

Articles

Miftaah Institute

Apr 5, 2026

Reset, Repent, Repeat



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Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ncMpUvotzo>

Introduction

For the believers, the path of Deen resembles a steep climb. Oftentimes en route to the summit, we find ourselves wandering off the straight path, veering into the valleys of worldly pleasures. But Allah ﷻ has blessed us with a reset button called tawba (repentance), so we can ultimately turn back into the right direction, to Him.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

"لَلَّهِ أَشَدُّ فَرَحًا بِتَوْبَةِ أَحَدِكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدِكُمْ بِضَلَّاتِهِ إِذَا وَجَدَهَا "

"Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His servant when he turns penitently towards Him than one of you would be on finding the lost camel." (Sahih Muslim)

Conquering the Climb

Coursing through the mountain means navigating its sloping slides, sharp ridges, and huge boulders, defying all odds and challenges, as tough as it may be — all because at the peak of it, the breathtaking view made it worthwhile. And yet, only a short while upon reaching the top of a mountain and taking in the view after the arduous climb, one has to eventually descend from the mountain.

For a believer, this may resemble a decline in our iman after a spiritual high. While it is understandably frustrating and challenging that it makes us feel stuck or want to give up, the reality of life is that we are never capable of remaining at the pinnacle of anything to begin with.

Just as every mountain has its varying levels that ascend and descend, uncertain terrains which plunge and rise, we are bound to struggle in our spirituality the same way.

In the landscape of our lives, we make an effort to protect our iman by staying on course; never letting our hearts and minds, as well as every limb of our bodies, move in any direction against Allah's pleasure — to earn His promised reward in the *akhirah*. Although, this is hard to achieve as no believer is devoid of sins.

Every second of our being will be met with either the lows or the highs. We might stumble and fall, but in each fragment of existence we can reset and start anew, so long as Allah ﷻ has given us time to repent. He does not expect us to constantly be at the highest point. As taught by the Prophet ﷺ, the chance of repentance will help a believer regain their sanctity. He ﷺ relayed:

كُلُّ بَنِي آدَمَ خَطَّاءٌ وَخَيْرُ الْخَطَّائِينَ التَّوَّابُونَ

"Every son of Adam commits sin, and the best of those who commit sin are those who repent." (Sunan Ibn Majah)

Finding Your Base Camp

The rulings of Allah ﷻ are realistic not idealistic. He tests us to test our faith, and He is the All Forgiving and Most Merciful. This is why as believers, we are

encouraged to persist on our journey and follow the route that leads us back to His virtuous path irrespective of how many times we may be lost in the indulgence of sins.

Whenever we find ourselves entangled in the trails of worldly charms, Allah ﷻ calls us to keep turning back to Him. He is the starting and ending point of a believer's great expedition; He is our base camp.

مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

O believers! Always turn to Him (in repentance), be mindful of Him, and establish prayers. And do not be polytheists (30:31)

This concept of never feeling like one has drifted far from their base camp is called inaba (sincere penitence). Adopting this attitude means that a believer will have a good sense of direction of where they came from and how to head home.

Home for a believer, is in the loving embrace of Allah ﷻ. Similar to that of a child who always recognizes their mother amongst a crowd, a believer will always be able to recognize Allah ﷻ as their source of return. And no matter how far a believer may have gone off track on their journey, the ones that head back in His direction, will be amongst those categorized as munibah (one who always turns to Allah ﷻ).

قُلْ لِعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

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." (39:53)

The munibah will never lose their spiritual sight. They are the ones who open their hearts to Allah ﷻ, have guilty conscience and deep regret over their wrongdoings, and constantly turn to Him to seek His forgiveness.

Ibn Al-Qayyim in his sayings, highlights the importance of turning to Allah ﷻ after sinning: "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 ﷻ."

To maintain a healthy lifestyle in avoidance of major and minor sins, a believer must at least ensure they maintain the bare minimum of their daily obligations, such as performing salat and wudu. The Prophet ﷺ emphasizes how these simple acts will be the gateway to Paradise for the believers.

مِفْتَاحُ الْجَنَّةِ الصَّلَاةُ وَمِفْتَاحُ الصَّلَاةِ الْوُضُوءُ

"The key to Paradise is Salah, and the key to Salah is Wudu'." (Jami` at-Tirmidhi)

At the end of each day, a believer is strongly encouraged to forget the etiquettes, simply confess their feelings and spend time in munajat (secret conversations). Plead, prostrate, cry and have a heartfelt moment with Allah ﷻ. Having secret conversations with Allah ﷻ will not only help us plough through our days, but fortify our connection with our Creator as well.

Equally to how the best climbs may be interspersed with terror, the journey to the top is bound to be a challenging one for the believers. Allah ﷻ however promises for those who keep striving to reach greater heights while enduring the greatest difficulties, a reward that is worthwhile. The Prophet ﷺ underlined:

عِظْمُ الْجَزَاءِ مَعَ عِظْمِ الْبَلَاءِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ إِذَا أَحَبَّ قَوْمًا ابْتَلَاهُمْ فَمَنْ رَضِيَ فَلَهُ الرِّضَا وَمَنْ سَخِطَ فَلَهُ السُّخْطُ

"The greatest reward comes with the greatest trial. When Allah loves a people He tests them. Whoever accepts that wins His pleasure but whoever is discontent with that earns His wrath."(Sunan Ibn Majah)

Finally, a believer should not wallow in sorrow or get caught up in Allah's displeasure when they find themselves at a low point in their lives. Instead, they should aim to elevate their ranks and make full use of the reset button that Allah ﷻ has given them to change their way of life.

It doesn't matter if we fall short. Our goal should always be to aim high, never stop repenting, repeating and submitting to Allah ﷻ. For truly to Him we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.

وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلَمُوا لَهُ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ

And turn in repentance and in obedience with true faith to your Lord and submit to Him, before the torment comes upon you, then you will not be helped. (39:54)