

Shaytān – the open enemy

Introduction

Shaytān is the biggest enemy of ours. He sees us though we do not see him. As soon as we are born, he begins his *Waswasas* on us and this continues throughout our lives. The extent of his influence is clear from hadīth, reported by Sayyiduna Anas (may Allāh be pleased with him):

عن انس رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله ﷺ ان الشيطان يجري من الانسان مجري الدم
(مشكاة المصابيح، ١: ٢٢٩)

The Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) said: 'Certainly Shaytān runs through man just like blood does.'

What was his crime?

*He refused to respect prophets (by not prostrating to Adam, peace be upon him).

*He was racist. He thought he was a better creation. The Qur'ān states:

قال ما منعك الا تسجد اذ امرتك قال انا خير منه خلقتني من نار و خلقته من طين

Allāh said: 'What prevented you [O Iblīs] that you did not perform *Sajda* when I commanded you?' He replied, 'I am better than him. You created me from fire and You created him from clay' (7: 12).

*He was not an apologist. Adam (peace be upon him) too was made to make a mistake (to create the sunna of *Tawba*) but he apologised. Shaytān made a mistake, did not apologise and remained defiant.

*He defied the *Ijmā*, namely the consensus of the angels. He was commanded and was the only one to refuse the prostration.

*He was big-headed and arrogant. Allāh does not like the arrogant.

What is his goal?

In short, to take down as many people as possible with him. To the fire of hell. The pious men of all are exempt from this and this certainly means the prophets and messengers of Allāh. This is the admission of Shaytān too:

قال رب بما أغويتني لأزينن لهم في الارض و لأغونهم اجمعين الا عبادك منهم المخلصين

He said, 'My Lord! Because you misled me, I shall indeed adorn the path or error for them on the earth, and I shall mislead them all. Except Your [chosen] sincere servants' (15: 39-40).

Of course, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was the one furthest away from the influence of Shaytān. Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allāh be pleased with him) reports that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

ما منكم من احد الا وقد وكل به قرينه من الجن وقرينه من الملائكة قالوا و اياك يا رسول الله قال و اياي و لكن الله اعانني عليه فاسلم فلا يأمرني الا بخير (مسلم)

‘There is none amongst you except he has been assigned a partner from the jinns (to entice evil) and a partner from the angels.’ They asked, ‘O Messenger of Allāh! Including you?’ He replied, ‘Including me. But Allāh helped me over the[evil] partner and he became a Muslim. So now he does not order me except with good.’

How does Shaytān operate?

a. He only troubles you when you are doing good things. In other words, he sits on the *Sirāt Mustaqīm*.

Generally speaking, when we perform Salāh, then our mind wanders everywhere and we find it hard to concentrate. Our mind strays onto matters like work, leisure, TV and shopping. On the other hand, when we watch TV, we have 100% concentration. Why do these things happen? Because Shaytān panics when he sees you do a good thing. He therefore diverts your attention away at all costs.

Imām Abū Hanīfa was once approached by a man who complained he had lost his gold, which he had buried in the ground. Imām Abū Hanīfa said he could not help. When he persisted, he told the man to stand after Ishā till Fajr in Nafl prayers. The next morning, the man came to the Imām and said he had found the gold. Imām Abū Hanīfa laughed and said, ‘I knew Shaytān would never let you read Nafls all night.’

Shaytān even tries to delay the completion of your ablution. In a hadith mentioned by Ibn Māja, we are told that there is a Shaytān called Walahān that tries to trouble a Muslim in Wudū:

قال رسول الله صلي الله عليه و سلم ان للوضوء شيطاناً يقال له ولهان فاتقوا وسواس الماء (ابن ماجه، كتاب الطهارة و سننها باب ما جاء في القصد في الوضوء و كراهية التعدي فيه)

When you get *Waswasas*, it shows that you are doing something good. But it also shows the power of Shaytān that he can influence your thinking and movement.

b. He promises things he cannot deliver, like wealth and eternity

In the Qur’ān, Allāh mentions the false promises of Shaytān:

هل أدلك علي شجرة الخلد و ملك لا يبلي

Shall I not lead you to the Tree of Eternity and a Kingdom that will never deplete? (20: 120)

What is the tree of eternity? This idea that you will live forever and that things can be delayed til tomorrow, next week, month, year and decade.

What is the treasure that never depletes? Again it is a trick of the devil. He always tricks us to believe enough is never enough and that we need more. He tries to make us greedy and selfish.

c. He has traps

Sayyiduna Isā (peace be upon him) once saw Shaytān pulling along five donkeys. He asked Shaytān what they were. Shaytān replied, 'These are my merchandise. I wish to sell it.' Isa asked 'tell me what exactly they are then?' Shaytān then proceeded to tell him the names.

'They are aggression, pride, jealousy, treachery and fraud. Aggression I sell to kings. Pride I sell to the leaders of the towns and cities. Jealousy I sell to Qāris. Treachery I sell to traders and merchants. And fraud I sell to women.'

Note that the last part is not derogative to women. The hadith also means when women are manipulated by men, which makes the men blameworthy.

How can we protect ourselves from his Waswasa?

Ta'awwuz: If you could fight Shaytān alone, Allāh would allow you to. You cannot and that is why you need Allāh's help to defeat him. That's why we recite *Ta'awwuz*:

أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم

I seek refuge with Allāh from the Shaytān, the accursed.

These words are an acknowledgement that only Allāh can help you overcome him. Without His help, you can never defeat the devil. Allāh has to lock him up just so you can fast properly.

Zikr of Allāh: Seemingly, the hadīth of Anas (mentioned at the beginning) suggests that Shaytān has complete control over us, in each and every part of our body. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) chose his words very carefully. If the Shaytān runs in our bodies like blood in our veins, then remember that all blood comes and returns to the heart. So if the heart is clean (with the *Zikr* of Allāh), then the blood that leaves it will also be clean. Allāh states that *Zikr* cleans the heart first and foremost:

الا بذكر الله تطمئن القلوب

Behold! With the remembrance of Allāh, hearts find peace (13: 28).

Conclusion

*Guilt and *Waswasa* is an indication of faith (not part of it). It shows that Shaytān has something worth taking from you, your *Imān*. Our youngsters are sometimes inundated with negative thoughts and they become worried as a result. In many instances, this is actually a

good thing because it means the Shaytān is working on them. If he wasn't then it would suggest they have nothing worth stealing. A burglar never targets a barren house. In this day and age, it would be worse if a youngster said 'I don't suffer from any *Waswasa* at all.'

*Spend so much time in good acts that you do not have time of bad ones. Fill your heart to the brim with the *Zikr* of Allāh and the love of the Prophet that no space remains for the Shaytān.

*Feel his presence. He is there. When you are on the streets, in the college and at home. Mute his influence on your life.

*Time and time again, Allāh in the Qur'ān describes Shaytān as the 'open enemy' (2: 168), (2: 208), (6: 142), (7: 22), (12: 5), (17: 53), (36: 60), (43: 62).

Sura Al-Baqara

سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ

168. O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth, and follow not the footsteps of Shaitān (Satan). Verily, he is to you an open enemy:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٦٨﴾

Sura Al-Baqara

سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ

208. O you who believe! Enter perfectly in Islām (by obeying all the rules and regulations of the Islāmīc religion) and follow not the footsteps of Shaitān (Satan). Verily! He is to you a plain enemy.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلَاحِ كَآفَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٠٨﴾

Sura Al-Anaam

سُورَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ

142. And of the cattle (are some) for burden (like camels) and (some are) small (unable to carry burden like sheep, goats for food, meat, milk, wool). Eat of what Allāh has provided for you, and follow not the footsteps of Shaitān (Satan). Surely he is to you an open enemy.

وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ حَمُولَةٌ وَفَرَسَاتٌ كُلُّوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٤٢﴾

Sura Al-Araf

سُورَةُ الْأَعْرَافِ

22. So he misled them with deception. Then when they tasted of the tree, that which was hidden from them of their shame (private parts) became manifest to them and they began to cover themselves with the leaves of Paradise (in order to cover their shame). And their Lord called out to them (saying): "Did I not forbid you that tree and tell you: Verily, Shaitān (Satan) is an open enemy unto you?"

فَدَلَّاهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِن وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلْتُ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

Sura Yusuf

سُورَةُ يُوسُفَ

5. He (the father) said: "O my son! Relate not your vision to your brothers, lest they arrange a plot against you. Verily! Shaitān (Satan) is to man an open enemy!

قَالَ يَبْنَى لَا تَقْصُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ عَلَى إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥﴾

Sura Al-Isra

سُورَةُ الْإِسْرَاءِ

53. And say to My slaves (i.e. the true believers of Islāmīc Monotheism) that they should (only) say those words that are the best. (Because) Shaitān (Satan) verily, sows state of conflict and disagreements among them. Surely, Shaitān (Satan) is to man a plain enemy.

وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْزِعُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّا الشَّيْطَانُ كَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا ﴿٥٣﴾

60. Did I not command for you, O Children of Adam, that you should not worship Shaitân (Satan). Verily, he is a plain enemy to you.

﴿أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٦٠﴾﴾

62. And let not Shaitân (Satan) hinder you (from the right religion, i.e. Islâmic Monotheism), Verily, he (Satan) to you is a plain enemy.

﴿وَلَا يَصُدُّكُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٦٢﴾﴾

For a good reason; because we often make enemies out of people who are *not* real enemies. We make our mother-in-laws our enemies. Our own parents. Brothers and sisters. Partners, husbands and wives. States, nations and organisations. No. It is Shaytân who actually causes this division and hatred. He is the real enemy.

When Muslims come, sit and laugh together it is the work of the Rahman. When Muslims split, stop talking and divide, it is the work of the Shaytân.

*Recite *Ta'awwuz* as much as possible and other Duas and Wazifas from the pious predecessors. Shaykh Umar ibn Hafeez once explained that Imam Muhammad bin Wasi would often make a supplication which Allâh inspired him to compose. The Devil came to him and said: Every time I try to approach you I find a barrier in my way. What is the supplication that you make?" He said, 'I say:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ سَلَّطْتَ عَلَيْنَا عَدُوًّا بَصِيرًا بَعِيُونِنَا، مُطَّلِعًا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِنَا، يَرَانَا
هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا نَرَاهُمْ، اللَّهُمَّ فَآيِسُهُ مِنَّا كَمَا آيَسْتَهُ مِنْ رَحْمَتِكَ،
وَقَنَّطُهُ مِنَّا كَمَا قَنَّطْتَهُ مِنْ عَفْوِكَ، وَبَاعِدْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُ كَمَا بَاعَدْتَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ
جَنَّتِكَ

"O Allâh, You have given an enemy power over us who sees our faults and who is aware of our weaknesses. He and his tribe see us from whence we see them not. O Allâh, make him give up hope of harming us, just as You have made him give up hope of receiving Your mercy; make him despair of harming us just as You have made him despair of receiving Your pardon. Distance him from us just as You have distanced him from Paradise."

Dr. Hafiz Ather Hussain al-Azhari

@hafiz_ather

BA Principles of Theology, al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt.

MA Arabic and Islamic Studies, Dar al-Ulum Muhammadia Ghawsia, Bhera, Pakistan.

BA Political Science, MPhil Theology & PhD Theology, University of Birmingham.