

To Repent to God of One's Sins

Bahau'llah

Partial translation



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*"To none is it permitted to seek absolution from another soul; let repentance be between yourselves and God. He, verily, is the Pardoner, the Bounteous, the Gracious, the One Who absolveth the repentant."*¹

*"... Should anyone be afflicted by a sin, it behooveth him to repent thereof and return unto his Lord. He, verily, granteth forgiveness unto whomsoever He willeth, and none may question that which it pleaseth Him to ordain. He is, in truth, the Ever-Forgiving, the Almighty, the All-Praised."*²

*"When the sinner findeth himself wholly detached and freed from all save God, he should beg forgiveness and pardon from Him. Confession of sins and transgressions before human beings is not permissible, as it hath never been nor will ever be conducive to divine forgiveness. Moreover such confession before people results in one's humiliation and abasement, and God--exalted be His glory -- wisheth not the humiliation of His servants. Verily He is the Compassionate, the Merciful."*³

"Baha'u'llah prohibits confession to, and seeking absolution of one's sins from, a human being. Instead, one should beg forgiveness from God. In the Tablet of Bisharat, He states that *"such confession before people results in one's humiliation and abasement,"* and He affirms that God *"wisheth not the humiliation of His servants."*

Shoghi Effendi sets the prohibition into context. His secretary has written on his behalf that we ... are forbidden to confess to any person, as do the Catholics to their priests, our sins and shortcomings, or to do so in public, as some religious sects do. However, if we spontaneously desire to acknowledge we have been wrong in something, or that we have some fault of character, and ask another person's forgiveness or pardon, we are quite free to do so.

The Universal House of Justice has also clarified that Baha'u'llah's prohibition concerning the confession of sins does not prevent an individual from admitting transgressions in the course of consultations held under the aegis of Bahá'í institutions. Likewise, it does not preclude the

1. Baha'u'llah, The Most Holy Book, para 34

2. Baha'u'llah, The Most Holy Book, para 49

3. Baha'u'llah, Glad-Tidings, The 9th Glad-Tidings



possibility of seeking advice from a close friend or of a professional counselor regarding such matters.”⁴



Babi Dispensation

The Báb did not permit repentance except to God and in secret. See Persian Bayan, Wáhid VIII, Chapter III



Islamic Dispensation

“...Turn to Allah in repentance all together, O believers, so that you may be successful.”⁵

“O believers! Turn to Allah in sincere repentance, so your Lord may absolve you of your sins and admit you into Gardens, under which rivers flow, ...”⁶

“...Surely Allah loves those who always turn to Him in repentance and those who purify themselves.”⁷



Christian Dispensation

The practice of confession in the Catholic Church dates to the early centuries of Christianity, evolving over time to become a fundamental sacrament for believers.



Jewish Dispensation

The Scriptures repeatedly prescribe confession of sin to expiation and atonement. See The Holy Bible, Leviticus V.5 & XVI.21 & Numbers V6-7



⁴. Notes to Kitab-i-Aqdas no. 58

⁵. The Holy Qur'an, Al-Nur 24:31

⁶. The Holy Qur'an, Al-Tahrim 66:8

⁷. The Holy Qur'an, Al-Baqarah 2:222