

Istighfar and Tawbah: The Islamic Concept of Seeking Forgiveness and Its Impact on Spiritual and Worldly Life

Introduction

In Islamic teachings, Istighfar (asking forgiveness) and Tawbah (repentance) are foundational concepts that guide a believer's return to Allah (SWT) after committing sins. Furthermore, Islamic sources establish a direct relationship between human actions—particularly sins—and the afflictions that manifest in the world, such as drought and poverty. This framework posits that divine blessings, including sustenance and prosperity, are often withheld or diminished as a consequence of human transgression, while sincere repentance and seeking forgiveness are presented as the primary means to restore these blessings.

Definition of Tawbah (Repentance)

Tawbah fundamentally means "to turn" or "returning" to Allah (SWT). In Islamic terminology, it signifies a spiritual return from a state of sinfulness towards obedience and God's mercy. Key elements of Tawbah include:

- **Turning towards God:** This involves engaging in acts of obedience and actively avoiding disobedience.
- **Acknowledgment and remorse:** Genuinely being sorry and ashamed of past misdeeds and acknowledging one's mistakes.
- **Sincere apology and change of behavior:** Making a heartfelt apology to Allah (SWT) and consciously striving to change one's conduct, resolving not to repeat the sin.
- **Making amends:** Compensating for previous offenses.
- **Spiritual purification:** Desisting from wrong, removing the filth of sins from the soul, and cleansing the rust of mistakes from the heart.

Tawbah is a mechanism by which Allah (SWT) allows individuals to rectify their wrongs, preventing feelings of desperation and uselessness from overwhelming sinners. True repentance, in this context, is not just verbal but involves sincere action, leading one to truly turn to Allah with a true return.

Definition of Istighfar (Asking Forgiveness)

Istighfar means seeking God's pardon or forgiveness for sins and shortcomings. It involves imploring Allah (SWT) to cover one's sins and wipe out their consequences. The sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him), presents Istighfar not merely as a simple verbal plea but as a profound and comprehensive spiritual endeavor that requires specific conditions for its acceptance and validity.

محمد بن الحسين الرضي في نهج البالغة (عن أمير المؤمنين) عليه السالم (ان اقئال اقل بحضرته: : أستغفر هلا، فقال: ثكلتك أمك أدري ما الاستغفار الاستغفار؟ درجة العليين وهو اسم واقع على ستة معان أولها: الندم على ما مضى، والثاني: العزم على ترك العود إليه أبدا، والثالث: أن تؤدي إلى المخلوقين حقوقهم حتى تلقى هلا عز وجل أملتس ليس عليك تبعة، والرابع: ان تعتمد إلى كل فريضة عليك ضيعتها فتؤدي حقها والخامس: ان تعتمد إلى اللحم الذي نبت على السحت فتذيبه بالحرارة حتى يلصق الجلد ببلعظم وينشوا بينهما لحم جديد، والسادس: ان تذيق الجسم ألم الطاعة كما أدقته حالوة المعصية فعند ذلك تقول: أستغفر هلا

Muhammad ibn Al-Hussein Al-Radi in (Nahj al-Balagha) from Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him): Someone said "Astaghfirullah" (I seek Allah's forgiveness) in his presence.

He said: **May your mother be bereaved of you! Do you know what is istighfar?**

Istighfar is a status of the 'Illiyin and it comprises six meanings: First: Remorse over what has passed. Second: Resolving never to return to it again. Third: Returning the rights to people so that you meet Allah without any burden on you. Fourth: Fulfilling every obligatory duty that you have neglected by performing it properly. Fifth: Dealing with the flesh that grew from unlawful sustenance by melting it through grief until the skin adheres to the bone and new flesh grows between them. Sixth: Making the body taste the pain of obedience as you made it taste the sweetness of disobedience. Only then can you say "Astaghfirullah."

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 1, Chapter 87, Hadith 21028

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) stated that Istighfar is a degree of the 'illiyun" and meant for people of a high position, standing on six supports or meanings:

1. **Remorse over the past:** Feeling deep regret and sorrow for mistakes committed.
2. **Resolution not to return to the sin:** Making a firm and unwavering determination never to repeat the wrongdoing. This is crucial, as seeking forgiveness while continuing to sin is considered a mockery of God.

3. **Returning to creatures their usurped rights:** Discharging all rights of other people that were violated, so that one may meet Allah (SWT) in a state of purity with no one having any claim against them.
4. **Fulfilling every duty neglected:** Making up for any obligatory duties or acts of worship that were ignored in the past.
5. **Melting away unlawful flesh:** Addressing the flesh of the body that grew from unlawful nourishment by causing it to melt away through grief and repentance until new, lawful flesh grows. This also entails purifying oneself from past wrongs.
6. **Making the body taste the pain of obedience:** Experiencing the difficulty and hardship of following Allah's commands, just as it previously tasted the pleasure and sweetness of sinfulness.

Differences Between Tawbah and Istighfar

Scope and Depth

Tawbah is defined more broadly as the act of returning to Allah through obedience and avoiding disobedience. It encompasses the general sentiment of regret and resolution.

Istighfar, especially in the profound explanation by Imam Ali (peace be upon him), is presented as a much more rigorous and comprehensive process. It not only involves seeking pardon but also mandates extensive internal and external rectification, making it a deeper and more demanding spiritual undertaking.

Station and Level

Istighfar, with its six conditions, is a degree of the 'illiyyun and the rank of the repentance of prophets and truthful individuals. This suggests that Istighfar, in its complete form, represents a higher or more perfected state of repentance compared to a general Tawbah.

Relationship as Components

Seeking forgiveness (istighfar) is repentance and expiation for everyone who cannot find the means to any form of expiation. This implies that Istighfar can serve as Tawbah or fulfill its function, particularly when other forms of expiation are unavailable.

The detailed conditions of Istighfar, as outlined by Imam Ali (peace be upon him), can be understood as the prerequisites and conditions for the acceptance of a true and sincere Tawbah. Without fulfilling these conditions—remorse, restitution, fulfilling duties, internal purification, and experiencing the hardship of obedience—a verbal Istighfar or a superficial Tawbah might not be considered genuine or complete.

The hadith from Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) confirms:

عن داود بن فرقد، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) - في حديث - اقل: إن الاستغفار توبة، وكفارة لكل من لم يجد السبيل إلى شيء من الكفارة

From Dawud ibn Farqad, from Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) - in a hadith - he said:

Indeed, seeking forgiveness (istighfar) is repentance and expiation for everyone who cannot find the means to any form of expiation.

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 22, Section 7, Chapter 6, Hadith 28801

In essence, Tawbah is the general act of repenting and turning back to Allah, while Istighfar, especially in its fullest form, is the specific, multi-faceted process of seeking forgiveness that encapsulates all the necessary actions and intentions for a complete and accepted return to God.

The Relationship Between Tawbah and Istighfar

The relationship is one of interconnectedness and hierarchy. Istighfar, particularly with its six supports, can be seen as the practical and profound realization of Tawbah. A truly meaningful Tawbah necessitates the fulfillment of the conditions outlined for Istighfar.

The phrase "Astagfirullaah Wa Atoobu Ilaih" (I seek the forgiveness of Allah and towards Him I turn) reflects this integration, combining the plea for forgiveness with the act of repentance and turning to God. One cannot genuinely repent (Tawbah) without earnestly seeking forgiveness (Istighfar) that is backed by sincere action and rectification. The comprehensive nature of Istighfar, as explained, provides the roadmap for achieving a true and accepted Tawbah.

خير العباداة الاستغفار.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **The best of worship is seeking forgiveness.**

— Mizan al-Hikmah by Muhammad al-Rayshahri, Volume 3, Page 2274

الإمام علي (عليه السلام): التوبة تطهر القلوب وتغسل الذنوب

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said: '**Repentance purifies the hearts and washes away the sins.**'

— Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 1355

الإمام علي (عليه السلام): التوبة على أربعة دعائم: ندم بالقلب، واستغفار باللسان، وعمل بالجوارح، وعزم أن لا يعود

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said: '**Repentance stands on four pillars: remorse with the heart, asking for forgiveness with the tongue, work with the limbs, and resolve not to repeat [the offense].**'

— Bihar al-Anwar, v. 78, p. 81, no. 74

The Kumayl ibn Ziyad narration provides further clarification on this relationship:

عن كميل بن زائد أنه اقل المير المؤمنين (عليه السلام): العبد يصيب الذنب فيستغفر هللا فقال: اي: ابن زائد التوبة، قلت ليس؟ اقل: ال، قلت: كيف؟ اقل: ان العبد إذا أصاب ذنبا اقل: استغفر هللا ابلتحريك، قلت: وما التحريك؟ اقل: الشفتان، واللسان يريد ان يتبع ذلك ابلحقيقة، قلت: وما الحقيقة؟ اقل: تصديق القلب واضمار أن ال يعود إلى الذنب الذي استغفر منه قلت: افذا فعلت ذلك أفان من المستغفرين؟ اقل: ال النك لم تبلغ إلى الصل بعد، قلت: أفصل الاستغفار ما هو؟ اقل: الرجوع إلى التوبة عن الذنب الذي استغفرت منه وهي أول درجة العابدين وترك الذنب والاستغفار اسم واقع لسته معان، ثم ذكر الحديث نحوه

From Kumayl ibn Ziyad who said to Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him): When a servant commits a sin and seeks Allah's forgiveness... He said: **O Ibn Ziyad, that's repentance.** I said: Is it not? He said: **No.** I said: How so? He said: **When a servant commits a sin and says "Astaghfirullah" with movement.** I said: What is movement? He said: **The lips and tongue, intending to follow it with truth.** I said: What is truth? He said: **Confirmation of the heart and concealing the intention to never return to the sin from which he sought forgiveness.** I said: If I do that, am I among those who seek forgiveness? He said: **No, because you have not yet reached the foundation.** I said: What is the foundation of seeking forgiveness? He said: **Returning to repentance from the sin you sought forgiveness for, and this is the first level of worshippers. Abandoning sin and seeking forgiveness comprises six meanings - then he mentioned the hadith similarly.** Obligation Of Sincere Repentance And Its Conditions

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 1, Chapter 87, Hadith 21029

عن جابر، عن أبي جعفر (عليه السلام) اقل: سمعته يقول: التائب من الذنب كمن ال ذنب له والمقيم عل الذنب وهو .مستغفر منه كالمستهزئ

From Jabir, from Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) who said: **I heard him saying: The one who repents from sin is like one who has no sin, and the one who persists in sin while seeking forgiveness for it is like a mocker.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 1, Chapter 86, Hadith 21016

Warnings Against Insincere Istighfar

Cautions against insincere Istighfar:

To seek forgiveness and then continue committing the same sin is considered a sin in itself, a mockery of Allah, and earns His displeasure.

رسول الله ﷺ (صلي الله عليه و آله) - وقد سئل عن التوبة النصوح :- هو الندم على الذنب حين يفرط منك، فتستغفر الله ۞ بندا متك عند الحافر، ثم لا تعود إليه أبدا

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **'Sincere repentance is remorse for the sin as soon as it slips out from you; then you ask Allah for forgiveness, then you never return to it.'**

— Kanz al-'Ummal, no. 10302

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) stated that seeking forgiveness but continuing to sin, is a new sin.

الإمام علي (عليه السلام): الاستغفار مع الإصرار ذنوب مجددة

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said: **'Seeking forgiveness alongside persistent sinning is renewing one's sins.'**

— Tuhaf al-'Uqul, no. 223

عن محمد بن مسلم، عن أبي جعفر (عليه السلام) اقل: اي محمد بن مسلم، ذنوب المؤمن إذا اتب منها مغفورة له فليعمل المؤمن لما يستأنف بعد التوبة والمغفرة، اما وهلا انها ليست ال الهل اليمان، قلت: إفنعاد بعد التوبة والاستغفار من الذنوب ! وعاد في التوبة، اقل: اي محمد بن مسلم، أترى العبد المؤمن يندم عل ذنبه ويستغفر منه ويتوب ثم ال يقبل هلا توبته؟ قلت: افنه فعل ذلك مرارا يذنب ثم يتوب ويستغفر، فقال: كلما عاد المؤمن ابالستغفار والتوبة عاد هلا عليه ابلمغفرة وإن .هلا غفور رحيم يقبل التوبة ويعفو عن السيئات، افايك أن تقنط المؤمنين من رحمة هلا

From Muhammad bin Muslim, from Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) who said: **O Muhammad bin Muslim, when a believer repents from his sins they are forgiven for him, so let the believer do good deeds after repentance and forgiveness. By Allah, this is only for the people of faith.** I said: What if he returns to sins after repentance and seeking forgiveness, and then returns to repentance? He said: **O Muhammad bin Muslim, do you think that when a believing servant regrets his sin, seeks forgiveness for it and repents, Allah would not accept his repentance?** I said: What if he does this repeatedly - sins then repents and seeks forgiveness? He said: **Every time a believer returns with seeking forgiveness and repentance, Allah returns to him with forgiveness. Indeed Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful - He accepts repentance and pardons misdeeds. So beware of making believers despair of Allah's mercy.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 1, Chapter 89, Hadith 21033

Imam Ali ar-Ridha (peace be upon him) further emphasized,

الإمام الرضا (عليه السلام): المستغفر من ذنب ويفعله كالمستهزئ بربه

'The one who seeks forgiveness for a sin and then repeats it is as one who mocks his Lord.'

— al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 504, no. 3

Recommended Order for Performing Them

The fulfillment of the six conditions of Istighfar must precede the sincere utterance of "Astaghfirullah" for it to be meaningful and accepted.

Only after fulfilling these six conditions, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) clarified, can one truly say "Astaghfirullah" (I seek Allah's forgiveness). Istighfar is considered the rank of the repentance of prophets and truthful individuals and is described as the only du'a that is never blocked.

A structured approach where the internal and external rectifications are primary:

1. **Internal Rectification (Remorse and Resolution):** The process begins with sincere remorse over past sins and a firm, unwavering resolution never to return to them. This mental reformation is foundational.

2. **External Rectification (Rights and Duties):** This involves practically discharging all usurped rights of others and fulfilling all neglected obligatory duties. These actions demonstrate sincerity and commitment to change.
3. **Physical and Spiritual Purification:** Addressing the physical manifestation of unlawful earnings (melting away unlawful flesh) and making the body experience the "pain of obedience" signifies a holistic purification and transformation.
4. **Verbal Istighfar:** Only after these internal and external conditions are met can one truly and sincerely utter "Astaghfirullah," knowing that the plea for forgiveness is supported by genuine actions and a transformed state.

The insights into the recommended sequence for supplication and Tawbah generally:

- Praise Allah (SWT) and extol Him.
- Acknowledge one's sins.
- Then make the request (which would include seeking forgiveness).

For a specific recommended prayer for Tawbah, the steps include:

- Performing ablution and Ghusl.
- Offering four rakats of prayer with specific recitations.
- Reciting Istighfar seventy times after the prayer.
- Followed by "La Hawla wa la Quwwata illa billahil a'liyyil A'zim" and a brief Du'a.

This shows that verbal Istighfar is an integral part of the ritualized act of Tawbah.

Combined supplications such as "Astaghferul laaha wa asalohut tawbah" (I ask Allah for forgiveness and I pray to Him to accept my repentance) indicate that seeking forgiveness (Istighfar) and requesting acceptance of repentance (Tawbah) are often sought simultaneously.

Tawbah vs. Inabah

Distinguishes of Tawbah from Inabah:

- **Tawbah:** Is a return from the domain of physical nature and its laws to the domain of spirituality and primordial nature.

- **Inabah:** Is a higher state of repentance. It involves turning away from and giving up even permissible things in order to seek only to please God and remember God continuously. It is a return from primordial nature and spirituality to God, involving a journey from the soul's habitat to its ultimate destination.

The Foundational Principle: Sin as a Cause of Deprivation

Islamic sources consistently establish sin as a primary cause of suffering and deprivation, affecting both individuals and communities. The Holy Qur'an affirms this principle unequivocally:

"And whatever difficulty afflicts you it is regarding what your hands have earned, and He Pardons a lot." (Quran 42:30)

ما يصيب المؤمن وصب ولا نصب ولا سقم ولا أذى ولا حزن إلا كفر الله به من خطايه

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **A believer won't be exposed to any suffering, hardship, disease, harm and sorrow, unless God ignores some of his sins (in lieu of them)**

— Nahj Al-Fasahah

الإمام الباقر (عليه السلام): إن العبد ليذنب الذنب فيزوى عنه الرزق

Imam Mohammad al-Baqir (peace be upon him) said: **'Verily when the servant commits a sin, his sustenance eludes him.'**

— al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 270, no. 8

عن الفضيل، عن أبي جعفر (عليه السلام) اقل: إن الرجل ليذنب الذنب فيدراً عنه الرزق وتال هذه الآية: (إذ أقسموا ليصرمنها مصبحين * وال يستثنون * فطاف عليها طائف من ربك وهم انثمون

From Al-Fudhayl, from Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) who said: **Indeed when a man commits a sin, his sustenance is withheld from him, and he recited this verse:**

"When they swore to pluck the fruits in the morning, without making any exception. Then a visitation from your Lord came upon it while they were asleep"
[Quran 68:17-19]

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 15, Section 2, Chapter 40, Hadith 20575

عن مفضل بن عمر، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) اقل: اي مفضل إيك والذنوب وحذرنا شيعتنا، فوهللا ما هي إلى أحد أسرع منها اليكم، ان أحدكم لتصيبه المعرة من السلطان وما ذاك ال بدنوبه،

وانه ليصيبه السقم وما ذلك الا بذنوبه وانه ليحبس عنه الرزق وما هو الا بذنوبه، وانه ليشدد عليه عند الموت وما ذاك الا بذنوبه حتى يقول من حضره: لقد غم ابلموت، فلما رأى ما قد دخلني اقل: أتدري لم ذاك؟ قلت: ال، اقل: ذاك وهلا إنكم ال تؤاخذون بها في الآخرة، وعجلت لكم في الدنيا

From Mufaddal ibn Umar, from Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) who said: **O Mufaddal, beware of sins and warn our followers about them. By Allah, sins hasten to none faster than to you. One of you is afflicted with harm from the ruler, and that is only due to his sins. He is afflicted with illness, and that is only due to his sins. His sustenance is withheld from him, and that is only due to his sins. Death becomes severe upon him, and that is only due to his sins, until those present say: "He is distressed by death."** When he saw what had come over me, he said: **"Do you know why this is?"** I said: "No." He said: **"By Allah, this is because you will not be held accountable for these sins in the hereafter, as they have been hastened for you in this world."** Obligation To Avoid Mistakes And Sins

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 15, Section 2, Chapter 40, Hadith 20587

أبي عبد هلا (عليه السالم) اقل: إن المؤمن لينوي الذنب فيحرم رزقه.

From Abu Abdillah (peace be upon him), he said: **Indeed, the believer may intend to commit a sin, and as a result, his sustenance is withheld.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 1, Section 2, Chapter 7, Hadith 121

عن سليمان بن طريف، عن محمد بن مسلم، عن أبي عبد هلا (عليه السالم)، اقل: سمعته يقول: ان . الذنب يحرم العبد الرزق

From Sulayman bin Tarif, from Muhammad bin Muslim, from Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) who said: I heard him saying: **Indeed sin deprives the servant of sustenance.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 15, Section 2, Chapter 40, Hadith 20574

عن الفضيل بن يسار، عن أبي جعفر (عليه السالم) اقل: إن العبد ليذنب الذنب فيزوى عنه الرزق.

From Al-Fudhayl bin Yasar, from Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) who said: **Indeed when a servant commits a sin, his sustenance is withheld from him.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 15, Section 2, Chapter 40, Hadith 20573

Even minor difficulties, like a scratch or a stumble, are said to result from sin, though Allah's forgiveness is greater than His punishment. Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) further clarified that Allah does not deprive a worshipper of a blessing until they commit a sin that warrants that deprivation.

The Effects of Sin

ما من عبد إلا وفي قلبه نكتة بيضاء، فإذا أذنب ذنبا خرجت في النكتة نكتة سوداء، فإن تاب ذهب تلك السواد، وإن تمادى في الذنوب زاد ذلك السواد حتى يغطي البياض، فإذا غطى البياض لم يرجع صاحبه إلى خير أبداً، وهو قول الله عز وجل: ((كلا بل ران على قلوبهم ما كانوا يكسبون)). (بحار الانوار ج 73 ص 332)

Imam Mohammad Baqir (peace be upon him): **There is no servant except that there exists a white spot upon his heart. So when he commits a sin a black spot arises into that white spot. So when he repents this black spot moves away. And if he continues on committing sins the blackness of this spot increases till such time it overwhelms and over rides the whiteness. When the whiteness is covered over (by the blackness) the owner of it (heart) does never at all return to wards beneficence and goodness. And this is what Allah means when he says:**

Nay! Rather, what they used to do has become like a rust upon their hearts (Quran 83:14).'

– 14, Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 73, P 332

عن زرارة، عن أبي جعفر (عليه السلام) اقل: ما من عبد إلا وفي قلبه نكتة بيضاء فإذا أذنب ذنبا خرج في النكتة نكتة سوداء، فإن تاب ذهب ذلك السواد، وإن تمادى في الذنوب زاد ذلك السواد حتى يغطي البياض فإذا غطى البياض لم يرجع صاحبه إلى (خير أبداً، وهو قول هلال عز وجل: (بل ران على قلوبهم ما كانوا يكسبون

From Zurarah, from Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) who said: **There is no servant except that in his heart is a white spot. When he commits a sin, a black spot appears in that white spot. If he repents, that blackness disappears, but if he continues in sins, the blackness increases until it covers the whiteness. When the whiteness is covered, its owner will never return to good. This is what Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, means by: "No! Rather, what they used to earn has rusted up their hearts"** [Quran 83:14]

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 15, Section 2, Chapter 40, Hadith 20580

عن ابن بكير، عن أبي بصير اقل: سمعت أبا عبدلهلا (عليه السالم) يقول: اذا أذنب الرجل خرج في قلبه نكتة سوداء، إفن اتب .انمحت، وإن زاد زادت حتى تغلب عل قلبه فال يفلح بعدها أبدا

From Ibn Bukayr, from Abu Basir who said: I heard Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) say: **When a man commits a sin, a black spot appears in his heart. If he repents, it is erased. But if he increases in sin, it increases until it overwhelms his heart, and he will never prosper after that.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 15, Section 2, Chapter 40, Hadith 20576

Specific Sins Leading to Drought and Reduced Rainfall

Islamic narrations identify particular sins that directly result in the withholding of rain and the onset of drought:

Disobedience to Allah

الإمام الباقر (عليه السلام): إنه ما من سنة أقل مطرا من سنة ، ولكن الله يضعه حيث يشاء ، إن الله عزوجل إذا عمل قوم بالمعاصي صرف عنهم ما كان قدر لهم من المطر

Imam Mohammad al-Baqir (peace be upon him) said: **'When the rainfall is less from year to year, it is only because Allah sends it down as and when He wishes, such that when a people commit acts of disobedience to Him, Allah - Mighty and Exalted - withholds the rain that He had ordained for them.'**

— Bihar al-Anwar, v. 73, p. 329, no. 12

عن أبي حمزة، عن أبي جعفر محمد بن عيل الباقر (عليه السالم) اقل: سمعته يقول: أما إنه ليس من سنة أقل مطرا من سنة، ولكن هللا يضعه حيث يشاء، ان هللا جل جالته اذا عمل قوم ابلمعاصي صرف عنهم ما كان قدر لهم من المطر في تلك السنة إلى غيرهم وإلى الفيافي والبحار والجبال، وان هللا ليعذب الجعل في جحرها بحبس المطر عن الرض التي هي بمحلتها: (لخطاي من بحضرتها، وقد جعل هللا لها السبيل إلى مسلك سوى محلة أهل المعاصي، اقل: ثم اقل أبو جعفر) عليه السالم افعتبروا اي اولى البصار

From Abu Hamza, from Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Ali al-Baqir (peace be upon him) who said: I heard him say: **Indeed there is no year that has less rain than another year, but Allah places it where He wills. When people commit sins, Allah the Majestic diverts what He had destined for them of rain in that year to other places, to the deserts, seas and mountains. Indeed Allah punishes even the dung beetle in its burrow by withholding rain from the land where it dwells due to the sins of those**

who live there, even though Allah has given it the means to move to a path other than the dwelling of the sinful people. Then Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) said: **So take heed, O people of insight/ vision!**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 2, Chapter 37, Hadith 21505

Unjust Practices by Rulers and False Testimony

Imam Ali ibn Husayn (peace be upon him) identified specific sins that prevent rain from falling:

الإمام زين العابدين (عليه السلام): الذنوب التي تحبس غيث السماء: جور الحكام في القضاء ، وشهادة الزور ، وكتمان الشهادة

Imam Zain-ul-Abideen (peace be upon him) said, **'The sins that prevent rain from falling are: the judges' unjust rulings, the giving of false testimony and the concealing of one's testimony.'**

— Nur al-Thaqalayn, v. 5, p. 597, no. 24

Cheating in Weight, Measure and Withholding Zakat

أبى ره قال حدثنى سعد بن عبد الله عن أحمد بن محمد بن عيسى عن أحمد بن محمد بن أبى نصر البزنطى عن أبان الأحمر عن أبى جعفر ع قال قال رسول الله ص خمس إذا أدركتموهن فتعوزوا بالله عز و جل منهن لم تظهر الفاحشه فى قوم قط حتى يعلنوها إلا و ظهر فيهم الطاعون و الأوجاع التى لم تكن فى أسلافهم الذين مضوا و لم ينقصوا المكيال و الميزان إلا أخذوا بالسنين و شدة المئونه و جور السلطان و لم يمنعوا الزكاه إلا منعوا المطر من السماء لو لا البهائم لم يمطروا و لم ينقصوا عهد الله عز و جل و عهد رسوله إلا سلب الله عليهم عدوهم فأخذوهم بعض ما فى أيديهم و لم يحكموا بغير ما أنزل الله إلا جعل بأسهم بينهم.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (peace be upon him) narrates that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, **"There are five things from which you should seek Allah's refuge. When people of a community start sinning openly, epidemic plagues, which were not destined for them earlier, become common. When people start cheating in weight, they have to face drought and oppression of an unjust ruler. When Zakat is not paid, rainfall is reduced and they would not have received rain had there been no animal among them. When the oaths of Allah and promises to His Messenger are broken, the Almighty Allah gives their control to their enemies. He takes away whatever is present with them. When people act without obeying Allah's commands, He sends His chastisement on them."**

– Thawāb al-A‘māl wa ‘iqāb al-A‘māl by Shaykh Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Ṣaduq, Book 3, Chapter 87, Ḥadīth #2

أبى ره قال حدثنى على بن إبراهيم عن أبيه عن النوفلى عن السكونى عن جعفر بن محمد عن أبيه عن آبائه ع قال قال رسول الله ص لا تزال أمتى بخير ما لم يتخاونوا و أدوا الأمانه و آتوا الزكاه و إذا لم يفعلوا ذلك ابتلوا بالقحط و السنين

Imam Ja‘far Sadiq (peace be upon him) narrates from his ancestors that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, “**My Ummah will remain safe till they do not betray trust and return the things to their owners and pay Zakat. When they cease to do so, they will face famine and drought.**”

– Thawāb al-A‘māl wa ‘iqāb al-A‘māl by Shaykh Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Ṣaduq, Book 3, Chapter 86, Ḥadīth #1

Failure to pay Zakat is identified as a critical factor in the cessation of rainfall.

Imam Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) articulated a comprehensive principle in this regard:

روى عبد الرحمن بن كثير عن الصادق عليه السلام أنه قال: «إذا فشّت أربعة ظهرت أربعة - 1488 إذا فشا الزنى ظهرت الزلازل و إذا أمسكت الزكاة هلكت الماشية و إذا جار الحكام في القضاء أمسك القطر من السماء و إذا خفرت الذمة نصر المشركون على المسلمين

Hadith.1488 - Abdul Rahman ibn Kathir narrated from Imam Jafar ibn Muhammad Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) who said: **When four things become widespread, four other things will appear: when fornication spreads, earthquakes will manifest; when Zakat (charity) is withheld, livestock will perish; when rulers act unjustly in judgments, rain will be withheld from the sky; and when agreements and covenants are broken, the polytheists will gain victory over the Muslims.**

— Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh (Vol. 1) by Shaykh Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Ṣaduq, Book 1, Chapter 80, Ḥadīth #1488

Specific Sins Leading to Poverty and Economic Hardship

Beyond drought, specific sins are identified as causes of widespread economic distress and poverty:

Betrayal of Trust and Non-repayment

A community may face famine and drought if they betray trust and do not return things to their owners.

Breaking Relations and Promises

الإمام علي (عليه السلام): إذا قطعوا الأرحام جعلت الأموال في أيدي الأشرار

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said: **'If they cut off ties with their kin, their wealth will be placed at the disposal of evil people.'**

— al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 348, no. 8

عن أبان، عن أبي جعفر (عليه السلام) (أقل: أقل رسول هلا) (صل هلا عليه وآله): خمس إن : أدركتموهن فتعودوا إبهل منهن لم تظهر الفاحشة في قوم قط حتى يعلنوها إل ظهر فيهم الطاعون والوجاع التي لم تكن في أسالفهم الذين مضوا، ولم ينقصوا المكيال والميزان إل أخذوا ابلسنين وشدة المؤونة وجور السلطان، ولم يمنعوا الزكاة إل منعوا القطر من السماء ولوال البهائم لم يمطروا، ولم ينقصوا عهد هلا وعهد رسوله إل سلط هلا عليهم عدوهم، وأخذ بعض ما في أيديهم، ولم يحكموا بغير ما أنزل هلا إل جعل هلا أبسهم بينهم

From Aban, from Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) who said: **The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said: There are five things, if you encounter them, seek refuge in Allah from them: Whenever immorality appears among people until they display it openly, plague and diseases that were not present in their predecessors will appear among them. And whenever they give short measure and weight, they will be seized with years of famine, hardship in provisions, and oppression from the ruler. And whenever they withhold Zakat, rain will be withheld from the sky, and were it not for the animals, they would not receive rain. And whenever they break the covenant of Allah and His Messenger, Allah will give their enemy power over them who will take some of what is in their hands. And whenever they rule by other than what Allah has revealed, Allah will cause their might to be used against each other.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 2, Chapter 41, Hadith 21549

Adultery and Sudden Death

إذا كثر الزنا من بعدي كثر موت الفجأة

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **If fornication increases after my time, sudden death will increase.**

— al-Kafi by Shaykh al-Kulayni, Volume 5, Page 541

(عن أبي حمزة، عن أبي جعفر) عليه السالم (اقل: وجدان في كتاب رسول هلا) صل هلا عليه وآله : إذا ظهر الزان من بعدي كثر موت الفجأة، وإذا طفف الميزان والمكيال أخذهم هلا ابلسين والنقص، وإذا منعوا الزكاة منعت الرض بركاتها من الزرع والثمار والمعادن كلها، وإذا جاروا في الحكام تعاونوا عل الظلم والعدوان، وإذا نقضوا العهد سلط هلا عليهم عدوهم، وإذا قطعوا الرحام جعلت الموال في أيدي الشرار، وإذا لم أيملوا ابلمعروف ولم ينهوا عن المنكر، ولم يتبعوا. الخيار من أهل بيتي سلط هلا عليهم شرارهم فيدعو خيارهم فال يستجاب لهم

From Abu Hamza, from Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) who said: **We found in the book of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family): When adultery appears frequently after me, sudden death will increase. When they give short measure and weight, Allah will seize them with years of famine and decrease. When they withhold Zakat, the earth will withhold its blessings from crops, fruits, and all minerals. When they are unjust in judgments, they will help each other in oppression and transgression. When they break covenants, Allah will give their enemy power over them. When they cut off family ties, wealth will be placed in the hands of the wicked. When they do not enjoin good and forbid evil, and do not follow the righteous ones from my household, Allah will give the evil ones among them power over them, then their righteous ones will supplicate but will not be answered.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 2, Chapter 41, Hadith 21550

الإمام الصادق (عليه السلام): إذا فشا الزنا ظهرت الزلازل

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said, '**When fornication becomes widespread earthquakes occur as an upshot.**'

— al-Tahdhib, v. 3, p. 148, no. 318

عن أبي عبيدة، عن أبي جعفر) عليه السالم (اقل: وجدان في كتاب عيل صلوات هلا عليه: اقل رسول هلا) صل هلا عليه وآله: إذا كثر الزان من بعدي كثر موت الفجأة

From Abu Ubaida, from Abu Jafar (peace be upon him) who said: **We found in the book of Ali, may Allah's blessings be upon him: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said: When zina (adultery/fornication) becomes widespread after me, sudden death will increase.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 1, Section 3, Chapter 1, Hadith 25685

Comprehensive Economic Consequences

و روي عن النبي صلى الله عليه وآله أنه قال: «إذا غضب الله تعالى على أمة ثم لم ينزل بها العذاب غلت أسعارها و قصرت أعمارها و لم يربح تجارها و لم تزك ثمارها و لم تغزر أنهارها و حبس عنها أمطارها و سلبت عليها أشرارها».

Hadith.1489 - It is narrated from The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family): **When Allah (swt), the Exalted, becomes angry with a nation but does not send punishment upon it, the prices of goods rise, their lifespans become shorter, their traders do not profit, their fruits do not flourish, their rivers do not flow abundantly, rain is withheld from them, and their wicked people are given authority over them.**

— Man Lā Yahḍuruh al-Faqīh (Vol. 1) by Shaykh Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Ṣaḍuq, Book 1, Chapter 80, Ḥadīth #1489

وعن النبي (صل الله عليه وآله) أنه اقل: إذا غضب هلا علة أمة ثم لم ينزل بها العذاب غلت أسعارها، وقصرت أعمارها، ولم ترح تجارها، ولم تزك ثمارها، ولم تغزر أنهارها وحبس هلا عنها أمطارها، وسلط عليها أشرارها

From the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family): **When Allah becomes angry with a nation but does not send down punishment upon them, their prices become inflated, their lifespans become shortened, their traders do not profit, their fruits do not ripen, their rivers do not flow abundantly, Allah withholds rain from them, and empowers their evil ones over them.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 8, Section 1, Chapter 7, Hadith 10008

حدثنا علي بن الحسين بن شاذويه (رضي الله عنه)، قال: حدثنا محمد ابن عبد الله بن جعفر - 24 الحميري، عن أبيه، عن أحمد بن محمد بن عيسى، عن العباس ابن معروف، عن علي بن الحكم، عن مند بن علي العنزي، عن محمد بن مطرف، عن مسمع، عن الاصبع بن نباتة، عن علي (عليه السلام)، قال: قال رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله): إذا غضب الله تبارك وتعالى على أمة ولم ينزل بها العذاب، غلت أسعارها، وقصرت أعمارها، ولم يربح تجارها، ولم تزك ثمارها، ولم تغزر أنهارها، وحبس عنها أمطارها، وسلط عليها شرارها (2).

‘Ali b. al-Husayn b. Shadhuwayh (ra) narrated to us. He said: Muhammad b. ‘Abdullah b. Ja‘far al-Himyari narrated to us from his father from Ahmad b. Muhammad b. ‘Isa from al-‘Abbas b. Ma‘ruf from ‘Ali b. al-Hakam from Mundal b. ‘Ali al-‘Anzi from Muhammad b. Mutraf from Masma‘ from al-Asbagh b. Nubata from ‘Ali (peace be upon him). He

said: **The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said: When Allah is angry with a nation and does not descend chastisement upon it, its prices increase, its life will be shortened, its merchants will not make a profit, its fruits will not ripen, its rivers will not be bounteous, its rain will be withheld from it, and its evil people will rule over it.**

— Al-Amālī by Shaykh Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Ṣaduq, Book 1, Chapter 85, Ḥadīth #24

Poverty as an Affliction

Poverty itself is considered a great affliction, equivalent to death, and can lead to unbelief. Islam views poverty as a destroying disaster that must be removed from society.

The Role of Istighfar: The Divine Remedy

In response to the calamities caused by sin, istighfar emerges as the paramount solution. It is presented as the divine remedy that restores blessings and rectifies the consequences of transgression.

Abundant Sustenance and Mercy

رسول الله ﷺ (صلي الله عليه وآله): من أكثر الاستغفار جعل الله له من كل هم فرجا، و من كل ضيق مخرجا

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **‘Whoever seeks forgiveness in abundance, Allah will give him relief from every distress and an outlet from every source of anxiety.’**

— Nur al-Thaqalayn, v. 5, p. 357, no. 45

عن أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام قال: الاستغفار يزيد في الرزق

Amir al-muminin, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said: **‘Seeking forgiveness increases sustenance.’**

— Bihar Al-Anwar volume: 90, pages: 277

عن أمير المؤمنين (عليه السلام): استغفر ترزق

Amir al-muminin, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said: **‘Seek forgiveness and you will be provided sustenance.’**

— Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, Volume 12, Page 122

اقل: واقل (عليه السالم): من أكثر من الاستغفار جعل هلا له من كل هم فرجا، ومن كل ضيق مخرجا، ورزقه من حيث ال. يحتسب

He [Ali] (peace be upon him) said: **Whoever frequently seeks forgiveness [does istighfar], Allah will grant him relief from every worry, a way out from every difficulty, and will provide for him from sources he never expected.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 7, Section 3, Chapter 23, Hadith 9051

حدثني محمد بن علي ماجيلويه عن علي بن إبراهيم بن هاشم عن أبيه عن النوفلي عن السكوني عن جعفر بن محمد الصادق عن أبيه عن آبائه ع قال قال رسول الله ص إن لله عز و جل فضولا من رزقه ينحله من يشاء من خلقه و الله باسط يديه عند كل فجر لمذنب الليل هل يتوب فيغفر له و يبسط يديه عند مغيب الشمس لمذنب النهار هل يتوب فيغفر له.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (peace be upon him) narrates from his predecessors that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, **"Allah gives abundant sustenance to whomsoever He desires. Similarly, the mercy of Allah is spread far and wide for the sinners day and night waiting for the person to repent and be forgiven. The mercy of Allah waits at sunset for the people who committed sins during the day to repent and get themselves forgiven."**

– Thawāb al-A'māl wa 'iqāb al-A'māl by Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Ṣaduq, Book 2, Chapter 398, Ḥadīth #3

Qur'anic Promises

The Holy Qur'an explicitly links istighfar to prosperity. In Surah Nuh, Allah states:

"And said: Ask forgiveness from your Lord, for He is ever Forgiving. He will send rain to you in abundance, and give you increase in wealth and children, and bestow on you gardens and rivers." (Surah Nuh, Quran 71:10-12)

Similarly, in Surah Hud (Quran 11:52): **"And O my people, ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in showers and increase you in strength [added] to your strength. And do not turn away, [being] criminals."**

The Five Worldly Promises in Surah Nuh

Commentators, citing verses 11 and 12 of Surah Nuh, have enumerated five great material blessings that result from istighfar:

A) The Sending of Successive Rains (Yursil al-sama' 'alaykum midraran)

The word "midraran" means abundantly pouring and rain-heavy. The meaning is that if the people perform istighfar, God will send abundantly raining clouds toward them. This rain is of such a nature as if the sky wants to descend, but it is a rain of mercy, non-destructive and controllable in rivers, which causes greenery and the growth of plants. The choice of the word "sama'" (sky) instead of "matar" (rain) indicates that the factors of plant growth are not only rain, but other heavenly blessings such as sunlight, wind, and tides are also included in this promise.

B) Assistance with Wealth (Wa yumdidkum bi-amwal)

God promises that through istighfar, He will increase people's wealth. This wealth includes every type of wealth and is not limited to a specific kind. This wealth will be pure and the result of constructive effort and through legitimate means.

C) Assistance with Children (Wa banin)

In the verse, "banin" (sons) is specifically mentioned. Commentators have given various reasons for this expression:

- In that society, sons played a key role as a more active labor force in economic affairs, gardening, and agriculture (which were heavy tasks), and their mention served as a symbol of the community's human and economic power.
- Human nature is inclined toward having sons, and this promise had greater appeal for the audience of that time.
- The meaning of children here is healthy, righteous children raised in the pure environment of a believing family.

D) The Emergence of Gardens (Wa yaj'al lakum jannat)

God promises to place green and flourishing gardens for them. These gardens are the direct result of the sending of abundant rains and the proper management of water resources.

E) The Flowing of Rivers (Wa yaj'al lakum anhara)

Alongside the gardens, flowing rivers also emerge that irrigate the gardens and bring prosperity to agriculture. These rivers indicate the control of surface waters and the prevention of destructive floods.

Illustrative Examples from Islamic History

The Counsel of Imam Hasan (peace be upon him)

الفضل بن الحسن الطبرسي في (مجمع البيان) عن الربيع بن صبيح، أن رجال أتى الحسن عليه السلام (فشكا إليه الجدوبة فقال له الحسن: استغفر هلالا، وأتته آخر فشكا إليه الفقر فقال له: استغفر هلالا، وأتته آخر فقال له: ادع هلالا أن يرزقني ابنا، فقال له: استغفر هلالا فقلنا له: أأتك رجال يشكون أبوابا ويسألون أنواعا أفمرتهم كلهم بالاستغفار؟! فقال: ما قلت ذلك من ذات نفسي، إنما اعتبرت فيه قول هلالا: (استغفروا ربكم إنه كان غفارا) (آلايت

Al-Fadl bin Al-Hasan Al-Tabarsi in (Majma' Al-Bayan) from Al-Rabi' bin Sabih, that a man came to Al-Hasan (peace be upon him) and complained to him of drought, so Al-Hasan said to him: **Seek forgiveness from Allah**. Another came to him and complained of poverty, so he said to him: **Seek forgiveness from Allah**. Another came to him and said: Pray to Allah to grant me a son, so he said to him: **Seek forgiveness from Allah**. So we said to him: Men came to you complaining of various issues and asking about different matters, yet you instructed all of them to seek forgiveness [from Allah]? He replied: **I did not say that from my own opinion. Rather, I considered the statement of Allah: "Seek forgiveness from your Lord. Indeed, He is ever Forgiving."** [Quran, 71:10] and the verses after it.

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 7, Section 3, Chapter 23, Hadith 9055

Salat al-Istisqa': The Prayer for Rain

The practice of Salat al-Istisqa' is a communal prayer specifically for rain, performed during droughts.

Purpose: This prayer is recommended when rivers run dry, rainfall is scarce, and the sky withholds its rain due to the prevalence of sins, ingratitude for blessings, withholding of rights, cheating in weights and measures, injustice, making excuses, neglecting enjoining good and forbidding evil, withholding zakat, judging by other than what Allah has revealed, and other things that cause the wrath of the Most Merciful, which leads to the withholding of rain, as mentioned in narrations.

Method: It consists of two rak'ahs in congregation, similar to the 'Eid prayer, with five takbirs and qunuts in the first rak'ah and four takbirs and qunuts in the second. In the qunut, it is preferable to request rain and implore Allah for His mercy.

و كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله إذا استسقى قال « اللهم اسق عبادك و بهائمك و انشر رحمتك و أحي بلادك الميتة » يرددّها ثلاث مرات

Whenever the Messenger of Allah (sw) prayed for rain (Salat al-Istisqa'), he would say:

Allahumma isqi 'ibadaka wa baha'imaka wa unshur rahmatataka wa ahyi biladaka al-maytah O' Allah (swt), provide water to Your servants and Your animals, spread Your mercy, and revive Your dead land.

He would repeat this three times.

— Man Lā Yahḍuruh al-Faqīh (Vol. 1) by Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Ṣaduq, Book 1, Chapter 80, Ḥadīth #1500

The Integration of Spiritual and Material Encouragement in Islamic Da'wah

Islamic teachings on da'wah (inviting to Islam) emphasize a holistic integration of spiritual and material encouragement, recognizing that human beings possess both spiritual and physical needs. This comprehensive approach ensures that people are guided toward perfection spiritually, physically, intellectually, and ethically. The Qur'anic account of Prophet Noah's (peace be upon him) mission, particularly as detailed in Surah Nuh (Chapter 71), provides profound insights into this integrated approach to religious propagation.

Holistic Development and Balance

Islam advocates a balanced approach to life, distributing focus equally between materialism and spirituality. This balance is viewed as a guarantee for healthy spirits and bodies. Spiritual development requires dedicated time, similar to time allocated for daily living and leisure.

رسول الله   (صلي الله عليه وآله): كان فيها [أي صحف إبراهيم (عليه السلام)] ... على العاقل ما لم يكن مغلوبا على عقله أن يكون له ساعات: ساعة يناجي فيها ربه عزوجل ، وساعة يحاسب نفسه ، وساعة يتفكر فيما صنع الله   عزوجل إليه ، وساعة يخلو فيها بحظ نفسه من الحلال؛ فإن هذه الساعة عون لتلك الساعات واستجمام للقلوب وتوزيع لها

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **'The scriptures of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) contain the following: '...the rational man, as long as he is of sound reason, must put aside several hours during the day – an hour for conversing with his Lord, an hour for [self-scrutiny and] accounting for himself, an hour to ponder over Allah's favors bestowed upon him, and an hour to spend on his own lawful pleasures, for this one hour will be an aid to him in fulfilling his other hours, as well as a time to recuperate and relax.'**

— al-Khisal, p. 525, no. 13 and Ma'ani al-Akhbar, p. 334

وقال (عليه السلام): للمؤمن ثلاث ساعات: فساعة يناجي فيها ربه، وساعة يرم معاشه، وساعة يخلي بين نفسه وبين لذتها فيما يحل ويجمل.

Amīr al-mu'minīn, peace be upon him, said: **The believer's time has three periods : The period when he is in communion with Allāh; the period when he manages for his livelihood; and the period when he is free to enjoy what is lawful and pleasant.**

— Nahj al-Balāgha by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, Book 3, Chapter 390, Ḥadīth #487

اجتهدوا في أن يكون زمانكم أربع ساعات: ساعة لمناجاة الله، وساعة لأمر المعاش، وساعة لمعاشرة الإخوان والثقات الذين يعرفونكم عيوبكم ويخلصون لكم في الباطن، وساعة تخلون فيها للذاتكم في غير محرم وبهذه الساعة تقدرون على الثلاث ساعات. (تحف العقول ص409)

Imam Musa Kazim (peace be upon him): **Put in endeavor and exercise effort that your time is scheduled into four hours (parts). An hour (part of it) for the supplication to Allah and an hour (another part) of it for the affairs of economy and livelihood and still another hour (part of it) for social contacts with the brothers and the persons of confidence who may let you learn your short comings and faults and they have a sincere interior (heart) for you.**

And a part of it in which you enjoy the unforbidden and lawful entertainments. And with this part of time you get the strength and vigor for the (rest of) three other (parts of) times

– Tuhful-Aqool. P 409

In Islamic teachings, spiritual and material life are not separate. Even mundane tasks, such as working in a laboratory or performing menial tasks, can be acts of worship and obedience to God's commandments. Muslims are encouraged to seek the blessings of this world, but not at the expense of forgetting the hereafter. The Qur'an states: "**But**

seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters." (Surah Al-Qasas, Quran 28:77).

Prophet Noah's Comprehensive Preaching Methods

Prophet Noah's mission, as described in Surah Nuh, was to warn his people before an excruciating torment. His preaching methods were comprehensive, persistent, and tailored to address the deep-seated disbelief and arrogance of his community.

Noah's clear and consistent message was to worship Allah alone, fear Him, and obey His messenger. He explicitly warned them against disobedience to Allah, emphasizing that an excruciating torment awaited them if they persisted in their ways. He reminded his people of Allah's magnanimity and favor by referencing His creation of the seven heavens in layers, the moon as a light, the sun as a blazing lamp, their own creation and growth from the earth, and the spreading of the earth as a carpet for their use.

Prophet Noah employed various methods of invitation, stating to Allah: **"Oh Allah I invited my people day and night... Whenever I would call them so you would forgive them, oh Allah, they put their fingers in their ears and they became arrogant"** (Surah Nuh, Quran 71:5-7). He called them openly and secretly, indicating his use of both public sermons and private appeals, leaving no method of invitation untried.

Despite 950 years of persistent preaching, his call only increased their flight from the truth, and they responded by putting their fingers in their ears, covering themselves with garments, persisting in their ways, and showing arrogance.

The Relationship Between Istighfar and Divine Blessings

A central theme in Surah Nuh is the direct link between seeking forgiveness (Istighfar) and receiving abundant blessings, both in this world and the hereafter. Prophet Noah emphasized that Allah is "Endlessly Forgiving" and that turning to Him in repentance would unlock a multitude of benefits.

Prophet Noah conveyed this crucial message to his people:

"And said [unto them]: **"Ask forgiveness from your Lord since He is Oft-Forgiving. So that He sends Bountiful rain unto you in abundance, And give you increase in**

affluence and offspring and bestow upon you verdant gardens and rivers" (Surah Nuh, 71:10-12).

Spiritual Blessings Associated with Istighfar

Forgiveness of Sins: The most direct spiritual blessing is the absolution from the impurities of disbelief and disobedience. Seeking forgiveness is described as a means to undo the wrong they have done and purify oneself.

Spiritual Development and Perfection: Seeking forgiveness is considered an essential aspect of spiritual wayfaring and ascent to the heights of human perfection. It helps a believer to stay on the right path" and is a means of seeking Allah's pardon and forgiveness.

Purification of the Heart: It is said that seeking forgiveness polishes the heart and removes rust, akin to how rust is removed from brass. According to Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (peace be upon him)

ـ عدة من أصحابنا عن أحمد بن محمد عن حسين بن سيف عن أبي جميلة عن عبيد بن زرارة قال قال أبو عبد الله (عليه السلام) إذا أكثر العبد من الإستغفار رفعت صحيفته وهي تتلألأ

A number of our people have narrated from Ahmad ibn Muhammad from Husayn ibn Sayf from abu Jamilah from 'Ubayd ibn Zurara who has said the following: "Abu 'Abd Allah (peace be upon him) has said, **'One who pleas for forgiveness often, his book of record of deeds is raised and it shines brilliantly.'**"

— Al-Kāfi (Vol. 2) by Shaykh Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, Book 2, Chapter 28, Ḥadīth #2

عن عبيد بن زرارة اقل: اقل أبو عبد هلا (عليه السالم): إذا أكثر العبد من الاستغفار رفعت صحيفته . وهي تتلألأ

From Ubayd bin Zurara who said: Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) said: **When a servant frequently engages in seeking forgiveness (istighfar), his book of deeds (record) is raised while it is shining.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 7, Section 3, Chapter 23, Hadith 9048

Integration of Faith and Worldly Prosperity

The Qur'anic account in Surah Nuh clearly presents repentance and Istighfar as not only compatible with but also conducive to worldly well-being. Genuine religiosity is not an impediment to material flourishing; rather, spiritual correction can open the way to the sound enjoyment of divine gifts and the restoration of communal prosperity.

However, a crucial qualification is made: wealth and children are not automatically virtuous. Noah condemned those whose material blessings produced only loss because they followed disbelief and disobedience. True benefit from material blessings comes when they are integrated with faith, repentance, and righteous conduct.

Faith (Iman) is identified as one of the four things considered beneficial for a person, alongside gratitude, seeking forgiveness, and supplication. The basis of prosperity and success, both in this world and the hereafter, is described as the love of Allah and awareness of His laws, rather than the greed for gold. Whoever maintains good relations with Allah, Allah will also rectify their affairs with people. Whoever arranges for their salvation, Allah will arrange their worldly affairs.

Practical Propagational Lessons

The account of Prophet Noah's mission yields several vital lessons for modern-day religious propagators:

Holistic Approach: Address both the spiritual needs (repentance, forgiveness, returning to Allah) and the legitimate material concerns (livelihood, family, agriculture, environmental well-being) of people.

Faith as a Source of Prosperity: Present faith not as an enemy of worldly prosperity but as a genuine source of constructive blessings.

Qualified Prosperity: Explain that worldly resources alone are insufficient; without faith and obedience, wealth and children can become sources of loss. Material blessings are only truly beneficial when linked with moral transformation.

Encouragement and Moral Connection: Use clear encouragement while consistently preserving the connection between divine blessings and moral transformation. The رسول الله ﷺ (صلي الله عليه وآله): إن هذا الدين متين فأوغلوا فيه برفق ، ولا تكرهوا عبادة الله ﷻ إلى عباد الله ﷻ فتكونوا كالراكب المنبت الذي لا سفرا قطع ولا ظهرا أبقى

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: '**Verily this religion is firm so penetrate into it gently, and do not arouse aversion for Allah's worship in**

His servants that they may become like shattered riders who have neither gotten further in their travel nor have any drive left to continue.'

— al-Kafi, p. 86, no. 1

رسول الله ﷺ (صلي الله عليه و آله): يسروا ولا تعسروا، وسكنوا ولا تنفروا

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: '**Ease and do not cause hardship [when propagating], and comfort and do not nauseate.**'

— Sahih al-Bukhari, v. 5, p. 2269, no. 5774

يسروا ولا تعسروا

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **Be easy- going and do not be hard (on people)**

— Nahj Al-Fasahah

Trust and Sincerity: Propagators must demonstrate trustworthiness, sincerity, and love, avoiding any sense of superiority, to attract people to the truth.

Resolute Perseverance: Noah spent 950 years of his thousand-year life in propagating God's religion, tirelessly battling idolatry despite having no helper or support except his reliance on God. This teaches the importance of unwavering steadfastness in the face of difficulties and opposition.

Trust in Allah: Messengers like Noah have always put their trust in Allah and have never been daunted by the threats of their people, knowing that absolute victory always comes to those who believe.

Consequences of Disbelief: The destruction of Noah's people, including his own son, serves as a stark reminder that even family relationships are not a guarantee of salvation or protection from God's judgment. Only righteousness and obedience to God lead to success.

Collective Success and Social Responsibility

A cornerstone of Islamic spirituality is the divine concern for the success of the entire collective, not solely the individual. Supplications frequently use the plural form (e.g., "Our Lord, give us good in this world"), emphasizing that the well-being of the community is implicitly included in personal prayers. The true measure of a human

being's ascent in the eyes of Allah is not solely gauged by individual spiritual accomplishments, but by how positively they impact and cater to the needs of those around them.

Conclusion

In Islamic thought, Istighfar and Tawbah are fundamental concepts that guide a believer's return to Allah (SWT). While Tawbah is the general act of repenting and turning back to Allah, Istighfar—especially in its fullest form as expounded by Imam Ali (peace be upon him)—is the specific, multi-faceted process of seeking forgiveness that encapsulates all the necessary actions and intentions for a complete and accepted return to God. The comprehensive conditions of Istighfar serve as the practical steps for achieving genuine Tawbah, making them mutually reinforcing concepts in the believer's spiritual journey.

Furthermore, Islamic teachings present a clear and consistent view: sins lead to a deprivation of blessings, including drought and poverty, as a divine consequence or lesson. The Qur'anic principle that **"And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much."** (Quran 42:30) establishes the foundational relationship between human transgression and worldly affliction.

Specific sins—including disobedience to Allah, unjust rulings, false testimony, cheating in weights and measures, withholding Zakat, betrayal of trust, breaking relations and promises, and corruption—are identified as direct causes of drought, famine, and economic hardship. These consequences affect not only individuals but entire communities, and even animals suffer due to human sins.

However, Allah's mercy is vast, and the path to redemption and the restoration of these blessings is through sincere istighfar. The Qur'anic promise in Surah Nuh (71:10-12) **"And said: Ask forgiveness from your Lord, for He is ever Forgiving. He will send rain to you in abundance, and give you increase in wealth and children, and bestow on you gardens and rivers."** (Surah Nuh, Quran 71:10-12), explicitly connects seeking forgiveness to abundant rain, increased wealth, children, gardens, and rivers. The story of Imam Hasan (peace be upon him) provides historical and practical affirmations of this principle, demonstrating how prayer for rain and, more broadly, seeking Allah's forgiveness, are powerful means to overcome environmental and economic hardships.

True istighfar, as articulated by Imam Ali (peace be upon him), comprises six essential components: remorse over past sins, a firm resolution never to return to sinning, restoring the rights of creatures that were usurped, fulfilling every obligatory duty neglected in the past, melting away any flesh that grew on unlawful nourishment, and making the body taste the pain of obedience just as it tasted the pleasure of sinfulness.

This holistic perspective underscores that adherence to divine commands and ethical conduct are fundamental not only for spiritual well-being but also for material sustenance and flourishing societies. The Islamic framework presents an integrated vision where spiritual righteousness is intrinsically connected to worldly well-being and prosperity.

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- Quran 68:17–19 — “When they swore to pluck the fruits in the morning, without making any exception. Then a visitation from your Lord came upon it while they were asleep.”
- Quran 83:14 — “Nay! Rather, what they used to do has become like a rust upon their hearts.” Also: “No! Rather, what they used to earn has rusted up their hearts.”
- Quran 71:10–12 — “And said: Ask forgiveness from your Lord, for He is ever Forgiving. He will send rain to you in abundance, and give you increase in wealth and children, and bestow on you gardens and rivers.”
- Quran 11:52 — “And O my people, ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in showers and increase you in strength [added] to your strength. And do not turn away, [being] criminals.”
- Quran 71:10 — “Seek forgiveness from your Lord. Indeed, He is ever Forgiving.” and the verses after it.

- Quran 71:5–7 — “Oh Allah I invited my people day and night... Whenever I would call them so you would forgive them, oh Allah, they put their fingers in their ears and they became arrogant.”
- Quran 28:77 — “But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters.”

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