

Repentance

From a lecture by brother Amr Khalid

Translated and Edited by Ihab El-Kady

Khutba delivered by Brother Ihab El-Kady on September 26, 2003. May Allah SWT be pleased with him and continue to bless him for his outstanding work.

[NOTE: Gaps in the text represent portions of the khutba that quoted specific Hadiths and were read in Arabic. Our limited technology prevents us from including these comments in this document. Our humble apologies.]

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The topic of our khutba today, brothers and sisters, is about a state of belief that is most beloved by Allah SWT, the level of levels and the act of acts. Our khutba today brothers and sisters is about Repentance A simple term which means to return to the straight path ordained by Allah SWT, out of fear of His punishment SWT, out of love in your hart for him SWT, out of gratitude for his blessings upon you AWG, and out of hope in His mercy TWT.

The road to repentance starts by inspecting ones actions; past, present, and even future. It starts by realizing what sin you have committed, then realizing Whom you have disobeyed, then by will to stop and abstain from what wrong you have been doing, and then hope in His forgiveness SWT.

Unfortunately brothers and sisters, when we speak of repentance, a large group of people think that the address is not for them, for they are in the most part obedient servants, who pray, give Zakat, fast Ramadan, and have performed or will perform Hajj when they can. Repentance is for the wrongdoers, those who commit the major sins that are worthy of and demand repenting from! Like worshipping another with Allah AWG, or committing murder, or usury, and their likes of huge grave sins. They do not realize that Repentance is for everyone and for every level of faith.

“O you who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance: in the hope that your Lord will remove from you your ills and admit you to Gardens beneath which Rivers flow”[66:8]

And if you open the Qur`aan you will find that this verse was revealed in Medina, and the speech was directed at the best of this Ummah, the companions of the prophet SAW!” It is a mandate, and one of the most beloved acts of worship Allah SWT says:

“Allah loves those who perform repentance and those who purify themselves”[2:222]

The prophet S says:

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“Repent to Allah, for I repent to Him SWT in each day 100 times” The prophet S, the one who has been forgiven of all sin? Yes because repentance as we said is not only from sin, it is a level of belief, and an act of worship. But for the most of us it is rightfully linked to sin, and all types of sin. Major

before minor. For believe it or not brothers and sisters most, if not all of us, are committing major sins day and night! But how can this be? Then what say you brothers and sisters in people who fear others more than they fear Allah? In people who prefer to disobey Allah and obey others? What say you in one who follows his pleasure preferring it to that of Allah AWG? ***“Have you seen one who has taken his pleasure his lord?”*** Like who? Like she who prefers the gazes of adornment from the people in the street to those of neglect and takes off her Hijab? Like he who sways with the companions of sin, fearing their tormenting comments over the torment and punishment of Allah. Before we say we are not among those, we have to ask ourselves, how many times have we delayed our prayer without excuse fearing the displeasure of him and her? How many times have we allowed the limits of Allah to be perturbed fearing the dissatisfaction of such and such to that of Allah? How many times did we obey so and so because deep down we believed that in his hands is our sustenance not in the hands of Allah? Are these not acts of worship worthy of only Allah SWT? Is this not as associating partners to Him AZW?

What say you brothers and sisters in precursors of adultery? Those who gaze at what Allah has forbidden. Those who says and do what he has ordained not fit for righteous Muslims. Young men who have befriended women, and young women who have befriended men in a relation similar to that of marriage but without ever being wedded? What say you in those who spent they nights scanning the channels and surfing the net looking ever so vigorously for images of Haram? Have we not heard what the prophet S said:

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“The eye commits adultery and its adultery is gaze, and the tongue commits adultery and its adultery is talk, and the hand commits adultery and its adultery is touch”

How about delaying the ordained prayers beyond their times, is this not a major sin? Is praying the Zuhr in the time of Asr not a major sin? Is praying Maghrib with Isha not a major sin? Is praying Fajr after the sunrise not a major sin? Have we not heard the prophet S when he said:

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“Who joins two prayers, meaning prays them together at the same time, without an excuse has entered the door of major sin”

Have we not read the verse:

“Wail” (a valley in Hell) So woe to the worshippers Who are neglectful of their Prayers” [107:5]

Ibn Abaas says: *it is not meant by neglectful those who do not pray, rather those who delay the prayer to the end of its time, so they pray Zuhr just before Asr, and pray Asr just before Maghrib.* He was asked: *and what is “Wail”?* He replied: *A valley in Hell filled with serpents and scorpions and is dedicated for those who delay their prayers.*

What say you brothers and sisters in those who treat and address their parents harshly? Do we think that raising our voice over that of a parent is not a major sin? Do we think that slamming the door in face of a parent is not a major sin? Is not a tear that slips from a mother’s or a father’s eye because of what their child has said or done not a huge major sin? No matter and regardless of when, how, or why! Isn’t it Allah SWT who ordains in His book:

“And Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour. And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: "My Lord! bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood”[17:23]

How about backbiting? How about gossip? How many of us have talked bout each other behind their backs? Have we not heard him SWT when He said:

“nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? None of you would abhor it.”[49:12] He SWT compared backbiting to eating the flesh of a dead human. Then what say you in those who backbiter their own parents? Does this happen or not brothers and sisters? Horrendous, but it happens.

Do you see how many major sins we are committing? Do we now believe that we are committing them day and night? Never the less, let us move beyond these major acts of sin. Let us talk about the millions of minor sins that are being continuously committed and mandate repentance. One cannot help but wonder: how many minor sins do you commit every day?

How many lies did you tell? How many unrightfully obtained items and things did you acquire? How many hairs fell out of your Hijab and you carelessly left them? How many cigarettes did you smoke? How many? How many? How many?

Yet it is not only the major nor minor sins that we have to repent from, the gravest of all is being careless of your lord. Being ungrateful for His blessings. Being unaware of His presence. His might. His vengeance. His love. His forgiveness. The question that we echo every time: Why were you created? And the answer is that you were created to know Allah AWG. How many of us know Allah as he is worthy of? How many have worshiped Him as he is worthy of? How many have performed his duties towards Him SWT in their complete form as is worthy of Him? How many have thanked Him SWT for what He has bestowed as He is worthy of? How many of us have done so brothers and sisters in the form and manner worthy of the Lord of the Lords, the bestower of sustenance, the granter of mercy, the great, the glorious, the King?! How many? Does this carelessness of His magnitude not mandate repentance? Who created you? Who ordained your form? Who sustains you? When was the last time you wept from the fear of His vengeance? When was the last time you truly prostrated between His hands as is deserving of his magnitude? When was the last time your hart was humbled when you remembered Allah? When was the last time your tongue moved with Al-Hamdu Lel-Laah? When was the last time you felt the magnitude of His Glory and His might? When brothers and sisters? Does all of this absence not mandate repentance?

Brothers and sisters what is worse than meeting Allah on the Day of Judgment with piles of sin, is meeting Him SWT on that day without ever truly knowing Him AWG. It is for this reason, brothers and sisters, that the

sinner is far better than the servant who is careless absent-minded of Allah SWT. Because a sinner with one day abstain, and may very well repent, but the absent thinks he has done nothing wrong, and will never become alert. Never will his intentions be completely pure, and never will his actions bare meaning or fruit. This is like one who prays like a robot, recites Qur`aan like a parrot, lives his/her life like a machine without a goal or object. Simply moving along like a train on rails, never establishing contact with his Lord.

On top of all of the above brothers and sisters, their remains one more thing that we need to repent from. From sins that we committed long times ago, then abstained from them not because of repentance, rather because of a change in our state of life. Like one who was a disobedient son or daughter to his parents when he was 16 or 17 and then as he or she became a parent themselves they stopped. Like one who committed adultery and stopped because he/she got married. Like one who smoked or took drugs and stopped because of illness. Wa Allahi no matter how old your sin is, or how far back it was, it will not be forgiven until you ask Allah for forgiveness from it. And you come on the Day of Judgment and open your book of deeds to find sins that you committed 60 years ago!

“On the Day that Allah will raise them all up (again) and show them the truth of their conduct. Allah has reckoned it, though they may have forgotten it, for Allah is Witness to all things”[58:6] and He says:

“And the Book (of Deeds) will be placed (before you); and thou wilt see the sinful in great terror because of what is (recorded) therein; they will say, "Ah! woe to us! what a Book is this! it leaves out nothing small or great, but takes account thereof!" they will find all that they did, placed before them: and not one will thy Lord treat with injustice.”[18:49]

Imagine yourself brothers and sisters in this situation on the Day of Judgment!

“On the Day when every soul will be confronted with all the good it has done, and all the evil it has done, it will wish there were a great distance between it and its evil. But Allah cautions you (to remember) Himself. And Allah is full of kindness to those that serve Him”[3:30]

Why brothers and sisters, why meet Allah SWT with the sins of the past, when you have already abstained from them, why not repent and meet Him AWG clean pure without the burdens of the past? Sufyaan Al-Thaury, one the great leading Islamic scholars of the generation of the followers of the companions of the prophet S: *I sat one day to count my sins. Have you ever done so brothers and sisters? I sat one day to count my sins, then I said to myself: You shall meet Allah O`Sufyann? and He shall ask you about each and every one of these sins? Then he said to himself: this is what you remembered, then what do you do with those that Allah has recorded and you have forgotten? Then he said to himself: Repent before you meet Allah.*

He says: *then I sat down recalling my life year by year, I remember the first years of my puppetry, and then repent of that had been of me in them, then the following then the following, until I finished. And when I did, I stood up feeling light.*

Listen brothers and sisters to the call out from Allah AWG:

“Say: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”[39:53]

What more do we need after such an invitation from Allah SWT? What more can we hope or ask for when He SWT says that He shall forgive all of what had been?

“And turn to your Lord (in repentance) and bow to His (Will), before the Penalty comes on you: after that ye shall not be helped.

And follow the Best of (the courses) revealed to you from your Lord, before the Penalty comes on you - of a sudden while you perceive it not!”

Repent before it is too late, before you feel the sorrow and regret of not doing so when you had the chance:

“Lest the soul should (then) say: ` woe to me! in that I neglected (my Duty) towards Allah, and was but among those who mocked!”

“Or (lest) it should say: 'If only Allah had guided me, I should certainly have been among the righteous!”

"Or (lest) it should say when it (actually) sees the Penalty: 'If only I had another chance, I should certainly be among those who do good!"

Repent brothers and sisters before the taste the bitterness of delay. Allah SWT also says:

“And Allah want to accept your repentance” This is his will with us, preconditioned that we actually do repent. But if you do not want, then He SWT warns you:

“And those who do not repent are the transgressors”[49:11]. Then listen to Him SWT with all the mercy that can be when he then says:

“ Do they not know that it is Allah that accepts repentance votaries and receives their gifts of charity, and that Allah is verily He, the Oft-

Returning, Most Merciful?”[9:104] Is this the reason they do not repent?
And he calls himself SWT :

“The forgiver of the sins and the acceptor of the repentance the Strict in His Punishment, the Long in His Reach. There is no god but He: to Him is the Final return.” [40:3]

Allah SWT then says:

“Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord”[3:133]. For the most of the people of Gahanam are those who say I shall, later, soon, etc. When I get married I shall wear the Hijab, when I am an elder I shall be steadfast on my prayer, and so on. And the most screams that the dwellers of Gahanam scream out with are not on the pain and suffering of the torment, rather from the regret and bitterness over sins that they could have repented from, but never did.

Allah SWT says:

“Allah accepts the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and repent soon afterwards; to them will Allah turn in mercy: for Allah is Full of Knowledge and Wisdom”[4:17]

Here ignorance of the sin does not mean that you didn't know that it was a sin, rather, ignorance of the magnitude and displeasure of Allah SWT as you were committing this sin. But hurry up your repentance for He also says in the very next verse:

“Of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil, until death faces one of them, and he says, "Now have I repented indeed;" nor of those who die rejecting faith; for them have we prepared a punishment most grievous.”[4:18].

And you will notice brothers and sisters that throughout the Qur`aan whenever Allah SWT talks about repentance He orders before Iman (belief) ***“Except those who repent , believe and perform good deeds”*** because sins spoil belief and it is only through repentance that one may attain a full Iman. Allah SWT also says:

“O you who believe turn to your lord with a sincere repentance”[66:8], and the meaning is that your repentance has to be inclusive of your entire sin. Yet in the explanation of the verse, it was said that, the word Comes from the Arabic word Which means to give advise, as if you are to perform a repentance so sincere that every time you are to commit sin, it awakens your conscious and advises and warns you against committing it.

Listen brothers and sisters to the Ahadeeths of the prophet S in the matter of repentance to see and understand how easy it is to go back to Allah SWT. The prophet S says:

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“Allah spreads out his hand by night for the wrongdoers of the day to repent, and spreads out his hand by day for the wrong doers of the night to repent” It is out of His mercy and love for you that He SWT is the one outreaching to you day and night. The prophet S also says:

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“Your lord descends every night to the last heaven in the last third of the night and calls out: Who is repenting that I may accept? Who is seeking my forgiveness that I may forgive? Who has something of me to ask that I may grant? And this is every night” Every night your Lord calls upon you co come back to him, doesn't it move you brothers and sisters to hear that Allah is calling out to you every single night. It is reported in the Hadeeth Al-Qudsy, that Allah TWT says:

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“O Son of Adam, as long as you call upon me and pled to me I would forgive what had been of you and shall care not”

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“O son of Adam, if your sins would mount up to the heavens, and then you asked my forgiveness, I would forgive”

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“O son of Adam, if you come to Me with the earths fill of mischiefs, and you come not worshipping another with me, I would grants you its fill in forgiveness ”

How can you hear him SWT calling out to you using these words, yet chose not to answer his call? Wa Allai, true He was SWT when He called Himself

the Forgiver of the Sin, the Acceptor of the repentance, the Granter of Acceptance, the Merciful, the Mercy-giving.

It is narrated that when Iblise disobeyed his lord and refused to prostrate to Adam A, he said:

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“By your might and your glory I will misguide them for as long as their soles are in their bodies”

And Allah AWG replied:

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“By My might and My Glory I will forgive them for as long as they as for My forgiveness”

Endless mercy brothers and sisters, yet a lot of us postpone going back to Him SWT. How much more do we need to hear brothers and sisters before we are moved, before we rid ourselves of the sins of the past, before we abstain from the sins of the present, do we not feel the shame of knowing that He SWT is with us in every step we take, every move we make, every whisper every whimper, yet we ignore Him SWT and worship our desires? Yet after all of this He is still willing to accept your repentance as if nothing had happened!

It is narrated that a man from Bani Israel worshiped Allah 20 years, and then disobeyed him 20 years, yes turned away after being guided, and how often and how many of us are like this, then he looked one day at his mirror and saw the gray hair filling his head and said: *O my Lord I obeyed you 20 years, and I disobeyed you 20 years, O my Lord I wonder, if I turn back to you would you accept me? Then he said to himself: But how can that be after all of what I have done.* Then he slept, and in his sleep he heard a voice calling out to him and saying:

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“*You obeyed Me, so I brought you close, and you disobeyed Me, so I gave you respite, and if you turn to Me I will accept*” What more do we need brothers and sisters, what more can we wish or hope for? But if you still need more then listen to this:

It is narrated that on the days of prophet Mousses A, an extreme drought had struck Bani Israel, crops perished, animals died, and people were starving, and so they went to prophet Mousses A, and asked him to pray and ask Allah for rain to fall from the sky, and so he A gathered them all in a big open space and started praying and pleading , and praying and pleading, but no rain fell from the sky. And so Mousses said to his Lord: *O my Lord, we have prayed and prayed and pled and pled but no rain has fell, O my Lord we are destined to die if you do not grant us your sustenance.* Allah SWT replied: *Amongst you is a man who has disobeyed me for 40 years, and because of the gravity and the disgust of his sin, you have been prevented sustenance. Expel him from amongst you and rain will fall.* Yes brothers and sisters, Wa Allahi, of the consequences of sin, is the prevention of sustenance and the discontinuity of bounty. Mousses then turned to Bani Israel, and said: *I ask you by Allah, between us is a man who has disobeyed Allah for 40 years, let him come out and leave us, for we will not be given continence until he does.* And the man looked to his right and to his left, hoping that another would come out, and then when he realized that it was him who is meant, he said to himself: *I disobeyed you O my Lord for 40 years and you have concealed me. O my Lord, if I go out today I shame and unveil myself. O my Lord, I bear you whiteness that I have repented so do not shame me.* Then raid started suddenly falling, and Mousses said: *O my lord, rain had fallen, yet no one has left?* Allah SWT replied: *rain fell*

because of the repentance of my servant who disobeyed me for 40 years. Mousses replied: Then tell me who he is, that I may congratulate him on his repentance. Allah SWT replied: He disobeyed me for 40 years and I have concealed him, then on the day he repents do you want me to unveil him?

What more brothers and sisters do we need to hear? Who is yet not ashamed by what he/she has been doing behind closed doors? Who yet thinks that he has no repentance to be granted from the gravity of his sin? Who still thinks that he will not be accepted if he turns back?

In the final segment of my khutba today, I would like to address the practical matter of repenting. What are the conditions of repentance?

1. **Regret.**
2. **Abstinence.**
3. **Intent and commitment on never returning.**

Regret on what has been of your sin. Its minimum is to feel the pain in your hart over disobeying Him SWT, and feel the remorse over committing what you have done. Abdullah Bin Omar says:

Who ever commits a sin, and his hart is bittred and saddened over doing it, it will be wiped away from his book of deeds. Never every praise your sin, or think about how much you enjoyed it, for if you do , then you have not repented. In a lot of cases brothers and sisters, this remorse is obtained and expresses by extra prayers, by extra charity, by extra deeds, that you do thinking of what you have committed, pleading to Allah with your actions for forgiveness, and hoping for His acceptance.

Then there is immediate Abstinence from the sin you are repenting from. For whoever repents while persisting on his sin is like one who takes

who is making fun of and taking Allah lightly! Be worry, be very worry of the vengeance pf your lord if you do so.

Then finally there is the intent and commitment that you will never return to this sin again. If you satisfy these three conditions than have certainty and belief that Allah SWT has forgiven you. Only these three and I will be forgiven? Yes only these three, and if you do not believe this, then this would be your first sin after the others have been wiped.

But what happens if you did have the intention and you did abstain for a while but Satan swayed you again, then you turn back to Him SWT and ask once more for forgiveness and He will forgive. The prophet S says:

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“A servant committed sin, then he said: O my Lord, I have sinned, so forgive me. Allah AW replied: My servant knew that he has a Lord who records sin and forgives sin, I have forgiven him”

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“Then he sinned again and said: O my Lord, I have sinned, so forgive me. Allah AW replied: My servant knew that he has a Lord who records sin and forgives sin, I have forgiven him”

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“Then returned again and sinned and then said: O my Lord, I have sinned, so forgive me. Allah AW replied: My servant knew that he has a Lord who records sin and forgives sin, I have forgiven him. Let my servant do what he wills as long as he repents to me”

Be careful brothers and sisters, this is not an invitation to sin, in each time of the above Hadeeth the

assumption is a pure complete repentance, and the assumption is that you will repent before you die, and no one has a guarantee on that time and place, for it could be as you are sinning!

It is also narrated that a man came to the prophet S and asked:
..... *“What say you if I committed a sin?”*

The prophet S replied: *“It will be recorded.”*

The man replied: *“What if I repent?”*

The prophet S replied: *“It will then be wiped.”*

The man replied: *“What if I returned to it again?”*

The prophet S replied: *“It will be recorded.”*

The man replied: *“What if I repent?”*

The prophet S replied: *“It will then be wiped.”*

The man replied: *“What if I returned to it again?”*

The prophet S replied: *“It will be recorded.”*

The man replied: *“What if I repent?”*

The prophet S replied: *“It will then be wiped.”*

The man then replied: *“until when will it be whipped?”*

The prophet S replied: *“Allah does not get bored by forgiveness until you get bored by asking for it.”*

Added to the previous conditions of repentance is a 4th condition if the sin was not between you and your Lord, rather between you and another person. The 4th condition is that you understand what wrong that you have done. By returning what you unlawfully took if had taken any. By asking forgiveness from one whom you have backbitten. By fixing what you have destroyed. But what if what I did was un-erectable? Then in that case, you

ask for forgiveness of the person, and you befriend him, and give him gifts with the intention of forgiveness until he does.

At the end of the Khutba, brothers and sisters, I would like to mention one more benefit for repentance. Allah SWT says:

“Those who invoke not, with Allah, any other god, nor slay such life as Allah has made sacred, except for just cause, nor commit fornication, and any that does this (not only) meets punishment. But) the Penalty on the Day of Judgment will be doubled to him, and he will dwell therein in humiliation”[25:69]

Then after all of this warning and promise of torment and punishment, He SWT says in the very next verse:

“Unless he repents, believes and works righteous deeds, for Allah will change the evil of such persons into good, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful, And whoever repents and does good has truly turned to Allah with an (acceptable) conversion.”[25:70]

Yes brothers and sisters, your sins are turned into good deeds, and in place of the mountains of sin no matter how grave, are now mountains of good

deeds as long as you have made a sincere repentance. In fact it is narrated that on the days of judgment, the repenting sinner will be brought and stood between the hands of his Lord and ordered to read his book of deeds. And he passes by his sins and his face darkens, and he passes by them again, and his whole body shivers, and he passes by more and more and his hart trembles, for he is doomed. And then he is ordered to read it again, and he finds that in place of his sins are now good deeds, and he reads even more and now he smiles and his hart dances from joy, to the point that he says:

..... *My Lord, there are other sins that the Angles forgot to record!* And this applies to those who have also turned Muslims after being non-Muslims, for the repentance from Kufr, is Iman.

Now, I ask you by Allah, brothers and sisters, after you have heard what you have heard, and after you realized the ease of repentance, the reward of carrying it out, will you not repent today? From sins of your past that you may have forgotten? From major sins in your present that you have taken lightly? From the endless stream of minor sins that you commit every day?