

# I Want to Repent, But...

Muhammad Şālih al-Munajjid

أريد أن أتوب، ولكن...

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IN THE NAME OF  
**ALLAH**  
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE, ALL-MERCIFUL



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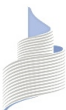
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## Directory of Symbols

(ﷻ): *Subhânahu wa Ta'âla* — “The Exalted.”

(ﷺ): *Şalla-Allâhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam* — “Blessings and peace be upon him.”

(ﷺ): *'Alayhis-Salâm* — “May peace be upon him.”

(ﷺ): *Rađi-Allâhu 'Anhu* — “May Allah be pleased with him.”

(ﷺ): *Rađi-Allâhu 'Anha* — “May Allah be pleased with her.”



## Transliteration Chart

أ	a
آ - ي	â
ب	b
ت	t
ة	h or t (when followed by another Arabic word)
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ



ظ	<u>dh</u>
ع	'
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه - ه - ه	h
و	w
و (as vowel)	oo
ي	y
ي (as vowel)	ee
ء	' (Omitted in initial position)

َ	Fathah	a
ِ	Kasrah	i
ُ	Dammah	u
ّ	Shaddah	Double letter
◌◌	Sukoon	Absence of vowel

## Introduction

Praise be to Allah, we praise Him and seek His help. Whomever Allah guides cannot be led astray, and whomever He leaves astray, cannot be guided. I bear witness that there is no true God except Allah alone, with no partner or associate, and that Muhammad is His Slave and Messenger (ﷺ).

Allah has commanded all the believers to repent, as He (ﷻ) says:

﴿... وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣١﴾﴾

(سورة الثور: ٣١)

﴿... And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O' believers, that you may be successful.﴾  
(Qur'an 24: 31)

People may be divided into two types: those who repent and turn to Allah, and those who do wrong; and there is no third category. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١١﴾﴾

(سورة الحجرات: ١١)

﴿... And whosoever does not repent, then such are indeed Dhâlimoon [wrong-doers, etc.].﴾  
(Qur'an 49: 11)

We are living in a time when many people have strayed far from the religion of Allah, and sin and immorality have become so widespread that there is no one who remains free from the taint of evil except the ones who are protected by Allah.

However, Allah will not allow but that His light should be perfected, thus many people have awoken from the slumber of negligence. They have become aware of their failure to fulfil their duties towards Allah, have regretted their carelessness and sin and so



have started to move towards the beacon of repentance. Others have grown weary of this wretched life of misery, so they are looking for a way, out of darkness, to the Light.

But these people face many obstacles which they think stand between them and repentance, some of which exist within their own selves, and others in the world around them.

For this reason I have written this brief booklet, hoping to clear up this confusion, dispel doubts, explain wisdom and drive away the *Shayṭân* (Satan).

Following an introduction which discusses the dangers of taking sin lightly, I explained the conditions of repentance, psychological cures, and *fatâwa* (rulings) based on evidences from the Qur'an and Sunnah addressed to those who repent. This is followed by quotations from some of the scholars' comments, and my own concluding remarks.

I ask Allah to benefit me and my Muslim brothers by these words. I ask no more from my brothers than that they would pray for me and offer me sincere advice (*naṣeeḥah*) for my shortcoming. May Allah, the Almighty, accept the repentance of us all.

## The danger of taking sin lightly

You should know, may Allah have mercy on you and me, that Allah has commanded His slaves to repent sincerely and has made doing so obligatory. He (ﷺ) says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا تُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا ...﴾ (سورة التَّحْرِيمِ : ٨)

«O' you who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance!...»

(Qur'an 66: 8)

Allah has given us time to repent before the honourable scribes (*kirâman kâtibeen* — recording angels) record our deeds. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The scribe on the left hand raises his pen (i.e., delays writing) for (six) hours (this may refer to six hours of 60 minutes as measured by astronomers, or it may refer to short periods of time during the day or night — *Lisân al-'Arab*) before he records the sinful deed of a Muslim. If he regrets it and seeks Allah's forgiveness, the deed is not recorded, otherwise it is recorded as one bad deed.”<sup>1</sup>

A further respite is granted after the deed has been recorded, until the moment before death approaches.

The problem is that many people nowadays do not place their hope and fear in Allah (ﷻ). They disobey Him by committing all sins, day and night. There are those who are being tested by the idea of regarding sins as insignificant, so you may see one of them regarding certain “minor sins” (*ṣaghâ'ir*) as inconsequential. He might say, “What harm can it possibly do if I look at or shake hands

<sup>1</sup> Ṭabarâni in *al-Kabeer*; Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab al-Eemân* (The Branches of Faith); Shaykh al-Albâni in *Silsilat al-Aḥâdeeth aṣ-Ṣaḥeeḥah*, hadith no. 1209.

with a (non-*maḥram*) woman?” They think it nothing to look at women in magazines and on TV shows. Some of them, when they are told that this is *ḥarâm*, may even facetiously ask, “So how bad can it be? Is it a major sin (*kabeerah*) or a minor sin (*ṣagheerah*)?” Compare this attitude with that reflected in the following reports narrated by Bukhari:

Anas (رضي الله عنه) said: “You do things which in your eyes are less significant than a hair, but at the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), we used to count them as things that could destroy a man.”

Ibn Mas‘ood (رضي الله عنه) said: “The believer regards his sin as if he were sitting beneath a mountain which he fears may fall on him, whereas the sinner regards his sin as if a fly lands on his nose and he wipes it away.”

Will these people then understand the seriousness of the matter when they read the following hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ)?

“Beware of the minor sins which are often thought of as insignificant, for they are like a group of people who stopped in the bottom of a valley. One of them brought a piece of wood, and another brought the same, until they gathered enough to cook their food. These minor sins, if a person is called to account for them, will destroy him.”

According to another report, He (ﷺ) said:

“Beware of minor sins, for they will pile up until they destroy a person.”<sup>2</sup>

The scholars said that when minor sins are accompanied by a lack of shame or sorrow, and with no fear of Allah, and are taken lightly, then there is the risk that they will be counted as major sins. Hence it is said that no minor sin is minor if you persist, and no major sin is major if you keep on seeking forgiveness.

<sup>2</sup> Aḥmad; Shaykh al-Albâni in *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Jâmi‘*, hadith nos. 2686-2687.

So we say to the one who is in this situation: Do not think about whether the sin is major or minor; but think about the One Whom you are disobeying.

*Inshâ' Allâh*, these words will benefit those who are sincere, and who are aware of their sins and shortcomings, and do not insist upon doing wrong and adhering to faults.

These words are for those who believe in the words of Allah:

(سورة الحجر: ٤٩) ﴿تَبٰىءَ عِبَادِيْ اِنَّىٓ اَنَا الْعَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ﴾  
«Declare [O' Muhammad] unto My slaves, that truly, I am the Oft-Forgiving, the All-Merciful.» (Qur'an 15: 49)

And in His (ﷻ) words:

(سورة الحجر: ٥٠) ﴿وَاَنَّ عَذَابِيْ هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْاَلِيْمُ﴾  
«And that My Torment is indeed the most painful torment.» (Qur'an 15: 50)

It is essential to keep this balanced view in mind.



## Conditions for the acceptance of repentance

The word *tawbah* (repentance) conveys a profound meaning, which carries great implications. It is not, as many people think, the matter of mere lip-service, after uttering it a person may then continue in his sin. If you think of the meaning of the *âyah* (verse):

(سورة هُود: ٣) ﴿... أَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ ...﴾  
﴿... Seek the forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him in repentance,...﴾ (Qur'an 11: 3)

You will see that repentance is something which is over and above mere uttering words and/or seeking forgiveness.

Such a great and important matter must necessarily have conditions attached to it. The scholars have described the conditions of repentance, based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. They include:

1. Immediate cessation of the sin
2. Regret for what was done
3. Determination not to return to the sin
4. Restitution of victims' rights, or seeking their forgiveness

Some scholars have also mentioned more details as conditions of sincere repentance, which we quote below with some examples:

1. The sin should be given up only for the sake of Allah, not for any other reason, such as being unable to do it, or being afraid of what people will say.

The person who gives up his sin because of its negative impact on his reputation and standing among people, or on his work, cannot be described as one who repents.

The person who gives up his sin for reasons of health and strength, such as one who gives up adultery or wine because he is afraid of contagious killer diseases, or because it weakens his body and his memory, cannot be described as one who repents.

The person who refuses to accept a bribe because he fears that the person offering it may be from the law enforcement agency, operating under cover, cannot be described as one who repents.

The one who does not drink wine or take drugs just because he does not have the money to buy them cannot be described as one who repents.

The one who does not commit a sin because of reasons beyond his control cannot be described as one who repents. So the liar who is robbed of the power of speech, the adulterer who becomes impotent, the thief who loses his limbs in an accident etc., must feel remorse for what they have done and give up any wish to do it again. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Remorse is repentance.”<sup>3</sup>

In the sight of Allah, the one who is incapable of committing a deed, but has the desire to do it, is the same as the one who does it. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“There are only four kinds of people in this world. The first is a slave whom Allah has blessed with wealth and knowledge, and he fears Allah with regard to them, and uses them to uphold family ties, and acknowledges the rights that Allah has over them. He has the highest status. The second is a slave to whom Allah has given knowledge, but not wealth. His intention is sincere, and he says, ‘If only I had wealth, I would do (good deeds) like so-and-so (the first slave).’ He will be rewarded according to his intention, so their reward will be equal. The third is a slave to whom Allah has given wealth, but not knowledge. He spends his money aimlessly, neither fearing Allah

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<sup>3</sup> Aḥmad; Ibn Mājah; Shaykh al-Albāni in *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Jāmi'*, hadith no. 6802.

with regard to it nor using it to uphold family ties or acknowledging the rights that Allah has over it. He has the lowest status. The fourth is a slave to whom Allah has given neither wealth nor knowledge. He says, 'If only I had wealth, I would do (bad deeds) like so-and-so (the third slave). He will be punished according to his intention, so their burden of sin will be equal.'<sup>4</sup>

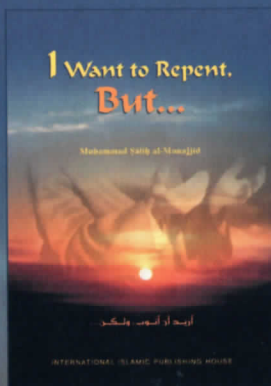
2. The one who repents should feel that his sin is repulsive and harmful. This means that if a person repents sincerely, he cannot derive any feelings of pleasure or enjoyment when he remembers his past sins, or wish to repeat them in the future. In his books *ad-Dâ' wad-Dawâ'* and *al-Fawâ'id*, Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) mentions many of the harmful effects of sins, including the following:

Loss of knowledge, feelings of alienation in the heart, difficulty in all one's affairs, physical weakness, loss of the desire to obey Allah, absence of blessing, lack of success by the help of Allah (*tawfeeq*), tightness in the chest, i.e., unhappiness, generation of evil deeds, habituation to sin, disgrace in the sight of Allah, disgrace in the sight of people, the curse of the animals, the dress of shame, sealing of the heart and being included in the curse of Allah, not having *du'âs* (supplications) answered, corruption on land and on sea, lack of self-respect or honour, loss of a sense of shame, loss of blessings, incurring the wrath of Allah, feelings of alarm and dismay in the heart of the sinner, falling into the clutches of *Shaytân* (Satan), an unhappy end, and the punishment of the Hereafter.

This description of the harmful consequences of sin would make anyone want to keep away from sin altogether, but some people no sooner give up one kind of sin, fall prey to another kind of sin, for numerous reasons, including the following:

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<sup>4</sup> Aḥmad, Tirmidhi, and al-Mundhiri in *at-Targheeb wat-Tarheeb*, 1/9.



One might say: “I want to repent, but who can guarantee that Allah will forgive me if I do so? I want to follow the Straight Path, but I feel very hesitant. If I know for sure that Allah would forgive me, I would definitely repent.” Ash-Shaykh Muḥammad Sāliḥ al-Munajjid, may Allah reward him, gives a clear-cut response to such doubts and questionings in this booklet, under the title *I Want to Repent, But...*

In order that the response reassures everybody concerned, it is based on the Noble Qur’an and the Honorable Sunnah, quoting so many verses and hadiths confirming that Allah’s mercy and forgiveness embrace all things, and are greater than all sins.

Among those quotations is Allah’s saying:

﴿ Say: O’ My slaves who have transgressed against themselves [by committing evil deeds and sins]! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah;...﴾

(Qur’an 39: 53)

For further knowledge about the significance of repentance as a precondition for forgiveness, your choice is in your hands.



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