

# Repentance and Constantly Returning to Allah - Tawbah and Inaabah

We are all familiar with the term Tawbah (when one repents to Allah), but there is another very similar term called Inaabah (إِنَابَةٌ), a term mentioned in the Qur'an many times. And since it is Ramadhāan, we want to move from Tawbah to Inaabah. Ibn al-Qayyim said it is to hasten pleasing Allah, while continuously and repeatedly returning to Allah (at all times). Meaning, it is Tawbah but continuous Tawbah. Part of Inaabah is to retreat to Allah with your heart, with love, reverence and sincerity in accordance to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Just as one retreats in the last ten days of Ramadhāan for I'tikaaf, leaving everything behind, Inaabah is constant returning in I'tikaaf to Allah. A heart needs to retreats to Allah with honour because if it does not do so with Allah, it retreats with humility to other than Allah. Turning fully to Allah in trials and at ease is Inaabah.

A person who is Muneeb (مُنِيبٌ) is one who repents when he commits a sin but goes further beyond that to change and become in constant contact with Allah, with a relationship with Allah.

Allah said it about Ibraheem 'alayhis-salaam:

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ ﴿٧٥﴾

Verily, Ibraheem was, without doubt, forbearing, used to invoke Allah with humility, and was repentant (to Allah all the time, again and again). (Surat Hud: 75)

Ibraheem was without a doubt forbearing, which is Haleem (حَلِيمٌ). Invoking Allah with humility, that is Awwaah (أَوَّاهٌ). And Muneeb (مُنِيبٌ) is repenting constantly, time and time, again and again, constant repenter to Allah.

A verse considered by some of the 'Ulamaa to be the most hopeful verse in the Qur'an:

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ  
اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ  
وَأَسْلِمُوا... ﴿٥٤﴾ ﴿الزمر﴾

Say: O 'Ibaadi (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, verily Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. And turn in repentance and in obedience with true Faith (Islamic Monotheism) to your Lord and submit to Him (in Islam). (Surat az-Zumar: 53-54)

After repentance, Allah mentions:

وَأَنِيبُوا

That is what we are targeting.

Inaabah is three levels. The first level is the root of Inaabah (the principle), which is leaving Shirk to Tawheed, leaving Kufr to Islam. Not having this will make one a Kaafir, because it is leaving Kufr to Islam. That is the first level and it is taken out of the verse:

وَالَّذِينَ اجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ أَن يَعْبُدُوهَا وَأَنَابُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ ۚ فَبَشِّرْ  
عِبَادِ ﴿الزمر: ١٧﴾

Those who avoid At-Taaghoot (false deities) by not worshipping them and turn to Allah in repentance, for them are glad tidings; so announce the good news to My slaves. (Surat az-Zumar: 17)

The second level of Inaabah is the Inaabah of al-Muttaqeen (the pious), leaving sins and committed in doing deeds. Whoever does not have this one, he is Muslim and he falls under Islam but we fear Hell over him unless Allah forgives Him (because he has sins). That is taken out of the verse in Surat az-Zumar:

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ  
اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿الزمر: ٥٣﴾

Say: O 'Ibaadi (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, verily Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat az-Zumar: 53)

And the following verse after it:

وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ  
﴿الزمر: ٥٤﴾

And turn in repentance and in obedience with true Faith (Islamic Monotheism) to your Lord and submit to Him, (in Islam), before the torment comes upon you, then you will not be helped. (Surat az-Zumar: 54)

The third and final level of Inaabah is the level we are trying to target this Ramadhaan, the Inaabah of the Muhsineen. The peak, complete turning to Allah in your heart and in your body. Constantly returning to Allah again and again, in all times and in all situations, and being in complete submission to Allah. This is the best form of Inaabah. This is the Inaabah of Ibraheem 'alayhis-salaam, this was the level of Ibraheem 'alayhis-salaam:

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ ﴿هود: ٧٥﴾

Verily, Ibraheem was, without doubt, forbearing, used to invoke Allah with humility, and was repentant (to Allah all the time, again and again). (Surat Hud: 75)

And it is also mentioned that Shu'ayb said:

...وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ۗ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ ﴿هود: ٨٨﴾

And my success cannot come except from Allah, in Him I trust and unto Him I repent. (Surat Hud: 88)

Ibn Taymiyyah Rahimahullah said the people of this level are the people most tested by the Shaytaan because they are the best, and the Shaytaan wants to get the best off track. Look at the master of humans, the Imaam of all Imaams, the master of the repenters, the master of the worshippers, sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam. He said:

وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً

By Allah, I seek the forgiveness of Allah and repent to Him seventy times every day. Seventy times in Sahih Bukhari and then a hundred times in Sunan an-Nasaa'ee. If the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam whose past, present and future sins are forgiven and he repents and asks Allah for forgiveness between seventy to a hundred times a

day, how many times should we ask when we are not guaranteed forgiveness for one of the hundreds or thousands of sins that we have committed?

Sins harden the hearts, so repent to soften your heart. It is a disease.

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً... ﴿البقرة :

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Then, after that, your hearts were hardened and became as stones or even worse in hardness. (Surat al-Baqarah: 74)

Sins darken the heart so repent, so you can cleanse your heart. There is no better time than these blessed days.

Allah said:

كَلَّا ۚ بَلْ ۙ رَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِم مَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿المطففين: ١٤﴾

Nay! But on their hearts is the Raan (covering of sins and evil deeds) which they used to earn. (Surat al-Mutaffifeen: 14)

Dot after dot placed on the heart, it comes to a time when you need to wash it out.

'Awn Ibn Abdillah said the ones who are constantly repenting to Allah are the ones you should always be with, because they have the softest hearts.

Repentance is a great bargain with Allah. Look at the deal you strike. You make a mistake, you transgress, you repent and you correct your future, all your sins are forgiven and a big baggage more. This Ramadhaan, no one forgot to stock up on food and groceries, and if they did then they go prepare for it before Maghrib. But what about stocking up on Istighfaar, Tawbah, good deeds and repentance?

يا رب إن عظمت ذنوبي كثرة فلقد علمت بأن عفوك أعظم ، إن كان لا

يرجوك إلا محسنٌ فبمن يلوذ ويستجير الآثم

O Lord, if the greatness of my sin increases, then I know Your forgiveness is even greater. If only the righteous call You, then who would the sinners like me go to?

أدعوك ربّي كما أمرت تضرعاً فإذا رددت يدي فمن ذا يرحم

I call on You my Lord as you ordered and commanded, with humility, with reverence, and if You turn away my hands then who else is going to accept from me? If You turn away my hands, then who else is going to have mercy on me? If You turn away my hands, then who else is going to forgive me?

مَالِي إِلَيْكَ وَسِيلَةٌ إِلَّا الرَّجَاءُ وَجَمِيلٌ عَفْوِكَ ثُمَّ أَنِي مُسْلِمٌ

All I have is hope in You Yaa Allah, that You will forgive me and that I am a Muslim. One of the most popular questions I get on this matter of repentance and Inaabah is, I repent and then I do a sin, then I repent and I do a sin, and I give up and I despair. Allah is talking to you, did you read the Qur'an? Allah is talking to you, calling you:

... يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ... ﴿الزمر: ٥٣﴾

O 'Ibaadi (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! (Surat az-Zumar: 53)

Allah did not say O you believers and He did not say O mankind, as He said many times in the Qur'an. He did not say Muttaqoon, He did not say the pious and He did not say the Muhsineen. He did not say the forerunners, the Saabiqun Bil-Khayraat (سَابِقُ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ). He called on the sinners not to despair.

'Aasim Ibn Rajaa' said Umar Ibn Abdul-Azeez gave a speech one time and he said O people, if you fall in a sin then repent, and if you do it again then repent again, and if you do it again then repent again because the sins enclose on the necks and they are a destruction. And the peak of destruction, the destruction of all destructions is remaining on sins and persisting on them without repenting.

An authentic Hadith al-Qudsi in Sunan at-Tirmidhi. O son of Adam, as long as you call on Me, I shall forgive you of what you have done and think nothing of it. O son of Adam, even if your sins were to reach the clouds in the sky and then you were to come and ask for My forgiveness, I would forgive you and think nothing of it. O son of Adam, if you were to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and you were to meet Me after death not making any Shirk, I would bring you forgiveness as great as the earth and think nothing of it. You are dealing with the Ghafoor, you are dealing with Ar-Raheem, you are dealing with the 'Afuw. That is what you get out of the qualities of Allah which you know about.

Ibraheem Ibn Shaybaan said there was a twenty year old youth that he knew. The Shaytaan instigated to him that you are young, why would you repent right now and leave the pleasures of this life? You have a long life ahead of you. So he went back to his sins and his old ways. In the midst of the sins, he had a flashback to his old days with Allah. A believer is still a believer even during sinning, he still has Laa Ilaaha Illallah in his heart. So he yearned and longed and began to cry and weep for those days. He said

will Allah ever accept from me? Then he heard a voice (it was possibly him talking to himself) saying:

عَبَدْتَنَا فَشَكَرْنَاكَ ، وَعَصَيْتَنَا فَأَمَّهَلْنَاكَ ، وَلَئِنْ رَجَعْتَ إِلَيْنَا قَبْلُنَاكَ

You worshipped Us and We thanked you, you sinned and We gave you respite, you come back and We will accept from you.

If you repented and got fooled by the Shaytaan, then return, do not be ashamed and do not despair. When you continuously repent, it is like a wrestling match with the Shaytaan. Every time you repent, you have pinned the Shaytaan down and won, you are the champ. Once you despair and stop repenting, the Shaytaan became the champ and you do not want that. Do not be a surrenderist and accept continuing sinning and being on the wrong path. Resist and struggle the sins. Maybe one of your shouts to Allah in repentance will be so sincere that He will write you among those swayed from being in Jahannam, and take you into Jannah.

How can you despair in Allah with all these Ayaat and Ahaadith, when He is asking you. Why is He asking you to repent when Allah does not need me nor you? He is Independent and Sovereign. That is Ar-Raheem, that is Al-Ghafoor, that is Al-'Afuw. Wallahil-'Adheem, you are dealing with One more merciful than your mother.

# Repentance

Wallahil-'Adheem you are dealing with One more merciful than your mother. In Sahih al-Bukhari and Muslim, the Sahaabah were sitting after a battle and they saw a woman from those who were captured. She was running after every child looking for her son. She would take every child, hug him, nourish him and then pass on and go to the next child. A very moving scene that moved the Sahaabah and the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam. The Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam decided to make a lesson out of it for the Sahaabah. He asked them, do you think that mother would ever throw her son in Hell? They said no, never. He said Allah is more merciful with His servants than that mother is with her child.

Several days ago I was reading Surat an-Nisaa' and a meaning popped up in my mind that I had never thought of before. In the Qur'an, Allah commands the parents to take care of their children when He talks about inheritance.

يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ... ﴿النساء: ١١﴾

Allah instructs you concerning your children. (Surat an-Nisaa': 11)

Many people think the most merciful to them is their parent, yet in this verse Allah is telling who you think is most merciful (your mum and your dad) to take care of their children. Allah is telling the ones you think are the most merciful to take care of you. You see that mercy? It was the Du'aa of some of the righteous, O Allah my mother is the most merciful to me and she would never ever let me be in torment and she would take me out of it, O Allah You are more merciful to me than my mother so protect me from the torment Yaa Arham Ar-Raahimeen (يا الرحم الرحمين).

With me (a human), you make a mistake or even before you make a mistake, before one shot and two shots or three strikes, I abandon you. But dealing with the Ghafoor, Ar-Raheem and Al-'Afuw, you are dealing with different measures.

...وَلِلَّهِ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَى... ﴿النحل: ٦٠﴾

And for Allah is the highest description. (Surat an-Nahl: 60)

Never despair. In the authentic Hadith in Sahih Muslim on the authority of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri, the man who killed ninety nine people (one of the biggest sins after Shirk). He went to an ignorant worshipper and he asked him can he repent. The worshipper said ninety nine? No way. So he finished them off, and that in itself is actually a lesson. If the doors of repentance were closed, it would cause chaos on this earth because what have you got to lose? Just go ahead and be full blown evil, you have nothing to lose. Then he asked an 'Aalim (a knowledgeable person). He told him I have killed a hundred people,

can I repent? He said nothing can stop you from repenting, get out of this evil land. Allah not only forgave him, but changed the universe for him. On his way to the new town, He shortened the universe for him, in honour for him (when the angels who take the good soul quarreled with the angels who take the evil soul). Allah changed the universe for a killer who killed one hundred innocent souls and repented. Imagine what He will do for me and you.

When you feel despair and you are going to despair in Allah, remember the story everyone knew as a kid, of the People of the Trench (Ashaab al-Ukhlood ( أصحاب (الأخدود)). It was a massacre and a genocide, they annihilated people of Laa Ilaaha Illallah. They killed the righteous young boy who stood up to them. Massacre and genocide. What does Allah say?

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿البروج: ١٠﴾

Verily, those who put into trial the believing men and believing women (by torturing them and burning them), and then do not turn in repentance, (to Allah), will have the torment of Hell, and they will have the punishment of the burning Fire. (Surat al-Burooj: 10)

Those who put the believing men and women into trial and did not turn in repentance. Look at that, and did not turn in repentance. Do you know what it means? Had they repented from their crimes, Allah would have forgiven them because He said:

ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا

And they did not repent.

There is no sin too big and there is no sin too small. Repent and Allah forgives all. Ramadhaan is the season for it, start right now. Number one, regret the past. Promise not to do it again and say Astaghfirullah. If it deals with the rights of other people, try to give it back to them directly, if not indirectly. If it will stir up Fitnah then make Du'aa for them, give charity in their name or mention them in good. Simple, you do that sincerely and Wallahi the Ghafoor, Ar-Raheem is going to accept.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَعْفُو عَنِ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿الشورى: ٢٥﴾

And He it is Who accepts repentance from His slaves, and forgives sins, and He knows what you do. (Surat ash-Shoora: 25)



He promised.

﴿النساء: ١٢٢﴾ وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا

And whose words can be truer than those of Allah? (Surat an-Nisaa': 122)

Not only will He accept, He will change them into deeds.

إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿الفرقان: ٧٠﴾

Except those who repent and believe (in Islamic Monotheism), and do righteous deeds, for those, Allah will change their sins into good deeds, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat al-Furqaan: 70)

Not only that, He will love you.

﴿البقرة: ٢٢٢﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ...

Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance. (Surat al-Baqarah: 222)

Get up my brother and sister and shake the dust of sins off your back. Spice up and decorate your Tawbah more by making Wudhu and two Rak'ah. Declare your Tawbah to Him, cry in agony over your sins and start the path to Allah. Repentance is a shadow that should never ever depart you. Repentance is condolence to those who are righteous. Ramadhaan is the prosperous season for all that. Do not get arrogant by any knowledge you have or any deeds that you ever did. No matter how much you have of it, Wallahi we are all in the boat of sinning together. We are all in the same boat.

In Sahih al-Bukhari, look at this beautiful, amazing Hadith. A servant committed a sin and said O Allah forgive my sin. So Allah said My servant committed a sin and he has known that he has a Lord that forgives his sin and punishes for his sin, I forgive him. Then he sinned again. Allah knows us, Allah knows His servants.

﴿الملك: ١٤﴾ أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ...

Should not He Who has created know? (Surat al-Mulk: 14)

He knows we are going to do it again and again, we are going to sin more and more. He knows who He created and their nature because He created us.

He sinned again and the sinner said O Allah forgive my sin. Allah said My servant has committed a sin, he knows that he has a Lord who forgives his sin and punishes for his sin. Then he said again a third time, O Lord I sinned forgive my sin. Look at that, three times. Allah says My servant has committed a sin and he knows that he has a Lord that forgives his sin and punishes for his sin, do what you wish I have forgiven you. I did not make a mistake here, Allah tells him do what you wish for I have forgiven you. Did you hear that? Not meaning you get a free ticket to Jannah. It means you are forgiven as long as you sincerely repented (as in the earlier part of the Hadith) and you continue to repent.

Wallahi there is so much hope in these Hadith that sometimes we have to warn that there is too much hope here, do not get carried away with hope because that is a danger zone as well. Never ever ever repent while you are planning the next sin. That is fake and that is fraud with Allah.

Make Allah happy. Yes I said it right, make Allah happy. In Sahih al-Bukhari, Allah is happier with one who repents more than a man whose on a journey in a desert, he loses his food, water, transportation and camel so he sits there by the tree and awaits death. Suddenly he looks up and the camel is before his eyes with his water, food and everything he needed. From awaiting death to sudden relief. Out of excitement he says O Allah you are my slave and I am your Lord. Allah gives a scenario of how happy one is when life comes back to him and Allah is happier than that when one repents. Make Allah happy my brother and my sister by not sleeping until you spill your heart out to Allah. Not just today but every day, today will be the start. Do it today so if you die you will meet Allah on a clean state.

Does one not have shame that Allah descends to the heaven closest to the earth every single night in the one third end of the night (in a manner that best suits Allah, we do not know how).

... لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ۖ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿الشورى: ١١﴾

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All Hearer, the All Seer. (Surat ash-Shoora: 11)

He descends and asks at a time when nearly everyone is between sins and sleep. They are either watching that which Allah prohibited, drinking in places that Allah prohibited or they are in deep sleep. That is the majority of the world. Be among the few of the few who are crying, begging and pleading to Allah.

In conclusion, I said a few days ago that anyone who does a deed will see its affect in this life and in the Aakhirah. You get the bonus (this life), but the main goal is the Aakhirah. From the verse:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ  
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿النحل: ٩٧﴾

Whoever works righteousness, whether male or female, while he (or she) is a true believer (of Islamic Monotheism) verily, to him We will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision), and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do (i.e. Paradise in the Hereafter). (Surat an-Nahl: 97)

The opposite is true today. Pertaining to our talk today, Ibn Abi Mulaykah said when Asmaa' radhiallahu 'anha used to have a headache, she would grab her head and say this is from a sin that I have committed and Allah forgave a lot.

The Qur'an is clear and decisive on it.

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ﴿الشورى: ٣٠﴾

And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much. (Surat ash-Shoora: 30)