

Prophet Adam's Repentance Accepted through the Names of the Holy Five (AS)

Learning Objectives:

- To become familiar with the meaning of verse 2:37
- To memorise verse 2:37

فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

“Then Adam received (certain) words from his Lord. And He turned towards him (mercifully). Verily He is oft-forgiving, the most Merciful.” (2:37)

Adam's return to Allah (SWT)

After the temptation of Iblis and removal of Adam from the Garden, Adam realised that he had truly done injustice to himself when he was removed from the quiet environment, full of bounties as a result of the temptation of Iblis and was placed on the earth, a grievous environment, full of toil and pain. At this time, Adam thought of compensation for his mistake and earnestly attended to the Lord with his whole heart and soul, with a great deal of regret and sorrow.

At the same time, the mercy of Allah was bestowed on him with ‘some effective words’ by means of which Adam repented and He accepted his repentance mercifully as Qur’an says: *“Then Adam received (certain) words from his Lord...” “...And He turned towards him (mercifully)....”* It happened because: *“.....Verily He is oft-forgiving, the most Merciful.”*

The term ‘*tawba*’ originally means ‘to return’. In the statements of the Qur’an, it means: ‘to return from sin’. In this case, it means, ‘to return to His Mercy’.

The Arabic word ‘*tawba*’ which is generally understood as ‘repentance’ does not imply the mere utterance of any verbal prayers. It demands a real and active change in the behaviour as well as the active attitude of the individual towards the purity of his life. It demands a moral conversion with a strong and definite determination on the part of the repenting individual, never again to return to the mistake or the wrongs that had been committed before.

The term ‘*tawba*’ is a word commonly used both for Allah and His servants. When it is used for the servants of Allah, it means that ‘they returned to their Lord’. When Allah is attributed with ‘*tawba*’, it means that He returns His extra mercy and favour to them.

Prophet Adam, indeed, did not do any unlawful thing against the Lord, but the very mistake was counted against as ‘comparative wrong’ regarding him. Adam (AS) immediately felt his condition and returned to his Lord. He repented by the means of the ‘words’ he received, and his repentance was accepted.

The ‘words’ Adam (AS) learnt from the Lord:

Commentators have cited different ideas on the quality and the meaning of the ‘words’ that Allah (SWT) taught Adam (AS).

The ‘words’ that were bestowed upon Adam (AS) by the All-Knowing, All-Merciful Lord could not have been anything of an ordinary prayer. It must have been something very special or extraordinary which the All-

Merciful Himself bestowed upon him by means of which Adam (AS) or anyone could unfailingly invoke the mercy of the Lord after having displeased Him.

It is popularly accepted the 'words' were the same words and meaning revealed in Sura Al-'A'raf, verse 23, thus:

قَالَ رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

They said: 'Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: if you do not forgive and have mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers'.

Many Islamic traditions narrated from the Ahlulbayt (AS) denote that the objective meaning of the 'words' taught to Adam (AS) by Allah (SWT), were the holy names of the highest beings, the holy Five (AS) whom Allah (SWT) had already introduced to Adam (AS).

These are:

1. Mohammed (SAW) the most praised, derived from Allah's name, the Praised One.
2. Ali (AS) the high, derived from Allah's name, the Most High.
3. Fatima (AS), the original, derived from Allah's name, the Originator of the heavens and earth.
4. Hassan (AS), the bountiful, derived from Allah's name, the Benefactor.
5. Husain (AS), the good, derived from Allah's name, the Good in Origin.

Adam (AS) relied on these 'words' and asked Allah (SAW) to forgive him. Then Allah (SWT) accepted it and forgave him.