*. This is all too prevalent in today's culture where people openly brag about

⁴⁶ *Sahih al-Bukhari* 6534, In-book reference: Book 81, *Hadith* 123, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/81/123>

⁴⁷ It was narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The first thing for which a person will be brought to account will be his *Salah*. If it is complete [all well and good], otherwise Allah will say: 'Look and see if My slave did any voluntary prayer.' If he is found to have done voluntary prayers, his obligatory prayers will be completed therewith." *Sunan an-Nasa'i* 467, Grade: *Sahih*, In-book reference: Book 5, *Hadith* 20, English translation: Vol. 1, Book 5, *Hadith* 468, <https://sunnah.com/nasai/5/20>

⁴⁸ Stern, M.S. *Al-Ghazzali on Repentance*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1990. 88

⁴⁹ Taymiyyah, Ibn. *Obstacles That Prevent One from Making Repentance* - Taken from the book, *At-Tawbah*. SalafiManhaj, 2005. <https://ebooks.worldofislam.info/ebooks/Repentance/Obstacles4Repentance.pdf>. 9-19

their sins on social media. Ibn Taymiyyah exposes the underlying cause of this disregard for one's sins as heedlessness of Allah, of His Divine Power, and of His authority to punish. In essence such a sinner lacks faith (*imaan*) and God-consciousness (*taqwa*) to the extent that not making *tawba* becomes the basis for his eventually forgetting to. The Companion Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) succinctly summarized this as follows: "You indulge in (bad) actions which are more insignificant to you than a hair while we considered them at the time of Messenger of Allah ﷺ to be great destroying sins."⁵⁰ Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger ﷺ as saying:

*All the people of my Ummah would get pardon for their sins except those who publicize them. And (it means) that a servant should do a deed during the night and tell the people in the morning that he has done so and so, whereas Allah has concealed it. And he does a deed during the day and when it is night he tells the people, whereas Allah has concealed it.*⁵¹

Al-Ghazali notes that pride and pleasure in minor sins drive people to engage in major sins; thus, major sins are almost always preceded by minor sins.⁵² Furthermore, one is encouraged to keep concealed those sins which Allah has not exposed out of His Mercy and Forbearance—particularly when it comes to encouraging and misleading others toward the same sins. Not only does this safeguard the sinner from disgrace and despair, giving him the opportunity to repent; but it also serves to protect others from the harm that comes with publicizing and normalizing one's sins. As Ibn 'Abbas so profoundly stated, "Woe to the scholar from his followers; he slips but goes right yet people carry the error far away."⁵³

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever sets a good precedent in Islam, he will have the reward for that, and the reward of those who acted in accordance with it, without that detracting from their reward in the slightest. And whoever sets an evil precedent in Islam, he will have a burden of sin for

⁵⁰ *Al-Bukhari*: Book 1, Hadith 63, <https://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/1/63>

⁵¹ *Sahih Muslim* 2990, In-book reference: Book 55, Hadith 68, <https://sunnah.com/muslim/55/68>

⁵² Stern, M.S. *Al-Ghazzali on Repentance*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1990. 82-83

⁵³ *Ibid.* 84

*that, and the burden of those who acted in accordance with it, without that detracting from their burden in the slightest.”*⁵⁴

False hope in time

One of Satan’s tactics is to convince the sinner to put off repenting until he eventually dies a sinner. Ibn Al-Qayyim discussed the crucial role of time in the life of the believer and the sense of urgency one must feel in making *tawba*. He divided time into three periods— past, present, and future. Corresponding to each are specific spiritual and practical aspects of *tawba*: one is to amend what has already passed by seeking forgiveness and abandoning the sin; to safeguard the present with active and conscious servitude to Allah; and to apply restraint and resolution to avoid returning to and persisting in that sin in the future.⁵⁵ In essence, if one is not actively engaged in moving forward with worship, good deeds, and *tawba* at any given moment in time, one will inevitably regress and fall into heedlessness and sin.⁵⁶ This is understood from the Quranic verse, “To whoever wills among you to proceed or stay behind.”⁵⁷ Inaction—whether it stems from apathy or doubt, or from wasting time, or from the assumption that time is on one’s side—is sadly common today but clearly not an option for the believer. Yet again, we see the immense mercy Allah has placed in *tawba* in that one not only amends but actually restores and regains the past as seen in Allah’s saying, “Except for those who repent, believe, and do righteous work. For them Allah will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful.”⁵⁸

Ibn Al-Qayyim viewed the present as the one demanding the greatest effort of the three saying, “And in both of these [the past and the future] there is no hardship or tiredness for the limbs, however the concern is for your life—and that is the time (at present) which is between two times. If you waste it, you will have wasted your

⁵⁴ *Sunan an-Nasa’i* 2554, Grade: *Sahih*, English translation: Vol. 3, Book 23, *Hadith* 2555, <https://sunnah.com/urn/1077320>

⁵⁵ “And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know.” [Qur’an, 3:135]

⁵⁶ Al-Qayyim, Ibn. *The Path to Guidance*.

<https://archive.org/stream/BooksOfIbnQayyimAl-jawziyyah/guide#page/n0/mode/2up>. 72-78

⁵⁷ Qur’an, 74:37, *Sahih International*

⁵⁸ Qur’an, 25:70, *Sahih International*

happiness and your [means of] safety. And if you safeguard it, along with correcting the [other] two times—that which is before it and that which comes after it—with what has been mentioned, you will be saved and you will succeed with ease, pleasure, and bliss.”⁵⁹ Thus, he highlighted the imperative to consciously take charge of every hour, referring to this as gathering provision for either Paradise or the Hellfire.

*“Hasten to forgiveness from your Lord...”*⁶⁰

Assuming that one has attained Allah’s Mercy

Sometimes a sinner counts on the mercy of Allah to be forgiven regardless of the magnitude of his sins without having repented. Allah’s mercy *is* all-encompassing, and includes sinners, as He chooses to forgive and overlook beyond all expectations. However, for a believer, humility requires living a balance between hope of attaining that mercy and fear of Allah’s displeasure and punishment; this hope and fear motivate the believer to adhere to the commands of Allah. The Qur’anic verse, “And they who give what they give while their hearts are fearful because they will be returning to their Lord” exemplifies this balance in the heart of the believer in extending his hand in charity to please Allah—yet remaining fearful of accountability before Allah and humble regarding its acceptance.⁶¹ Ibn Al-Qayyim demonstrates the misguidance in the sinner’s line of thinking by pointing to Satan’s being cursed forever over a simple command to prostrate and Adam’s being expelled from the Garden over a mere morsel of food. While they may appear to be small acts of disobedience, both carried enormous consequences, exemplifying the potential for destruction each and every sin carries.⁶²

*And he does not fear the consequence thereof.*⁶³

⁵⁹ Al-Qayyim, Ibn. *The Path to Guidance*.

<https://archive.org/stream/BooksOfIbnQayyimAl-jawziyyah/guide#page/n0/mode/2up>. 74

⁶⁰ Qur’an, 3:133, *Sahih International*

⁶¹ Qur’an, 23:60, *Sahih International*

⁶² Taymiyyah, Ibn. *Obstacles That Prevent One from Making Repentance - Taken from the Book, At-Tawbah*. SalafiManhaj, 2005. <https://ebooks.worldofislam.info/ebooks/Repentance/Obstacles4Repentance.pdf>. 14-15

⁶³ Qur’an, 91:15, *Sahih International*

Heedlessness

One who is not engaged in the frequent remembrance of Allah will lack the spiritual awareness, conditioning, and fortitude required to abstain from following their desires. This is especially problematic today given the countless distractions that accompany an abundance of leisure time, prosperity, and secularism. Without *taqwa*, such an individual will likely follow his own desires and fall into sin. This obstacle illustrates the negative impact of a spiritually devoid heart on one's actions. *Tawba* is the means of reviving one's heart and realigning one's moral compass and trajectory toward forgiveness and reform. It is for this reason that Allah repeatedly calls our attention to His powerful and at times catastrophic signs, be it natural disasters, calamities, or war; He is, in essence, calling people to wake up from heedlessness and return to Him with *tawba*.⁶⁴

*And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.*⁶⁵

Despair

One of the most destructive obstacles to *tawba* is despair. The sinner who believes his sins are excessive and that Allah will no longer forgive them gives up all hope and does not repent at all. This may stem from a feeling of excessive guilt and hopelessness. Where one would ideally experience remorse, a natural and proactive type of guilt which motivates one to repent and seek closeness to Allah, guilt in this case reaches a dangerous level, becoming a barrier to *tawba*, further distancing one from Allah. Negative sentiment about God and religion seen in the question, “What’s the point of repenting anyway?” is not a modern phenomenon. Rather, it has always been a common strategy of Satan used to distance the servant from his Master—in the same way Satan himself once despaired instead of seeking forgiveness from Allah. Islam teaches us the importance of a healthy balance and outlook toward oneself and others, and to stay clear of either extreme—that of complacency or arrogance on the one hand and outright despair on the other. The Prophet Noah (*Nuh*) preached to his people, a corrupt nation he by and large could

⁶⁴ And We send not the signs except as a warning. [Qur'an, 17:59]

⁶⁵ Qur'an, 51:55, *Sahih International*

not convince, for nine hundred and fifty years, urging them to seek forgiveness.⁶⁶ In a powerful statement, the Prophet ﷺ said, “None of you should long for death, for if he is a good man, he may increase his good deeds, and if he is an evil-doer, he may stop the evil deeds and repent.”⁶⁷ The overwhelming positivity and hope in this is often unfairly and inaccurately masked by the false perception, lack of awareness, and misinformation that Islam preaches a rigid, oppressive, and guilt-inducing way of life. Nothing could be further from the truth. Rather the default in Islam is optimism, hope, and a good standing with Allah such that if and when the believer falters, *tawba* instantly becomes a means back to it.

*Say, “O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”*⁶⁸

Reliance on one’s good deeds

This is the case of the one who thinks his good deeds far outweigh his sins and mistakenly believes that he is guaranteed forgiveness—so he does not repent. The believer should never take forgiveness for granted, given the very real possibility of falling short even in regard to the best of his deeds. Hence, one is instructed to seek forgiveness after every obligatory prayer to acknowledge one’s shortcomings.⁶⁹ We see humility in the example of the noble Prophet Abraham (*Ibrahim*) who, upon completing the monumental task of building the Ka’bah with his son, Ishmael (*Isma’il*) made the following supplication in which he sought forgiveness:

...Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing. Our Lord! and make us Muslims [in submission] to You and from

⁶⁶ “...Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in [continuing] showers and give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers.” [Qur’an, 71:10-12]

⁶⁷ *Sahih al-Bukhari* 7235, In-book reference: Book 94, *Hadith* 10, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/94/10> Also, Ibn ‘Umar narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Indeed Allah accepts the repentance of a slave as long as (his soul does not reach his throat).” *Jami’ at-Tirmidhi* 3537, Grade: *Hasan*, In-book reference: Book 48, *Hadith* 168, English translation: Vol. 6, Book 45, *Hadith* 3537, <https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/48/168>

⁶⁸ Qur’an, 39:53, *Sahih International*

⁶⁹ Whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ finished his *Salat* (prayer), he would beg forgiveness three times [by saying, ‘*Astaghfirullah*’ *Muslim*, Book 20, *Hadith* 8, Arabic/English book reference: Book 20, *Hadith* 1876, <https://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/20>

our descendants a Muslim nation [in submission] to You. And show us our rites and accept our repentance. Indeed, You are the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful.⁷⁰

Related to this obstacle is the practice of taking evidence of worldly success as a sign of Allah's pleasure and favor. The Qur'an and *Sunnah* give us ample proof of cases in which this is true and instances when it is not. For example, the great companions, Uthman ibn Affan and Abdul Rahman ibn Awf were among those promised Paradise and were well-known for their wealth and immense generosity in serving the needs of the *ummah*. However, this becomes a dangerous line of thinking when assumed about oneself. It is equally important to take note of those who were endowed with the best of this world yet still earned the wrath of Allah—The Pharaoh (*Fir'aun*) is a clear example, going so far as to assign himself divine authority and to declare himself to be the Master (*Rabb*) in his arrogance and pride.⁷¹ In fact, it is greed and love for this world, and the illusion of its grandeur, though temporary, that is one of the primary diseases that leads one to sin and opens the way to injustice. What begins with injustice toward oneself opens the door to injustice against others, and can eventually manifest in corrupt leadership, and in turn a morally bankrupt society subjected to injustice and oppression.

*Anas bin Malik narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "If Adam's son had a valley full of gold, he would like to have two valleys, for nothing fills his mouth except dust. And Allah forgives him who repents to Him."*⁷²

The enormous regret of people will be seen on the Day of Reckoning: "The hypocrites will call to the believers, 'Were we not with you?' They will say, 'Yes, but you afflicted yourselves and awaited [misfortune for us] and doubted, and wishful thinking deluded you until there came the command of Allah. And the Deceiver [Satan] deceived you concerning Allah.'" ⁷³

⁷⁰ Qur'an, 2:127-128

⁷¹ Qur'an, 79:17-25

⁷² *Sahih al-Bukhari* 6439 In-book reference: Book 81, *Hadith* 28, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/81/28>

⁷³ Qur'an, 57:14, *Sahih International*

The fruits of *tawba*

Ibn Al-Qayyim derived a number of benefits the believer realizes in this world as a result of abandoning sin—these benefits serve as tremendous motivation to do so immediately. Among them is that *tawba* becomes a means of protecting one’s honor and wealth. When one leaves sinning, one’s heart, body, and soul are all strengthened and contentment overtakes sadness and grief. The path to righteousness is made easier for the believer, he is drawn closer to Allah, and his supplications and those of others for him are readily answered as he gains the love and respect of the people around him. Despite these worldly gains, he becomes eager to meet Allah and desires the reward that awaits him, no longer fearing death. The greatest of benefits no doubt will be realized in the Hereafter when the believer will taste the sweetness of his faith and experience everlasting joy far greater than any pleasure derived from sinning.⁷⁴ The journey described here once again reinforces the interdependence of the spiritual and practical components of *tawba*.

Perhaps one of the most reassuring *hadith* in regard to the benefits of *tawba* is the Prophet’s ﷺ statement, “*The one who repents from sin is like one who did not sin.*”⁷⁵ Scholars further discussed whether the spiritual station of the one who has repented is likened to that of the one who didn’t commit that sin at all, or whether it is possible for the repentant sinner’s station to be even higher. While some say it would be at the same level in light of the *hadith* above, Ibn Taymiyyah made the distinction that while for some this may indeed be the case, for others it is possible to attain an even higher station with Allah. This is because the sinner emerges from sinning and *tawba* more conscientious than before. He cites the example of the Prophet David (*Dawud*) who sought forgiveness from Allah and gained a higher rank.⁷⁶ The same can be noted of Adam and Moses (*Musa*) among others—each of whom gained the favor of Allah and the noble status of prophethood after *tawba*.

⁷⁴ Al-Qayyim, Ibn. *Al-Fawaid: A Collection of Wise Sayings*. Al-Mansura, Egypt: Umm Al-Qura, 2004. 254-255

⁷⁵ *Sunan Ibn Majah* 4250, Grade: *Hasan*, English reference: Vol. 5, Book 37, *Hadith* 4250, Arabic reference: Book 37, *Hadith* 4391, <https://sunnah.com/urn/1293530>

⁷⁶ Farid, Ahmad. *The Purification of the Soul: According to the earliest sources*. London: Al-Firdous, 1996. 156

...Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in [continuing] showers and give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers.⁷⁷

Ibn Al-Qayyim articulated some of the most subtle and beautiful spiritual benefits of *tawba*: the knowledge and insights one develops with regard to the Names and Attributes of Allah. The sinner's journey through the steps of *tawba* is interlaced with the recognition of Allah's Might (*Al-Azeez*) and the Perfection of His Decree (*Al-Qadir*) when one acknowledges one's imperfections and the need for Allah to safeguard one from failure. The believer appreciates that Allah has concealed his sins from being exposed, even though He is the All-Seeing (*Al-Baseer*). It is His Forbearance (*Al-Haleem*) which has delayed punishment, giving the believer time to repent. He feels gratitude for the blessings of Divine Generosity, Mercy (*Al-Rahman, Al-Raheem*) and the Oft-Forgiving (*Al-Ghaffar*) nature of Allah, as the Effacer of sins (*Al-Afu'*) and the One who repeatedly turns to His servants in forgiveness (*At-Tawwab*). One is led through *tawba* through the states of humility, surrender, need, and submission, giving the believer a heightened appreciation for Allah as the All-Seeing (*Al-Baseer*), All-Hearing (*Al-Sami'*), and The Sustainer (*Al-Razzaq*).⁷⁸

Resolve – the heart holds the way forward

Let's consider again the man who had murdered ninety-nine people; his persistence in wanting to repent despite having repeated such a grave sin points to the powerful role of resolve as the final step in a complete and successful *tawba*. Al-Ghazali describes the process as involving an unrelenting battle between one's desires and one's intellect. When the former are strengthened, one is susceptible to sin, and when the latter prevails, one will repent and reform.⁷⁹ Ibn Al-Qayyim described

⁷⁷ Qur'an, 71:10-12

⁷⁸ Farid, Ahmad. *The Purification of the Soul According to the Earliest Sources*. London: Al-Firdous, 1996. 160-162

⁷⁹ Stern, M.S. *Al-Ghazzali on Repentance*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1990. 42-43

this very process when he said, “It is but [firm] resolution and a strong and firm intention [which allows your] body, heart and your inner-self to rest. So whatever has passed you by, you amend by repentance and you correct what has yet to come with restraint, resolution [of one's will] and (firm) intention.”⁸⁰

Allah’s command, “...*And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed*” was revealed well after the establishment of Islam, and first and foremost to the best generation of Muslims who had proven their sincerity through hardship and sacrifice—among them those blessed with the promise of Paradise. These were the Companions who lived around the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, learning from him and striving to emulate him to better themselves in servitude to Allah. Their example leaves no doubt that *tawba* should constitute a way of life for every believer and is required for ultimate success in this world and in the Hereafter.⁸¹ Taking from the example of the noble Prophets, the elite group of Companions, and so many among our pious predecessors, resolve is a consistent component in the life of the believer—one that is born in the spiritual realm. However, for it to take effect as the means to the renewal of *tawba*, it must turn into practice—that of continually seeking knowledge to build certainty in one’s faith and practice, of choosing righteous company, of frequenting the times and places of *dhikr*, and of reminding oneself of the pain of regret as fuel to stay the course of the righteous and be counted in the ranks of those oft-returning to Allah.

And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far,

[It will be said], “This is what you were promised—for every returner [to Allah] and keeper [of His covenant]

Who feared the Most Merciful unseen and came with a heart returning [in repentance].

Enter it in peace. This is the Day of Eternity.”

⁸⁰ Al-Qayyim, Ibn. *The Path to Guidance*.

<https://archive.org/stream/BooksOfIbnQayyimAl-jawziyyah/guide#page/n0/mode/2up>. 73

⁸¹ Farid, Ahmad. *The Purification of the Soul According to the Earliest Sources*. London: Al-Firdous, 1996. 151

*They will have whatever they wish therein, and with Us is more.*⁸²

⁸² Qur'an, 50:31-35