

# Why Do We Sin? (Steps for prevention)

Allah has ordained the nature of man to be fallible. We are constantly subjugated to the pulls and desires of this worldly life. While we have the ability to steer our “free will” in any direction, we remain exposed to [Satan's attacks](#) and whispers that can stray us from the straight path.

## How to repel Satan's Attacks?

We can counter Satan's plan of pulling us down with sins by increasing our faith, knowledge, and good deeds and that can then elevate us to a level which can merit our meeting with [Allah](#) with bright and shining faces. Alternately, we can ignore Allah's commandments and burden ourselves with sins thus bringing in darkness and sadness on our faces. As Allah says in the [Quran](#):

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاصِرَةٌ  
إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ  
وَوُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَاسِرَةٌ  
تَظُنُّ أَنْ يُفْعَلَ بِهَا فَاقِرَةٌ

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- **Some faces that Day shall be [Nadirah](#) (shining and radiant).**
  - **Looking at their Lord (Allah).**
  - **And some faces, that Day, will be [Basirah](#) (dark, gloomy, frowning, and sad),**
  - **Thinking that some calamity is about to fall on them (Quran, [Al-Qiyama:22-25](#)).**

For those of us who believe, the anticipation of meeting Allah alone should invigorate us to straighten our acts and to stay clear from all types of sins. But again, the fallibility of our [essential nature](#) makes us either forget or neglect our obligations and drives our *nafs* (self) to sin. To shield ourselves from misguidance, therefore, we should look at the root causes that can help us become aware of Satan's tactics and accordingly prevent our *nafs* from being misguided.

## Overcoming Temptation of Sins

The following are six major of those reasons and the divine guidance that can help us overcome the temptation to get into sins.

## Lack of knowledge about religious matters

Lack of knowledge about religious matters and the vast chasms that it creates in our understanding is one of the reasons why many of us engage in sins. This also denies us the knowhow about the allowed (halal), and the prohibitions (haram). Consider what the prophet (S.A.W.S.) said regarding our responsibility to learn Islamic knowledge that he brought for mankind:

*“The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed rain water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the rain water and Allah benefited the people with it and they utilized it for drinking, making their animals drink from it and for irrigation of the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it was barren which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (then that land gave no benefits). The **first** is the example of the person who comprehends Allahs religion and gets benefit (from the knowledge) which Allah has revealed through me (the Prophet) and learns and then teaches others. The **last** example is that of a person who does not care for it and does not take Allah’s guidance revealed through me (He is like that barren land.)”* [Bukhari, Vol. 1, Book 1, Hadeeth 79].

Unfortunately, it’s not uncommon to see Muslims today who fall in the last category and make little effort to learn such knowledge. This is what Caliph Umar Ibnul-Khattaab had predicted when he said: *“Soon the bonds of Islam will be loosened bit by bit, because people will enter into Islam but will be unaware of Jaahiliyyah (ignorant practices that Islam opposes),”* meaning that they won’t hesitate to follow them “

Moreover, to excuse ourselves from the obligation to learn more about Islamic matters, some of us rationalize to ourselves that our daily worships may be sufficient for us to live meaningfully. Again, this is one of those traps that many scholars over the centuries had warned us about. This is because worshipping Allah without the basis of knowledge leaves our foundations of faith very vulnerable and fallible. In this context,, reading the two verses of Suah Al-Hashr (16, 17)

كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ

فَكَانَ عَاقِبَتُهُمَا أَنَّهُمَا فِي النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ

There parable is like Satan who says to him “disbelieve” and when he becomes disbeliever, he says “ I am free of you; I fear Allah, The Rabb of the Worlds. The end of both is hell fire and will there forever, thus Shall the reward of wrongdoers.

where an ignorant worshipper based his life on worshipping Allah unknowingly, so Satan seized the opportunity and thus seduced him (due to lack of his knowledge) to disbelieve in Allah. So, we see that an ongoing effort to strengthen our faith through knowledge is essential not just to protect us from minor sins but also to prevent us from the greatest sin of all, which is to disbelieve in Allah.

## Social pressures drive us toward sins

A number of us sin not because of willful disobedience but because sometimes we get pulled into the act reluctantly. It is no secret that certain social (and other) pressures tend to push us into committing sins that we normally would not commit. When in such situations, we quiet our conscience and then go with the social flow. This is one of the reasons why the prophet (S.A.W.S.) warned us about keeping company that can take us away from the straight path. He (S.A.W.S.) said: “A man will follow the way of his close friends, so let each one of you look at who he takes as a close friend.” (Narrated by Abu Dawood, 8433; classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood, 4046.)

We should remind ourselves that time always passes and such friends won't last us for the full journey of our life and they won't be with us on the day when we are held accountable for the sins that we committed due to their influence. Consider what Allah says in the following two verses about the Day of Judgment:

الأخلاء يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ  
“Friends on that Day (the **Day of Judgement**) will be enemies except al-Muttaqoon (the pious)” (Az-Zukhruf 43: 67).

وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا  
يَا وَيْلَتَى لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيلًا  
لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَنِي وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِلْإِنْسَانِ خَذُولًا

“And (remember) the Day when the wrongdoer will bite at his hands, he will say: O! Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger (Muhammad). Ah! Woe to me! Would that I had never taken so-and-so as a friend. He indeed led me astray from the reminder (the Quran) after it had come to me. And **Satan** is ever a deserter to man in the hour of need” (Al-Furqaan 25: 27–29).

Let's, therefore, ensure that if our social circles are directly or indirectly pushing us to commit sins or discouraging us from performing good deeds then we should disengage from such groups and people immediately. By quieting our conscience in the face of

social pressures, we also start to slowly regard many wrongs as rights and gradually lose our internal compass of the right and wrong.

## Sense of pride and arrogance driving toward sins

Pride and arrogance can lead us to suppress the goodness and common sense within us simply to provide merit to our egocentric agendas. One sign of such an attitude involves engaging in frequent argumentation, disputes, and quarrels simply to push misguided viewpoints. Such an attitude in general stands counter to everything that the Quran and the prophet taught us. As one of the Islamic scholars stated, if faith ([eemaan](#)) was simply knowing the facts in one's heart, then that is similar to Satan's situation because he was very knowledgeable about his Lord (rabb) [1], yet his arrogance and pride led him to become argumentative and disobedient to Allah, and in the process became the worst of creatures.

Let's remember that the prophet (S.A.W.S.) associated such an attitude with misguidance. He said, "A nation never went astray after being guided except by means of disputation (Tirmidhi #3253 and ibn Majah #48 on the authority of Abu Umamah)." Consider the example that Allah provides about such people:

وَلَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ مَثَلًا إِذَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْهُ يَصِدُّونَ

وَقَالُوا آلِهَتُنَا خَيْرٌ أَمْ هُوَ مَا ضَرَبُوهُ لَكَ إِلَّا جَدَلًا بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُونَ

- **And when the son of [Maryam](#) (Mary) is quoted as an example (i.e. Jesus is worshipped like their idols), behold! Your people cry aloud (laugh out at the example).**
- **And say: "Are our aliha (gods) better or is he ([Jesus](#))?" They quoted not the above example except for argument. Nay! But they are a quarrelsome people (Quran, 43:57-58).**
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We ought to, therefore, look within ourselves and see whether the pride in our hearts or the arrogance of our attitudes in anyway influence us to refuse seeing or listening to the truth. For those of us who suffer from such diseases, what is needed instead is an attitude of humility or humbleness that can motivate us to stay calm and open to seeing our mistakes thereby providing an opportunity to fix them. It is said that a sin that leads one to submission (and humility to Allah in repentance) is preferable in the sight of Allah than a good deed that causes pride (in one's heart). That is obviously because pride puts a veil on our eyes and hearts and can lead us to more sins.

## Not taking minor sins seriously

Many take minor sins lightly taking it for granted that Allah will forgive them for such sins. As a result, they persist in such sins thereby getting desensitized to the need to address them. Consider the [hadith](#) of the Prophet (S.A.W.S.) where according to one report he said, “Beware of minor sins, for they will pile up until they destroy a person” (Reported by Ahmad; Saheeh al-Jaami’, 2686-2687).

Some scholars are of the view that when minor sins are accompanied by a lack of shame or remorse, and with no fear of Allah, and are taken lightly, then there is the risk that they will be counted as major sins. Hence it is said that no minor sin is minor if you persist, and no [major sin](#) is major if you seek forgiveness .

## Abandoning the practice of enjoining good and forbidding evil

One of the reasons why we see sin proliferate is that many of us have forgotten the principles of inviting people to good and stopping them from doing bad. When people live in environments (within the family or other social circles) where advice for the good isn’t encouraged much, it takes away the opportunities for improvements and also lets people develop false perceptions about themselves. As we discussed earlier, Allah has created us weak and as a result staying away from sins requires periodic doses of knowledgeable advice and [wisdom](#). Additionally, Islamic teachings also command us to advise each other on matters of right or wrong. When communities fail to espouse these principles, sins spread more easily. Allah says in the Quran (about Muslims):

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ  
وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِّنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

**“You are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin Al-Ma’rûf (the good and the truth) and forbid Al-Munkar (the wrong, evils, sins, etc.), and you believe in Allâh . . .” (Quran 3:110)**

The Prophet (S.A.W.S.) said: “If the people see an evil and they do not change it, soon Allah will inflict them all with His Punishment (Hadith – Ahmed, graded authentic by Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami’ (1/398).”

However, matters of giving advice should be handled wisely. It is not uncommon to see people getting discouraged (whether in situations of advising or when being advised) due to the manner in which such advice is given. This is because they fail to see the difference between [advising](#) and [condemning](#). Similarly, when we know of the wrong actions of believers, we shouldn’t make it a point to propagate their weaknesses to others. It is forbidden that the commanding of the good and forbidding evil when it was done to someone in a public forum. Instead, it should be done privately. This is since it is not the goal of the one who is advising to spread and publicize the faults of the

person he is advising, rather his goal is only to put an end to the evil that he has fallen into .

## Not knowing the ill effects of sins



Another reason why many people sin, or care little about their sins is their failure to see the impact that sins can have on their lives in this world and in the hereafter. The truth is that if we don't understand the ghastly nature of sins, we wouldn't stay away from them. Consider a sample of the ill effects of sins.

- *Sins deprive a person of provision (rizq) **in this life**. In Musnad Ahmad it is narrated that Thawbaan said: "The Messenger of Allah (SAWS) said: 'A man is deprived of provision because of the sins that he commits.'" (Narrated by Ibn Maajah, 4022, classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh Ibn Maajah).*
- *A sinful person experiences a sense of alienation (indifference) with his Lord, and between him and other people. One of the Scholar had said that he could see the impact of disobedience to Allah (in some aspects of his daily life).*
- *A person who commits sins sees that things become difficult for him. In any matter that he turns to, he finds the way blocked or he finds it difficult. By the same token, for the one who fears Allah, things are made easy.*
- *'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Abbaas said: "Good deeds make the face light, give light to the heart, and bring about ample provision, physical strength and love in people's hearts. Bad deeds make the face dark, give darkness to the heart, and bring about physical weakness, a lack of provision and hatred in people's hearts."*
- *Sin breeds sin until it dominates a person and he cannot escape from it. Sin weakens a person's willpower. It gradually strengthens his will to commit sin and weakens his will to repent until there is no will in his heart to repent at all . . . So he seeks **forgiveness and expresses repentance**, but it is merely words on the lips, like the repentance of the liars, whose hearts are still determined to commit sin and persist in it. This is one of the most serious diseases that is likely to lead to doom. He becomes desensitized and no longer find sins abhorrent; so it becomes his habit, and he is not bothered if people see him committing the sin or talk about him.*

All in all, let's remember that for us to stay clear from sins we need to constantly work at building a strong internal frame of reference that is reinforced with knowledge of the truth. This must be coupled with a living conscience that can help us recognize sins when we see them and to have it poke at us should we get inclined to indulge in those sins. Again, reflecting back on the verses of Sura Al-Qiyamah that we reviewed earlier, let's strive to keep the burden of our sins light when we meet Allah, so that our faces are **Nadirah** (shining and radiant) rather than **Basirah** (dark, gloomy, frowning, and sad).