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Khutbah

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Title: [Repentance and Forgiveness: Turning to Good Deeds](#)

DVD title: Sincere Repentance Transforms Evil Deeds to Good Deeds

Allah reveals in Holy Qur'an the following 'āyat. It says in Suratu Tawbah:

But the Messenger and those who believe in him, struggle in the way of Allah with their wealth and their selves. It is they who will have good things and it is they who are successful. (9:88)

Allah says in Suratu-l-Furqan:

Say: the one who repents and believes and performs righteous deeds, of such, Allah will change their evil deeds to good and Allah is Ever Forgiving, Singularly Compassionate. (25:70)

And Allah says in Suratu-z-Zumar:

Truly We have sent you down a Book of Truth. So worship Allah alone and make your religious and spiritual life, your *dīn*, sincere. All those who have taken protection from other than Him, say, "We only worship them so that they may bring us closer to Allah." Surely Allah will judge between them concerning everything they differ upon between themselves. Surely Allah does not guide anyone who is a liar or anyone who covers up. (39:3)

So what is the quality mentioned here? Sincerity. *Alhamdulillah*. The Qur'an and the Sunnah speak frequently and emphatically about the fact that a worshipper who repents and asks forgiveness for his sins, will be forgiven and will not be asked about those sins again. In fact, Allah (swt) tells us that those sins will be exchanged for good deeds. Allah says: **“Except those who repent and believe and work righteous deeds their evil deeds will be turned into good deeds.”** Ibn Kathir discusses this issue of evil deeds being turned into good deeds in his *tafsīr*. He says, *“There are two opinions of what it means.”*

The second opinion, which is what I will focus on, is that those evil deeds which have passed are turned into good deeds by the way of the true and sincere repentance itself. This is because every time a person remembers what he has done, and he regrets it, feels remorse, and seeks Allah's forgiveness...what are the four things? He remembers it, he regrets it, feels remorse, and he seeks forgiveness. In this way, the sin becomes an act of obedience. On the Day of Judgment, even if he finds those deeds recorded against him, they do not harm him and are turned into good deeds on the page of his account. This is what is established in the Sunnah and by the statements related to us by the pious predecessors. Here is the text of the *hadith*:

Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Indeed I know the last person to leave the hell fire and the last person to enter paradise. A man will be brought and it will be said: “Set aside his major sins and ask him only about his minor ones.” It will be said to him, “On a certain day, did you do such deeds? And on a certain day, did you do such and such a deed?” He will say, “Yes” unable to deny anything of it. Then it shall be said to him, “For you is a good deed for each of those evil deeds.” Then he will say, “O my Lord, I did other things that I do not see recorded here.” Thereupon Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) laughed and laughed

until we could see his molar teeth. The human being by nature is prone to error. That is why that Prophet Mohammed (sal) said, "Every descendant of Adam is oft to err, and the best of those to err are those who are oft to repent."

The Prophet Mohammed (sal) also said, *"If you were not to commit sins, Allah would remove you and replace you with a people who would commit sins and then seek Allah's forgiveness, just so Allah could forgive them."*

And Ibn Hanafiya relates that from Sidna Ali (as) that the Prophet (sal) said, *"Indeed, Allah loves the believing servant who falls into trials and then repents."*

Ibn Hagar Alaskalani mentions this statement in the Fath al-Bahri with the words, *"The best of you are those who fall into trials and then repent."*

Therefore, we have to make ourselves upright. We shouldn't complain. We shouldn't moan and groan over our past faults. We shouldn't also plan the fault with the idea that we are going to repent. We must know that none of us is going to gain any admission to Jannah by virtue of our deeds, but only by Allah (swt) encompassing us with His Mercy, His Rahmat, His Rahīm, and His Fadl, His Blessing and Grace. The believer, all of us, might very well, at times, think we are weak and actually be weak. At times we may even be indulgent, or even think we are indulgent.

However, the believer does not establish the foundation of his being-ness upon his sin or doesn't persist in that heedlessness. He neither despairs of Allah's Mercy nor does he or she see renewal/*tajdīd* as hopelessness. Instead, the *mu'min*, the true Muslim resolves him or herself to seek Allah's Forgiveness and to follow up their evil deeds with works of righteousness. He knows for certain that Allah is

the most merciful of all and the best of the forgivers. Allah's Mercy encompasses all things. Allah says, **“Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to those who do good.”**

We should resolve first of all, then, to be among those who are doing good. We should understand that if we are established among those who do good, then whatever other faults we have can be changed. We have to make it a habit to make *dhikru-Llāh* to thank Allah, to make *tawbah* to seek forgiveness, and to do good deeds to wipe away the evil ones. If we slip, as we will; and if we commit sins, as we do; we must make sure not to follow it up again with another one—to have that intention, at least. We must rush to what is good to wipe away the effect of what is evil on our slate. We have to cleanse our countenance, our body, our mind, our face and remove the pain of those actions from our souls.

In so doing we can remove the pain of our actions from the hearts and the minds of those around us, who love us, or who know us. The believer knows that he or she has no power over their own to turn away from sins or turn away from heedlessness to awareness, from weakness to strength except by the Fadl of Allah, by Allah's Nai'ma/Grace. We ask Allah (swt) by His Grace and Generosity to turn ourselves towards Allah's Mercy and Forgiveness and not to leave us to our own desires, not even for a blink of an eye.

I read to you, **“Worship Allah alone in doing religious deeds or good deeds sincerely for Allah's sake.”** Do not set up any rivals with Him. Surely the *dīn*, the worship, the *ibāda* is for Allah alone. Sidna Umar ibn Akhatab related that he heard the Prophet Mohammed (sal) saying, ***“The reward of deeds depends on intention. Every person, will get the reward according to what he intended. Whoever immigrated from worldly benefits or for a woman or man to marry, their immigration was for what they immigrated for.”*** The meaning of sincerity,

then, which is at the root of this transformation, is to purify one's intention or deeds. What is sincerity? To purify one's intentions and one's deeds from all things that can render it void, like showing off, or innovations that are destructive.

Actions can, of course, have the same form and the same shape, but they differ according to what the intention is. They differ according to what your sincerity is. You can take somebody out to dinner to get their business, or you can take somebody out to dinner for their company. You can sit with someone to impress someone with your knowledge, or you can sit with someone for *suhbat*. You can pray to get rewards only for yourself and to win in some situation or you can pray for strictly for the sake of Allah. You can ask for forgiveness because it is the thing to do so you can say that you did it, or you can ask for forgiveness out of *taqwa*. The truthful intention and sincerity is different from the lack of sincerity and the selfish or self-centered intention.

The person who is sincere in their action will be among the nearest ones to Allah, and the insincere one among the punished ones. What is that nearness to Allah? The nearness to Allah is seeing Allah, being aware of that Divine Presence, being aware of the love that is coming towards you. It can be the love of the parents for the children, from the children to the parents, from friend to friend, from husband to wife, from brother to sister, from members of the community to one another, from members of the nation to other nations. Those sincere actions bring you nearer to Allah, because Allah is present in all of those relationships. If you don't see it, this is a tremendous punishment.

This is a tremendous punishment, because, if nothing else, you will not see the Jannah. You will not see the good. You will be blind in the Hereafter—not just blind, but you will not know where you are. You will be removed from the Beloved and not see the nearness to Allah. That has many implications, in the

way I tell this to you, about the way the system operates, about the blessing. Can you imagine living your life, even up to this day, even up to this moment, even if you are the youngest in this room without any love shown to you, without any compassion being shown to you? Even the littlest one in this room, [can you imagine if] they fell down and they hurt themselves, they skinned their knees outside this mosque and no one would come to help, the mother would not pick up and the father would not pick up the child? Could you imagine? Even the youngest in this room. So then, how many such experiences—if you are the oldest in this room—have you had of the Rahmat of Allah (swt)?

How many times has that Divine Presence in the form of a brother or a sister, a husband or wife, a friend, a mother, a father, a stranger shown you that Divine Love and Presence? Can you imagine living your life without any of that—ever? That would be hell. Wouldn't that be hell? Because you are yearning for something that you cannot have. You are in a place where others are getting it, but you are getting nothing. All the lower part of your nature would rise up. The one who is sincere in their action will be the ones nearest to Allah, and the insincere will be among the ones who are cursed. Allah says in Suratu Tawbah: **“But the Messenger and those who believed with him, strove hard and fought with their wealth and their lives, such are they for whom are the good things and it is they who will be successful.”**

For those who are insincere, He says: **“Verily the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths, the lowest grade of the fire and no help will you find for them.”** Would you find a helper among people who cared nothing? You would only have companions in hell, so to speak. To further underline the importance of sincerity and the gravity of hypocrisy, Allah categorizes those who do good into two groups. One will be in Paradise, and the other will be in Hell. Now we have understood what that means from our point of view: among the good and the

happy and the pleasing, seeing the countenance of Allah everywhere, and remembering that is the countenance of Allah; or being totally oblivious of that and being among those who are totally oblivious and who cannot fulfill their true journey. It is one way of seeing it—not the only way, but one way.

As for those who are in Jannah, they are the ones who carry out their deeds with sincerity with Allah. The second group who will be in Jahannam are those who show off. Here is a *hadith* that gives a vivid explanation. Prophet Mohammed (sal):

Benefits of this world are for four persons) only. A servant of Allah whom Allah favors with wealth and knowledge, he fears that Allah does good to his kin and recognizes Allah's rights in that wealth. This servant is of the highest rank.

The second one is one who Allah's favors with knowledge and does not give him wealth, but he is sincere and says: "If only I had money, I would do such and such a good thing." He and the first person will be equal in reward because of his good intention.

The third is a person whom Allah blesses with wealth without knowledge, spends his wealth uselessly, does not fear his Lord, nor does good to his kith and kin and neither recognizes Allah's rights in their wealth. This one is of the worst rank.

The fourth is the one servant who Allah never either blessed with wealth or knowledge and he says, "If only I had wealth, I would do like such and such a person." He and the third person will be equal in sin because of his bad intention.

This is a way of understanding it. If you take it into the personal context and out of the literal fear mongering that one finds sometimes among the *katibs*; and think only of the good deeds, the repentance and the sincerity; and not get so wound up and caught up in the uselessness of repentance because I have done such and such and the hell-fire is waiting for me, then you can understand truly how much control over your own life you have been given, how much opportunity you have been given. Who is it that you are going to account to at the end? Who is it that the soul will account to? Your neighbor? Your buddy? Your drinking partner? Your doping partner? The other evil person? The person of equally bad deeds? The liar? The cheat? Who are you going to account to?

You are going to account to Allah. What does it mean? Are you going to find yourself forever in misery, or are you going to find yourself forever in joy and gratitude because you find out and made your best intention and best effort. And every time you fell down, you reached for the rope; and every time somebody gave you a hand, you took it; and every time somebody fell down, you gave them a hand. You didn't judge them and you didn't hold onto that initial judgment. This is the opportunity of life.

Asalaam aleikum.