



وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا سُوءًا فَذُكِّرُوا بِهِ لَا يَتَوَكَّلُونَ عَلَىٰ آلِهِمْ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ لِحُزْنٍ ۗ وَذُكِّرُوا بِهِ ثُمَّ لَا يَلْمُونَ سِوَا اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ۚ

*(The people of taqwa are) those who, when they commit a shameful deed or wrong their souls, they bring Allah Ta'ala to mind and then seek forgiveness for their sins. And who can forgive sins besides Allah? And they do not persist on what (sin) they did while they know. Those – their reward is forgiveness from their Rabb and gardens beneath which rivers flow and in which they will abide eternally. And how excellent is the reward of those who work (and strive for the Hereafter)! (Surah Aal 'Imraan v135-136)*

In the preceding verse, Allah Ta'ala described three qualities of the pious – they spend in the path of Allah Ta'ala in all conditions, suppress their anger, readily forgive others and show kindness to people (even those who wrong them).

If we examine these qualities, we will realize that they all relate to huqooqul 'ibaad (the rights that relate to our interaction with the creation). However, for a person to attain piety, he must uphold both the rights of the creation (e.g. serving one's parents, not causing harm to one's neighbour, etc.) as well as the rights of the Creator (e.g. performing salaah, abstaining from sin, etc.). Thus, in describing some of the qualities of the pious, the abovementioned verse relates to huqooqullah (the rights that we owe to Allah Ta'ala).

Humans, by nature, are prone to be forgetful. It is during these moments of forgetfulness and weakness, when a person becomes negligent and forgets that Allah Ta'ala is watching him, that he falls into sin and disobeys his Creator. However, the pious are such that if they have to err and make a mistake at any time, then they immediately return to their senses and remember

Allah Ta'ala.

After remembering Allah Ta'ala, their hearts are filled with grief and remorse over their sin, and thus they immediately turn to Him in repentance, sincerely crying to Him as they know that only He can forgive their sins.

From the above, we understand that zikr (the remembrance of Allah Ta'ala) is not restricted to the recitation of tasbeeh and other verbal recitations. Rather, true zikr is for a person to remain cognizant of Allah Ta'ala, due to which he refrains from sins and pleases his Creator at all times.

It is for this reason that the 'Ulama encourage us to meditate over the fact that Allah Ta'ala is watching us – so that this awareness may be deeply entrenched in the heart.

Nevertheless, the 'Ulama explain that three conditions are required for the acceptance of a person's repentance. The first is that he should immediately cease committing the sin, the second is that he should feel sincere remorse in his heart, and the third is that he should make a firm determination to never again repeat this sin.

It is in regard to this that Allah Ta'ala mentioned in the verse above, *“And they do not persist on what (sin) they did while they know”*.

Finally, Allah Ta'ala mentions that the reward of His pious and righteous friends (the people of taqwa) will be the gardens and orchards of Paradise in which they will reside forever.

*May Allah Ta'ala bless us to be among His pious friends, and may He admit us into the highest stages of Paradise.*