

How To Repent For The Sins Committed?

This article focuses on how one can repent for the sins committed, and to earn Allah's pleasure for asking for such forgiveness. As Allah the Most Caring assures us:

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ
سورة الزمر

“Say: O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, verily, Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Surah Az-Zumar 39:53)

He also says in the Quran:

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ
سورة البقرة

“Indeed Allah loves those who repent and purify themselves.” [Surah Al Bagarah, 2:222]

The following paragraphs summarize some of the steps one can take to ask Allah for His forgiveness. However, along with the following, the sinner should ensure that he or she feels sorry for the sins, desist from committing them, and make a resolve not to recommit those sins. We should also attempt to move away from situations and environments that encourage sinful behavior.

Ask for forgiveness after the Salat (prayers)

The best time for seeking Allah's forgiveness is after the Salat. (It goes without saying that we should be regular in offering Salat). Allah guides us in this matter as well. He, the most Merciful, Says:

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفِي النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفَا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ
سورة هود

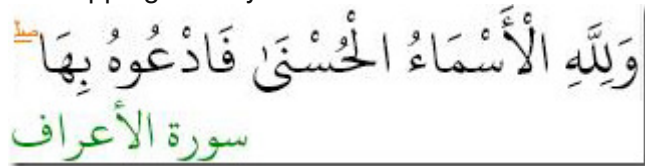
“And perform Salaat, at the two ends of the day and in some hours of the night [i.e. the five compulsory Salaat].” (Hud 11:114).

Asking Allah for forgiveness day and night

Being steadfast in prayers day and night and constantly asking Allah for forgiveness can help us repent for our sins. Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari (R.A.A) reported: The Prophet (S.A.W.S) said: **“Allah, the Exalted, will continue to stretch out His Hand in the night so that the sinners of the day may repent, and continue to stretch His Hand in the daytime so that the sinners of the night may repent, until the sun rises from the west (start of day of judgment)”**. [Sahih Muslim].

Using Allah’s names to ask for His forgiveness

While seeking forgiveness, Allah’s names concerning His Attributes of forgiveness and kindness should be used. Among the perfect Names of Allah, the Majestic and Most High, is *Al-‘Afuww* (He who pardons), and *Al-Ghafoor* (He who forgives), and *Al-Ghaffaar* (The Oft-Forgiving). Allah, the Majestic and Most High, loves our calling upon Him by His names and worshipping Him by that which His names demand. As He said:



“And Allah has the most excellent and perfect names, so worship and invoke Him by them” (Al-A’raaf ,7:180)

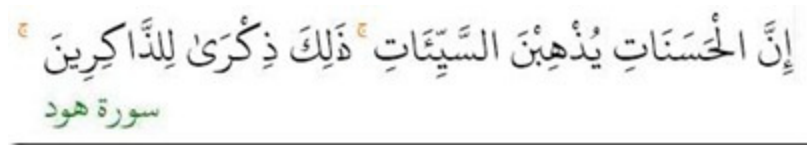
The Prophet has said in a hadith reported in the two Sahihs’ from Abu Hurairah , **“Allah has ninety-nine names. Whoever memorizes and is mindful of them (ahsaahaa) will enter Paradise.”** (Al-Bukhari, vo1. 8, no. 419 and Muslim, no.6476.)

However, ‘... memorizing and being mindful of them ...’ (ih saa), is not merely writing these names on a piece of paper and reciting them, as some people do. Scholars have explained that ‘ih saa’ of the names comprises of three stages. The first of these is to memorize the names. The second is to understand their meanings. And the third is to call upon Allah by these names in context of the calling.

Staying away from forbidden matters and performing the obligatory

deeds

Allah tells us in the Quran that doing good deeds can help us in erasing our bad deeds. He says in the Quran:



“Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds (i.e. small sins). That is a reminder (an advice) for the mindful (those who accept advice).” (Hud 11:114)

Focusing on the obligatory acts and steering clear of what Allah has forbidden, thus helps one distance from sins.

If an evil action has been committed, it should be followed up with a good one. Righteous actions expiate the evil actions as the Prophet (S.A.W.S) said:

“The five daily prayers and one Jumu’ah to the next, and one Ramadan to the next Ramadan, is expiation for what lies between them as long as one refrains from the major sins.” [Sahih Muslim]

And he said: ***“One Umrah to the next is expiation for what is in between them”*** [Sahih Al-Bukhari]

Practicing self control

One can stay away from sins by practicing self control. We can practice self control using that the prophet (S) taught us. For example, we are asked to stem anger by reciting ***A’udhu Billahi min ash-shaytaan-i’r rajeem*** (I seek refuge in Allah against the accursed Satan), whenever we get angry and are about to do or say something in a fit of anger. Sins pertaining to fulfillment of desires in the haraam, forbidden way, require self control as well. This should be accompanied with supplications to Allah, as we constantly need His help to strengthen ourselves. To help us in such situations where self control needs to be brought forth, we should think of the rewards that Allah Most Merciful has promised those who exercise patience and restrain themselves from reacting with anger or in any negative manner. Those rewards should not be lost!

Weeping out of fear of Allah

Anas bin Malik (R.A.A) reported: The Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.S) delivered a Khutbah to us the like of which I had never heard from him before. In the course of the Khutbah, he said: ***“If you knew what I know, you would laugh little and weep much”***. [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]. Abu Hurairah (R.A.A) reported: Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.S) said, ***“One who weeps out of fear of Allah, will not enter Hell till milk returns back in the udder...”*** [At-Tirmidhi].

Other acts that can help the sinner in getting Allah’s Forgiveness:

- ***Supplication upon hearing the Athaan:*** Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqaas, (R.A.A), narrated that the Prophet (S.A.W.S) said, ***“He who says upon hearing the person calling the Athaan, ‘I also bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone without a partner, and that Muhammad is His slave and messenger. I accept Allah as a Lord, Muhammad as a messenger, and Islam as a religion’ – all his previous sins will be forgiven.”*** (Sahih Muslim).
- ***Saying ‘Ameen’:*** Abu Hurayrah, (R.A.A) narrated that the Prophet (S.A.W.S) said, ***“When the Imaam says ‘Ameen’, say ‘Ameen’, because he who coincides with the angels when saying Ameen will get all his previous sins forgiven.”*** (Al-Bukhaari & Muslim).
- ***Praying two rak’aah of salaah attentively:*** The Prophet (S.A.W.S) said, ***“He who performs ablution properly, then prays any two rak’aah (of salaah) without being heedless, will get all his previous sins forgiven.”*** (Ahmad).
- ***Gathering in circles of people mentioning Allah:*** Sahl ibn Hanthalah, R.A.A) narrated that the Prophet (S.A.W.S) said, ***“It is never that a group of people gather to mention***

Allah, but they will be told upon leaving the circle (after finishing): ‘Your sins have been forgiven.’” (Ahmad).

- **Being patient in Sickness** (accepting it gracefully, without complaints): Aa’ishah (R.A.A), narrated that the Prophet (S.A.W.S) said, **“Whenever a believer becomes sick, he will be purified from his sins, just as fire purifies steel.”** (Al- Bukhaari).

Conclusion

Let us remember that Prophet Adam (alaihi salam) was misled by Satan into disobeying Allah. However, he regretted it considerably and repented very sincerely. Allah (SWT) showed His Mercy and revealed the words for seeking forgiveness from Him.

... رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ
سورة الأعراف

“Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If Thou forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers.” (Al-A’raf; 7:23) and Allah forgave him.

Allah says:

فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ
سورة البقرة

“..... And his Lord pardoned him (accepted his repentance). Verily, He is the One Who forgives (accepts repentance), the Most Merciful.” (Al-Baqara, 2:37)

Select Duas asking for forgiveness

Both the Quran and Hadith provide us with many Duas that one can use to ask for Allah’s forgiveness. Some of them are stated below:

One should recite **Astaghfirullah** constantly. This includes saying it 3 times after every salat and a minimum of 100 times a day as was reported in Sahih Muslim

استغفر الله

“I seek forgiveness from Allah”

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَتُبْ عَلَيَّ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

“My Rubb! Forgive me and pardon me. Indeed, You are the Oft-Returning with compassion and Ever Merciful.” (Reported in Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi).

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي خَطِيئَتِي وَجَهْلِي، وَإِسْرَافِي فِي أَمْرِي، وَمَا أَنْتَ
أَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنِّي، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي هَزْلِي وَجِدِّي، وَخَطَايَايَ وَعَمْدِي،
وَكُلُّ ذَلِكَ عِنْدِي.

“O Allah! Forgive my sins, my ignorance, my intemperance in my affairs and all that I am not aware of but You know. O Allah! Forgive my play and my seriousness. Forgive my sins, be they unintentional or deliberate, for all of which I am responsible.”
(Source: Sahih Al-Bukhari # 6398)

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، خَلَقْتَنِي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ، وَأَنَا عَلَى
عَهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ، أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ، أَبُوءُ
لَكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ عَلَيَّ، وَأَبُوءُ بِذَنْبِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ
إِلَّا أَنْتَ.

“O Allah, You are my Lord, there is no God but You. You have created me, and I am Your slave. I try my best to keep my covenant (faith) with You and to live in the hope of Your promise. I seek refuge in You from the evil I have done. I acknowledge Your favors upon me, and I admit my sins. Please, forgive me, for none forgives sins but YOU.” (Source: Sahih Al-Bukhari # 6306)

“Subhan Allahi wa bihamdihi; Astaghfirullahi wa atubu ilaihi -Allah is free from imperfection, and I begin with praising Him. I beg forgiveness from Allah and I turn to Him in repentance.” Reported by Aishah (R.A.A) that prior to his death, the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.S) used to supplicate this dua frequently. [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].