

How to *Stay Away* from Sins

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at-tazkiyah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Allāh ﷻ created us and sent us into this world for a very limited time. During this short time, we have to prove to Him that we are His true and loyal servants. Those who prove this by always obeying Him will be granted His Pleasure and eternal success in the hereafter. However, those who disobey Him will suffer His Displeasure and ultimately face failure in the Hereafter. It is therefore necessary that we obey Him and stay away from everything that brings His Displeasure.

Willpower

To help us in this endeavour, Allāh ﷻ has equipped every human with the great blessing of willpower. This willpower enables a person to overcome the greatest of hurdles and challenges and carry out even the most difficult of tasks.

When it comes to staying away from sins, whether it be lustful glances, adultery, fornication, consuming drugs and alcohol, wrong usage of social media

and the internet, misuse of the tongue in sins like backbiting, lying and slandering, or missing ṣalāh, one will only be able to stay away by using his willpower and opposing the unlawful demands of one's nafs (base desires). It may be difficult in the initial stages, but overtime the urge and desire to commit sin will subside, making it easier for a person to overcome the nafs.

This action of opposing the nafs and resisting the temptations to sin is known as mujāhadah, and it is this that draws a person nearer to Allāh ﷻ, and makes his resistance to committing sins stronger too. If a person can continue doing this, then a time will come when he will have the ability to completely control his nafs without needing to exert much effort to refrain from sin. All that is needed in the beginning is a firm resolve: I will die but I will not commit a sin.

Greater Sacrifice means Greater Reward

In order to oppose the nafs a person is required to exert effort and give sacrifice, as nothing comes without sacrifice; but the greater the sacrifice, the greater the reward. For example, some people are fortunate to not have any inclination towards drugs and alcohol, thus they do not have to exert any effort to refrain from them. Others find slight inclination towards

them and thus have to use their willpower a little and exert some effort to oppose the inclination; they will be rewarded for this slight sacrifice. A third category is of those who experience strong urges to consume drugs or alcohol. It is this group which will need to exert the most effort and use their full willpower to refrain from consuming these substances. Although such individuals face greater dangers of committing sins due to the strong urge or addiction, they are able to please Allāh ﷻ the most and accumulate the most reward, as they make the most sacrifice to refrain from sin.

A Three Step Plan

When faced with any scenario in which we are vulnerable to sin, to save ourselves we should keep three steps in mind which we learn from the story of Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ.

Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ was a young and very handsome man and Zulaykhā was also a very beautiful and attractive woman. She fell in love with Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ and thus tried to seduce him. The Qur'ān depicts the whole incident in detail and guides us on how we should behave when faced with a similar situation:

وَرَأَوَدَتْهُ الَّتِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَن نَّفْسِهِ وَغَلَّقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ
 وَقَالَتْ هَيْت لَكَ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ
 إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ

And the woman (Zulaykhā) in whose house he was, seduced him against his will. She bolted the doors and said, “Come here!” He said, “I seek refuge in Allāh. Indeed, my Rabb has given me a good abode (i.e. treated me honourably). Indeed, the wrongdoers do not prosper.” (12:23)

Thereafter, he ran from her towards the door whilst she chased him.

When faced with this dilemma, Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ did three things:

1. First, he sought refuge in Allāh ﷻ saying, ‘Ma‘ādhallāh’: I seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ (from committing this sin). Thus, the first thing we need to do when finding ourselves in danger of committing sin is to seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ by saying, ‘Ma‘ādhallāh’ or ‘a‘ūdhu billāh’, as it is only through the Help of Allāh ﷻ that one will be able to save himself from sin and come out of such a situation unharmed.

2. The second thing Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ did was to remind himself of the Favours of Allāh ﷻ. We too need to remind ourselves of the innumerable Favours of Allāh ﷻ upon us and that if we disobey such a Great Benefactor, we will surely be from the wrongdoers who never prosper.
3. Finally, Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ ran away from the sin. We too should run away from the sin and anything related to it. We should run away from the person, place, environment or item that causes us to disobey Allāh ﷻ. If it is a smartphone or device that is making us sin, then we must stop using it. If it is a person, then we must disassociate from him. If it is a place, then we must stay away from it. In short, we must do everything that we are able to in order to save ourselves from disobedience to Allāh ﷻ.

If we carry out the aforementioned three points, then the Assistance of Allāh ﷻ will surely descend as it did in the case of Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ. He ran towards the door despite knowing that she had locked the doors of the room they were in. He did what was in his ability and Allāh ﷻ came to his help and allowed the door to open for him, saving him from the trial he was in. If we adopt the same principle then Allāh ﷻ will definitely help us.

Easing the Struggle

A person will only be able to carry out the aforementioned three points by using his willpower. However, some people may say that using the willpower is not an easy task. This is due to the weakness in our spiritual stamina. In order to make it strong, we need to hold fast to the following three points:

1. Carry out the dhikr of Allāh ﷻ regularly and in abundance. Recite the Glorious Qur'ān on a daily basis, even if it be just a page or even half a page, and slowly build up to reciting one juz daily. On a daily basis, recite kalimah ṭayyibah 100 times, astaghfirullāh 100 times and any formula of ṣalāt 'alan nabī (the shortest being ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) 100 times. Always be aware that Allāh ﷻ is watching us. Dhikr of Allāh ﷻ provides nutrition to our souls which makes it easy for us to use our willpower and fight nafs and shayṭān.
2. Always remain in good company and good environments and refrain from bad company and bad environments. Company and environment are the two things that influence a person the most; thus we must choose them carefully. If our company and environment are good, we will feel inclined towards good and disinclined from evil;

and if they are bad, we will feel inclined towards evil and disinclined from good.

3. Connect yourself to a reliable Shaykh, adopt his pious company as much as possible and follow his instructions to purify the heart. Once the heart is purified under his guidance, it will become easy to use one's willpower and refrain from sin.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the tawfīq to recognise our true purpose of life. May He enable us to use our willpower to always do good and stay away from evil. May He enable us to follow the example of Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ to remain safe whenever posed with the danger of sin, and may He enable us to take all the necessary steps needed to strengthen our spiritual stamina. Ultimately, through these simple steps, may Allāh ﷻ make us His true servants who acquire His Pleasure and the success of both worlds. *Āmīn.*

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