

Sayyid al-Istighfaar (the Master Supplication for Seeking Forgiveness)

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

Allaahumma Anta Rabbee laa ilaaha illaa Anta, khalaqtanee wa anaa 'abduka, wa
anaa 'alaa 'ahdika wa wa-'dika mas-tata-'tu, a-'oothu bika min sharri maa sana-
'tu, aboo'u laka bi-ni-'matika 'alayya, wa aboo'u bi-thanbee faghfir lee fa-innahu
laa yagh-firuth-thunooba illaa Anta.

‘O Allaah, You are my Lord, there is nothing which deserves to be worshipped except You; You have created me and I am Your servant; and I am obligated to fulfill Your covenant [i.e. that I made with You] and Your promise [i.e. that I made to you] as much as I can. I seek refuge in You from the evil of what I have done. I acknowledge Your favors upon me, and I acknowledge my sins; so forgive me, for indeed no one forgives sins except You.’

Text of the Hadeeth:

From among the splendid words of remembrance and blessed supplications which are befitting of a Muslim to be consistent in its recitation every morning and night, is that which is confirmed in the Saheeh of al-Bukhaaree, from the Hadeeth of Shaddaad ibn Aws (Radiyah Allaahu an-hu), from the Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) that he (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) said:

“Sayyid al-Istighfaar (the Master Supplication for seeking forgiveness) is that one say:

‘O Allaah, You are my Lord, there is nothing which deserves to be worshipped except You; You have created me and I am Your servant; and I am obligated to fulfill Your covenant [i.e. that I made with You] and Your promise [i.e. that I made to you] as much as I can. I seek refuge in You from the evil of what I have done. I acknowledge Your favors upon me, and I acknowledge my sins; so forgive me, for indeed no one forgives sins except You.’

“Whoever recites this (supplication) during the day - having certainty (of its truthfulness) - and then dies in that day before he reaches the evening will be one of the people of paradise.

“And whoever recites this (supplication) during the night - having certainty (of its truthfulness) - and then dies before he reaches the morning will be one of the people of paradise.” [Saheeh al-Bukhaaree, no. 6306; Fortress of the Muslim, no. 79]

Explanation of the Hadeeth:

This is a tremendous supplication, bringing together the meanings of repentance (Tawbah), humble submission (Tadhallul) to Allaah, the Blessed and Most High, and turning back (Inaabah) to Him.

The Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) described it as being ‘**the Master Supplication For Seeking Forgiveness**’ (Sayyid al-Istighfaar). And that was because it surpassed all of the other phrases used for seeking forgiveness in excellence and is higher than the others in status.

From among the meanings of ‘**Sayyid**’: One who surpasses and excels his people in goodness and rises above them. In a similar manner, this supplication excels and surpasses the other expressions used for seeking forgiveness due to the Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) opening it with praise and glorification (ath-Thanaa’) of Allaah, then the acknowledgement that he (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) is an ‘Abd (slave) of Allaah, one being cared for, created by Him, the Mighty, the Majestic; and then, acknowledging that He (the One Free from all imperfections) is the One Who deserves to be worshipped, and that there is none who deserves to be worshipped besides Him.

Also, acknowledging that he (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) is abiding by the promise, firm upon the covenant of Emaan (faith) in Allaah and His Book (al-Qur’aan), as well as the rest of His Prophets (Alayhimus-Salaam) and Messengers (Alayhimus-Salaam); and that he (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) is adhering to all of this as best he can, in accordance with his strength and ability.

Next, the Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) sought refuge in Allaah, the One Free from all imperfections, from the evil of everything that he did, including his shortcomings in fulfilling the obligation of showing gratitude for the bounties and favors bestowed upon him, as well as the evil resulting from his commission of sins.

Then, the Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) acknowledged the succession of His blessings and continuous gifts and benevolence. Likewise, he (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) confessed to whatever sins and acts of disobedience he has committed. Then he (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) asked Allaah, the One Free from Imperfections, for forgiveness (Maghfirah) from all of this, declaring openly that no one can forgive sins besides Him, the One Free from all Imperfections.

This is the most complete and perfect form of what could possibly be in one’s supplication. For this reason, it is seen as the greatest and most excellent expression of seeking forgiveness and the most beautiful, due to the meanings that it contains which ensure the forgiveness of sins.

The Prophet’s (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) saying, in the beginning of this supplication: ‘**Allaahumma**’ has the same meaning as ‘**Yaa Allaah**’ (O Allaah). In this case, the vocative ‘*Yaa*’ (used for calling out to someone, to get their attention) has been deleted,

while *al-meem al-mushaddadab* (doubled letter ‘m’) has been substituted for it, at the end of the Majestic expression ‘Allaah’, resulting in the very same meaning.

For this reason, it is not permissible to combine these two expressions; since a substitute and that which it substitutes for are never used together. Additionally, this expression (‘*Allaahumma*’) is only used for requesting something (from Allaah). Hence, you would not say: *Allaahumma Ghafoor Raheem* (i.e. O Allaah, Forgiving, Merciful). Rather, you would say: *Allaahumma –gh-fir-lee wa-r-ham-nee* (i.e. O Allaah, Forgive me and have Mercy upon me), and that which is similar.

The Prophet’s (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) saying: ‘...**You are my Lord, there is nothing which deserves to be worshipped except You; You have created me and I am Your servant...**’ contains an expression of submission (Tadhallul), humility (Khudoo’) and fragility or brokenness (Inkisaar) in front of Allaah. It is also an expression of Emaan (True Faith) in the Unique Oneness (Wahdaaneeyah) of Allaah in His Lordship (Ruboobeeyah) and His Divinity (Ulooheeyah).

The Prophet’s (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) saying: ‘**You are my Lord...**’ means I have no Lord, nor any Creator besides You. And the Lord (ar-Rabb) is the Owner (al-Maalik), the Creator (al-Khaaliq), the Provider (ar-Raaziq) and the Controller (al-Mudabbir) of the affairs of all of His creation. So, this is a confirmation and acknowledgement of *Tawheed ar-Ruboobeeyah* (the Unique Oneness of Allaah’s Lordship). For this reason, he (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) later said: ‘**You have created me...**’, meaning, You are my Lord, Who has created me, and I have no Creator besides You.

The Prophet’s (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) saying: ‘...**there is nothing which deserves to be worshipped except You...**’ means: There is nothing which has a right to be worshipped besides You. You, Alone, are the One deserving all worship. And this is the actualization of *Tawheed al-Ulooheeyah* (the Unique Oneness of Allaah’s Right to be worshipped). For this reason, he (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) later said: ‘**and I am Your servant...**’, meaning, I am a worshipping servant of You. You are the One Who has a right to all worship, and there is none who has a right to be worshipped besides You.

The Prophet’s (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) saying: ‘...**and I am obligated to fulfill Your covenant and Your promise as much as I can...**’ means: I am obligated to fulfill the covenant that I made with You, and the promise that I made to You, to have true Emaan (faith) in You and to be obedient to You and to comply with Your commands – in accordance with my ability and to the extent of my fullest capacity. Indeed, Allaah, the One Free from all Imperfections, does not hold a person responsible except in accordance with his ability.

The Prophet’s (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) saying: ‘...**I seek refuge in You from the evil of what I have done...**’ means: I seek asylum with You, O Allaah! And I cling to You for protection, from the evil which I have done: from its evil consequences, its evil end-result, the descending of its penalty, being deprived of forgiveness for it, or that I

return to that which is similar to it, whether it be evil actions, disgraceful deeds or despicable characteristics.

The Prophet's (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) saying: '**...I acknowledge Your favors upon me...**' means: I confess to the enormity of Your generosity to me, and Your unending favor and kindness to me, and this confession implies gratitude to the Benefactor, the One Free from all Imperfections, and being exonerated from ingratitude for these many favors.

The Prophet's (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) saying: '**...and I acknowledge my sins...**' means: I admit to my sins, i.e. whatever sin, error or mistake that I have committed, including omitting an obligatory duty or committing an unlawful act. This acknowledgement of sins and shortcomings is the way to repentance (Tawbah) and turning back to Allaah (Inaabah). And whoever admits to his sin and repents from it, Allaah turns to him in acceptance of his repentance.

The Prophet's (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) saying: '**...so forgive me, for indeed no one forgives sins except You**' means: O Allaah! Forgive me (for) all of my sins, for indeed Your Mercy is all-encompassing (vast), and You are Liberal (Generous) in Pardoning; no sin is too grave for You to forgive [for one who repents to You]. Indeed, You are the All-Forgiving (al-Ghafoor), the Most Merciful (ar-Raheem). And no one can forgive sins except You!

Allaah, the Most High, says: '**...and those who, when they have committed grave sins (like illegal sexual intercourse) or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allaah and ask forgiveness for their sins – and none can forgive sins except Allaah...**' [Qur'aan, 3:135]

Then, the Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) sealed this supplication with clarification of the immense reward and abundant recompense which will be achieved by anyone who is careful to recite it each and every morning and evening.

The Prophet's (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) saying: '**...Whoever recites it...**' i.e. the words of this supplication, '**during the day - having certainty of it**' i.e. being certain that it is the truth, and believing in it, since it is the speech of the impeccable one who does not speak from desires, rather what he says is only revelation that is revealed – may the Praise of Allaah in the highest assemblies of the angels and peace, safety and security be upon him – '**... and then dies in that day before he reaches the evening will be one of the people of paradise. And whoever recites this (supplication) during the night - having certainty (of its truthfulness) - and then dies before he reaches the morning will be one of the people of paradise.**'

Indeed, the reason why the person who is careful of, and consistent in, the recitation of this supplication achieves this generous promise, tremendous reward and abundant recompense is because he opened his day and closed it acknowledging the Tawheed of Allaah in His Lordship (Ruboobeeyah) and His Divinity (Ulooheeyah); then, acknowledging his servitude/worship (of Allaah Alone) and the witness of His gifts and

acknowledgement of His favors; then, the open announcement of the defects and shortcomings of himself, begging for pardon and forgiveness from the Oft-Forgiving (al-Ghaffaar); along with his standing in a posture of humility, submission and surrender (to the Mighty, the Majestic).

These are all sublime, lofty meanings, and noble characteristics with which he begins and ends the day. Hence, it is befitting that the possessor, or one who observes *with care* the regular recitation of this supplication be worthy of pardon and forgiveness, freedom from the Hell-Fire and entry into the gardens of Paradise. And we ask Allaah, the Most Generous (al-Kareem) for His Favor!

Taken from: '*Explanation of the Morning & Evening Adhkaar*'

(Words of Remembrance of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ)

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