

٤١٧. وَقَالَ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) لِقَائِلٍ قَالَ بِحَضْرَتِهِ: أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ.

417. Someone said before Amīr al-mu'minīn, peace be upon him: “astaghfiru'llāh” (I ask Allāh's forgiveness), then Amīr al-mu'minīn, peace be upon him, said:

تَكَلَّمْتُكَ أُمَّكَ، أَتَدْرِي مَا الْإِسْتِغْفَارُ؟ (إِنَّ) الْإِسْتِغْفَارُ دَرَجَةُ الْعَلِيِّينَ، وَهُوَ اسْمٌ وَقَعَ عَلَى سِتَّةٍ مَعَانٍ:

Your mother may lose you! Do you know what “istighfār” (asking Allāh's forgiveness) is? “istighfār” is meant for people of a high position. It is a word that stands on six supports.

أَوَّلُهَا: الذَّمُّ عَلَى مَا مَضَى.

The first is to repent over the past;

وَالثَّانِي: الْعَزْمُ عَلَى تَرْكِ الْعُودِ إِلَيْهِ أَبَدًا.

the second is to make a firm determination never to revert to it;

وَالثَّالِثُ: أَنْ تُؤَدِّيَ إِلَى الْمَخْلُوقِينَ حُقُوقَهُمْ حَتَّى تَلْقَى اللَّهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ أَمْلَسَ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ تَبَعَةٌ.

the third is to discharge all the rights of people so that you may meet Allāh quite clean with nothing to account for;

وَالرَّابِعُ: أَنْ تَعْمَدَ إِلَى كُلِّ فَرِيضَةٍ عَلَيْكَ ضَيَعْتَهَا فَتُؤَدِّيَ حَقَّهَا.

the fourth is to fulfil every obligation which you ignored (in the past) so that you may now do justice with it;

وَالْخَامِسُ: أَنْ تَعْمَدَ إِلَى اللَّحْمِ الَّذِي نَبَتَ عَلَى السُّحْتِ فَتُنْذِيهِ بِالْأَحْزَانِ. حَتَّى يَلْصِقَ الْجِلْدُ بِالْعَظْمِ، وَيَنْشَأَ بَيْنَهُمَا لَحْمٌ جَدِيدٌ.

the fifth is to aim at the flesh grown as a result of unlawful earning, so that you may melt it by grief (of repentance) till the skin touches the bone and a new flesh grows between them;

وَالسَّادِسُ: أَنْ تُذِيقَ الْجِسْمَ أَلْمَ الطَّاعَةِ كَمَا أَذَقْتَهُ حَلَاوَةَ الْمَعْصِيَةِ.

and the sixth is to make the body taste the pain of obedience as you (previously) made it taste the sweetness of disobedience.

فَعِنْدَ ذَلِكَ تَقُولُ: أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ.

On such an occasion you may say “astaghfiru’llāh”.