

Shaitan's (Satan's) Tactics and How to Prevent his Influences and Whispers

The dawn of evil started with the arrogance and rebellious nature of Iblees (Shaitan / Satan)



Shaitan's (also referred to as Satan) enmity with man started when Allah (SWT) created the first man, Adam (alaihi salaam). Satan was from amongst the "jinn" who have been created with the ability to obscure themselves from human sight, and who constitute a world of their own. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

"And (remember) when We said to the angels: 'Prostrate yourselves unto Adam.' So they prostrated themselves except 'Iblis' (Satan). He was one of the jinn; he disobeyed the command of his Lord" (Quran, [Surah Al-Kahf: 50](#)).

"....And they prostrated except Iblis (Satan), he refused and was proud and was one of the disbelievers (disobedient to Allah)" (Quran, [Surah Al-Baqarah: 34](#))

Satan's arrogance – reinforced by his false logic, and jealousy – prevented him from obeying Allah's command. As Allah tells us in the Quran, Satan said,

قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ

“I am

better than him (Adam), You created me from fire, and him You created from clay” (Quran, [Surah Al-Aaraf: 12](#)).

Iblees asks for reprieve until Day of Judgement

When Satan refused to obey Allah’s commands, Allah asked him for the reasons of disobedience of the Lord or the worlds. Allah says in the Quran:

- (Allah) said: “O Iblees (Satan)! What is your reason for not being among the prostrators?”
- (Iblees (Satan)) said: “I am not the one to prostrate myself to a human being, whom You created from sounding clay of altered black smooth mud” (Quran, [Surah al-Hijr:32 – 33](#)).

The subsequent dialog stated in the Quran is as follows:

قَالَ فَأَخْرِجْ مِنْهَا فَإِنَّكَ رَاجِمٌ

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

- (Allah) said: “Then, get out from here, for verily, you are Rajeem (an outcast or a cursed one).” (Tafseer At-Tabaree).
- “And verily, the curse shall be upon you till the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)” (Quran, [Surah Surah al-Hijr: 34 – 35](#)).

Then Iblees asked for a respite until the [Day of Resurrection](#), and Allah granted him that. Allah says:

قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ ﴿٣٨﴾

- (Iblees (Satan)) said: “O my Lord! Give me then respite till the Day they (the dead) will be resurrected.”
- Allah said: “Then, verily, you are of those reprieved,
- “Till the Day of the time appointed” (Quran, Surah al-Hijr: 36 – 38).

When Iblees was certain that he was doomed, he resolved to mislead whomever he could from the slaves of Allah, so that they would be with him in Hell. Allah says:

قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي

الْأَرْضِ وَلَا أَغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمْ الْمُخْلِصِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

- (Iblees (Satan)) said: “O my Lord! Because you misled me, I shall indeed adorn the path of error for them (mankind) on the earth, and I shall mislead them all.
- “Except Your chosen, (guided) slaves among them” (Quran, Surah al-Hijr: 39 – 40).

Iblees' / Satan's ultimate goal

After Allah gave him the reprieve until the Day of Judgment, he made misleading man as his primary goal. Allah told us about that in the Quran, “(Iblees) said: ‘Because You have sent me astray, surely, I will sit in wait against them (human beings) on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them as thankful ones (i.e. they will not be dutiful to You)’” (Quran, Al-Aaraf: 16,17).

He has such confidence in ensnaring his victims that he openly declares his strategy of approaching them from all sides and making them succumb to his temptations. The first victims of Satan were Adam (alaihis salam) and Hawwa. Allah says, “Then the Shaitan (Satan) made them slip there from (the Paradise), and got them out from that in which they were. We

said: “Get you down, all, with enmity between yourselves. On earth will be a dwelling place for you and an enjoyment for a time” (Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah: 36).

“and an enjoyment for a time” is what Satan makes the most of. He has decided to make the world appear beautiful and attractive and works on ways to lure man, limit his perspective to the gains, pleasures and enjoyment of this world alone, and make him forget the path that Allah (SWT) has chalked out for all human beings during their stay here.

Satan’s ultimate goal is to make people go astray and eventually to turn them into disbelievers, or polytheists at a minimum. The manner in which Satan pursues that goal varies in accordance with the interests and inclinations of his victims. For example, he uses piety to attack the pious; scholarly disciplines to attack scholars; false reasoning and logic for those who take pride in being knowledgeable, and ignorance to attack the ignorant. Allah (SWT) Has warned us in the Holy Quran:

“O Children of Adam! Let not Shaitan (Satan) deceive you, as he got your parents (Adam and Hawwa’ (Eve)) out of Paradise,” (Quran, Surah Al-Aaraf: 27).

“. . . and follow not the footsteps of ‘Shaitan’ (Satan). Surely he is to you an open enemy” (Quran, Surah Al-Anaam: 142).

So, Allah has made it clear to mankind that Satan is their enemy and Satan’s goal is to divert mankind from the goal that Allah established for them, which is to follow and worship Allah by obeying His commands. Satan’s goal is to make mankind disobey Allah and divert them to the hell fire in the hereafter, which will also be Satan’s abode. Allah says in the Quran:

“Surely, Shaitan (Satan) is an enemy to you, so take (treat) him as an enemy. He only invites his Hizb (followers) that they may become the dwellers of the blazing Fire” (Surah Faatir 35:6).

Shaitan is the source of all evil

Everything that happens among the sons of Adam of kufr (disbelief of the Truth), murder, enmity, hatred, the spread of immorality and fornication, the public wanton display of women’s beauty, drinking alcohol, worshiping idols and other major sins, is all the work of Satan to corrupt mankind and to drive people from following the way of Allah and drag them to the Fire of Hell with him. So, let’s remember that when we find ourselves around evil or being lured by it, Satan is engaged in his work and our task is to fend off his plans. Allah says in the Quran: **“And if an evil whisper from Shaitan (waswasa) tries to turn you away (O Muhammad) (from doing good), then seek refuge in Allah. Verily, He is the All Hearer, the All Knower” (Quran, Surah Fussilat: 36).**

Ways in which Satan approaches us

Satan approaches man through stealthy means. Allah (SWT) cautions us in the Quran with this verse:

“Verily, he and Qabiluhu (his soldiers from the jinn or his tribe) see you from where you cannot see them” (Quran, Surah Al-Aaraf: 27).

The following are some of the ways in which Satan approaches man to invite him toward evil.

Provokes rebelliousness

After establishing the supremacy of one’s ego in one’s heart, **Satan encourages the person to become rebellious** and to reject the laws and rules established by Allah the All Mighty. He

leads men to their suspicion, questioning and argumentation in sheer obduracy. In a world where human weakness from temptations and weakness of faith abound, Satan influences man into ignoring and belittling the words of Allah stated in the Quran. He thus overly engages man into running after the worldly goals at the expense of violating divine commandments. Let's not forget that when we engage in this form of rebellion where our hearts start to ignore or reject the truth, we risk doing exactly what Satan did, as we see from the verse where Allah said, "...

except Iblees (Satan), he refused and was proud and was one of the disbelievers (disobedient to Allah)" (Quran, al-Baqarah: 34). Let's ensure, therefore, that our actions and thoughts do not lead us to rebel against Allah's message that He revealed to His Messenger.

Weakens one's faith and Eeman in Al-Qadr (Allah's Divine Will) – Believing in Allah's will is an integral part of a Muslim's faith. Another common way for the Satan is, therefore, to make us compare our situations with those around us and leads us to feeling discontented with Allah's will. Satan thus diverts our attention from accepting the will of Allah to focusing on those who may have more of this life's luxuries and thus arousing feelings of envy and jealousy. He also presents this life as the sole prize that cannot be missed and thus induces in us discontentment with our present situations in life.

As Muslims, let's ensure that we do not let Satan play with our imagination, conjuring up rosy pictures of the unattainable, making us visualize what could have been or should have been our destiny thus weakening our faith in Al Qadr. As Muslims, we should never forget Allah's "will" in the ultimate determination of our destinies. We should also remember the Day of Judgment when all accounts will be settled and appropriate dues will be paid. ***"And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full" (Quran, Aal-e-Imran: 185).*** Also, as Allah says in the Quran, ***"And you cannot will unless (it be) that Allah wills the Lord of the 'Aalameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists)" (Quran, al-Takweer: 29).***

Instills feelings of pride and Ar-Riya (showing off)

When one does good deeds, Satan is quick to instill feelings of pride followed by the desire to show off one's virtues or achievements (also referred to as Ar-Riya). He diverts his victim's mind from vying for the deed's rewards from Allah to expecting praise to flow from people instead. As Muslims, let's not forget that the payoff that we desire for our deeds reflects the nature of the intention of doing those deeds. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) says: "The most fearful thing I fear for you is Minor Shirk". He (Peace be upon him) was asked about it, and he said: "It is Ar-Riya showing off". Then, he (Peace be upon him) explained it saying, "A man stands in prayer, performs it more beautifully and properly than ever, because he notices someone looking at him" (Imam Ahmed).

Induces conceit in a person who has accomplishments to his credit – Satan also induces false confidence in a person making him feel that he has reached perfection or that he is far better than others. This leads to vanity, self-admiration and distancing one from reality. As a result, the person starts viewing others patronizingly. We should, therefore, constantly remember Allah and look for opportunities of doing good deeds. Most of us know the story of the prostitute from the nation of Children of Israel who saved a dog from dying thirsty and as a result of that deed was entered in paradise. Similarly, we also know the story of the lady who trapped her cat and made her die of hunger and as a result was sent to hell fire. This is why the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, ***"...one of you may do the deeds of the people of Paradise until there is nothing between him and it but a cubit, then the decree overtakes him and he does a deed of the people of Hell and enters it. And one of you may do the deeds of the people of Hell until there is nothing between him and it but a***

cubit, then the decree overtakes him and he does a deed of the people of Paradise, and enters it” (al-Bukhaari (3208) and Muslim (2643) from Ibn Mas’ood).

Uses laziness and procrastination to keep one away from good deeds

We should realize that when Satan fails to make us rebel against the key truths of Islam, he uses other tactics to distance us from our basic obligations by using the tools of laziness and procrastination, and belittling in our minds the importance of those obligations. For example, even though many Muslims recognize the obligation to pray regularly, they fail to follow through in getting regular in such worships. In one of the hadiths narrated by Abu Hurayrah, he mentioned that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ***“The Shaitan ties three knots at the back of the head of any one of you when he goes to sleep, striking each knot and saying: “You have a long night ahead, so sleep.” If he wakes up and remembers Allah, one knot is undone. If he does wudoo’, two knots are undone. If he prays, all the knots are undone, and he starts the day energetic and in a good mood. Otherwise, he starts his day in a bad mood and feeling lazy”*** (al-Bukhaari (3269) and Muslim (776)).

Sets one Muslim against another

Satan works on a common human weakness related to making one quickly assume something negative about the other. He thus infuses suspicion and doubt in the hearts of Muslims making them think badly about one another, and provoking them against one another. For example, Satan considers sowing the seeds of discord between a husband and wife as one of his greatest achievements. The Prophet (S.A.W.S) said: *“Iblis places his throne upon water; he then sends detachments (for creating dissension between people); the nearer to him in rank are those who are most notorious in creating dissension. One of them comes and says: “I did so and so.” And he says: “You have done nothing.” Then one amongst them comes and says: “I did not spare so and so until I sowed the seed of discord between a husband and a wife.” Satan goes near him and says: “You have done well.” He then embraces him”* (Sahih Muslim and narrated by Jabir Ibn ‘Abdullah).

Pushes obligatory deeds to the background

Within Islam, obligatory duties take precedence as they establish the Muslim’s identity and foundation of belief. When Satan’s efforts to influence the staunch believer hit a dead end, he attempts to make the ‘recommended’ lawful deeds appear more inviting than ‘obligatory’ duties thus pulling the believers away from the obligatory duties of Islam. For example, helping and supporting parents and family members is more important than helping friends. Similarly, praying the five obligatory prayers in congregation is more important than praying Taraweeh prayers. We should, therefore, be careful in not sacrificing the obligatory deeds at the expense of the less important deeds.

Finally, at the end, whom do we blame and what will Satan say?

So, at the end – on the Day of Judgment – when we are all made to account for what we had done in this life, we won’t be able to blame Satan for the bad deeds that we did because of how he had incited us. Rather, this is what Satan will say on the Day of Judgment (as Allah tells us in the Quran):

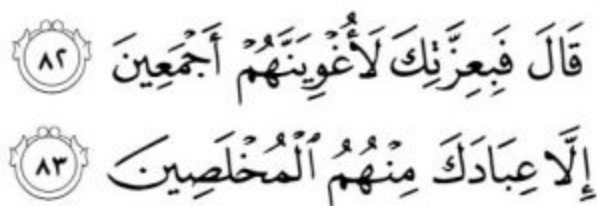
“And Shaitan (Satan) will say when the matter has been decided: ‘Verily, Allah promised you a promise of truth. And I too promised you, but I betrayed you. I had no authority over you except that I called you, and you responded to me. So blame me not, but blame yourselves. I cannot help you, nor can you help me. I deny your former act in associating me (Satan) as a partner with Allah (by obeying me in the life of the world). Verily, there is a painful torment for the Zaalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers)’” (Quran, [Surah Ibrahim: 22](#)).

There’s much to ponder about in this verse. Here are the key points:

1. Satan knows the real truth of Allah’s message. We know this because he will say, **“Verily, Allah promised you a promise of truth...”** He will continue to say later, **“I deny your former act in associating me (Satan) as a partner with Allah (by obeying me in the life of the world).”**
2. Satan will mock us by pushing the burden back on us. He would say, **“...I called you, and you responded to me...”**
3. Satan would not even accept the blame and instead will put the blame on us. He would say, **“...So blame me not, but blame yourselves...”**

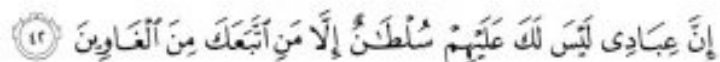
The remedy – ways to protect ourselves

In spite of all the tactics that Satan uses to mislead mankind, he is not able to hurt those of Allah’s slaves who are aware of Satan’s tactics, and use their defenses provided them by Allah to ward off those tactics. Allah says in the Quran:



“(Iblis (Satan)) said: ‘By Your Might, then I will surely mislead them all. Except Your chosen slaves amongst them (i.e. faithful, obedient, true believers of Islamic Monotheism).’” (Quran, [Surah Saad: 82-83](#)).

Allah said to Satan:



“Certainly, you shall have no authority over My slaves, except those who follow you of the Ghawun (Mushrikun and those who go astray, criminals, polytheists, and evil-doers)” (Quran, [Surah Al-Hijr: 42](#)).

The following are some of the defenses that we can use to keep Satan from exerting his influence over us.

Ignore Satanic whispers (waswaas)

One of the effective ways to ignore Satanic whispers is to first be aware of them and then once recognized, to ignore them. So, we should be quick to recognize that when we feel being driven

by our temptations to do bad or succumb to a feeling of laziness or procrastination to do good, we should ignore that waswaas. It is worth quoting here what Ibn Hajar al-Haythami (may Allah have mercy on him) said about dealing with waswasah in his book al-Fataawa al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kubra (1/149). This is what he said: “He was asked about the problem of waswasah (insinuating whispers from the Shaitan), and whether there is a remedy for it. He replied that there is an effective remedy for it, which is to ignore them completely, no matter how frequently they may come to mind. When these whispers are ignored, they do not become established; rather they go away after a short time, as many people have experienced. But for those who pay attention to them and act upon them, they increase until they make him like one who is insane or even worse, as we see among many of those who have suffered from them and paid attention to them and to the devil whose task it is to insinuate these whispers, whom the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) warned us against..., as was explained in Sharh Mishkaat al-Anwaar.

In al-Saheehayn there is a report which supports what has been mentioned above, which is that whoever suffers from waswaas should seek refuge with Allah and turn away from the waswaas. So think about this effective remedy which was taught by the one who does not speak of his own whims and desires to his ummah, and understand that whoever is deprived of this is deprived of all goodness, because waswasah comes from Satan, according to scholarly consensus, and Satan has no other desire than to make the believers go astray, make them confused, make their life a misery, and cause them distress to the extent that they leave Islam without realizing it.

Faith and Trust in Allah

Allah says in the Holy Quran: **“Verily! He (Satan) has no power over those who believe and put their trust only in their Lord (Allah)”** (Quran, **Surah An-Nahl: 99**). The message, therefore, is clear and that is to direct our attention not to what works in helping Satan in his goals but to do what our Creator wants for us. Allah says in the Holy Quran: **“And whoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (of every difficulty). And he will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine”** (Quran, **Surah At-Talaq: 2-3**).

Fearing Allah and not His Creation

Another weapon used by Satan is that of inducing fear in the hearts of weak human beings. He tries to frighten the believers with apprehension of various consequences and difficulties in following the Straight Path. Allah tells us in the Quran: **“Shaitan (Satan) threatens you with poverty and orders you to commit Fahsha (evil deeds, sins, illegal sexual activities, etc.) whereas Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself and Bounty, and Allah is All-Sufficient for His creature’s needs, All-Knower”** (Quran, **Surah al-Baqarah: 268**). Allah warns us that one of Satan’s tactics is to make us fear His creation. He says in the Quran: **“It is only Shaitan (Satan) that suggests to you the fear of his Auliya’ (supporters and friends (polytheists, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah and in His Messenger Muhammad)); so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are (true) believers”** (Quran, **Surah Aal-e-Imran: 175**).

Recite Dhikr

We should use Allah's remembrance (Dhikr-Allah) to ward off waswasas. Al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said that "...when the Shaitan hears dhikr (remembrance of Allah) he slinks away, and Laa ilaaha ill-Allah is the best of dhikr, and the most effective remedy for warding off waswasah is to remember Allah a great deal."

Obtaining Islamic knowledge (from the Right Sources) –Taking heed of Satan's ways and becoming aware of his plans and goal can help us to be alert to his influence or persuasion and keep our defenses up. For this, it is essential to acquire Islamic knowledge from the right sources. It is very difficult for Satan to approach those dedicated to learning. Let us reflect upon what Imam Shafai said: ***"All humans are dead except those who have knowledge; and all those who have knowledge are asleep except those who do good deeds; and those who do good deeds are deceived except those who are sincere; and those who are sincere are always in a state of worry."***

Taking refuge and shelter in Allah – Allah says in the Holy Quran: ***"And if an evil whisper comes to you from Shaitan (Satan), then seek refuge with Allah. Verily, He is All-Hearer, All-Knower"*** (Quran, Al-Aaraf: 200). One of the other ways to seek refuge from Satan is to recite the last two chapters of the Holy Quran, namely [Surat Al-Falaq](#) (The Daybreak) and [Surat An-Nas](#) (Mankind), by supplicating for Allah's Protection, and seeking the Most Merciful's forgiveness for one's sins constantly.

Being thankful to Allah for the gift of Eeman and seeking His Protection for it

Let us remember that the confidence Satan expressed in his success to mislead people, stems from his assurance that most people are ungrateful to their Creator, Lord and Master Allah the All Mighty. Allah says in the Quran that Satan claimed: ***". . . and You will not find most of them as thankful ones (i.e. they will not be dutiful to You)."*** (Quran, Surah Al-Aaraf: 17). It is, therefore, man's ingratitude to Allah that Satan banks upon in getting man off track. So one of the antidotes to Satanic whispers is to be in a state of constant consciousness of Allah (SWT), and thankfulness for all His Blessings upon us.

To conclude, let's remember that when we fall prey to our temptations and commit the wrong, let's remind ourselves that even Satan knows the truth, yet he is determined to make us earn Allah's anger and on the Day of Judgment, he will simply say, ***"...So blame me not, but blame your***