

Tricks of Shaitaan

Allah has given Shaytan the ability to flow in the body of man in a way which we do not understand.

Allah's Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "Shaytan flows through the sons of Adam like blood." [Mishkaat al-Masaabih]

Shaytan may reach a man's heart and mind, and whisper or tempt him to listen to or look at haraam things or commit immoral actions. This is called waswaas.

Shaytan, however, does not directly approach humans and ask them to abandon their religion. No sane person would willingly disobey Allah while choosing to follow Shaytan instead and share his dreadful fate! Shaytan has his own ways of distracting mankind from the religion of Allah and deceiving them into committing evil deeds.

Strategies of Shaitaan

To achieve his goal of dragging mankind with him into Hell, Shaytan first lures mankind into committing Shirk and Kufr through invoking the dead, practicing magic, etc., because Shirk (associating partners with Allah) is the greatest sin. Anyone who dies upon Shirk will not be forgiven, nor will he ever be taken out of Hell-fire.

So, if Shaytan overwhelms the son of Adam by causing him to commit Shirk, then he is satisfied and pleased. "Like when Shaytan says to man, 'Disbelieve in Allah.' But when (man) disbelieves in Allah, Shaytan says, 'I am free of you, I fear Allah...'" [Soorah al-Hashr (59): 16]

If he cannot manage to deceive people into committing Shirk and Kufr, he does not give up. He causes people to follow bidah (innovations in the religion) the actions that have no basis in the religion.

Sufyan th-Thawri said, "Bidah is dearer to Shaytan than sin, for, one may repent from sin, but not from bidah." One who sins, knows that he is disobeying Allah and some time, he may turn to Allah and seek forgiveness and be pardoned. But he, who practices Bidah, deems his action to be a form of worship to Allah and thus, never even thinks of repentance! "Say (O Muhammad), 'Shall We tell you the greatest losers in respect to (their) deeds?"

Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds!” [Soorah al-Kahf (18): 104] meaning, they performed deeds that were not in accordance with the prescribed way and thus not acceptable.

If Shaytan fails at causing people to follow innovations, he will move on to calling them to major sins like abandoning prayers – particularly, if the person is a respected personality, because huge number of people will follow his example.

If the believer keeps steadfast, Shaytan is still not discouraged, he calls them to minor sins because even minor sins can have devastating effect on one’s Hereafter. Allah’s Messenger warned us concerning minor sins by giving an example of how a great fire can be kindled by means of small wooden sticks collected in a place.

Similarly, minor sins if allowed to accumulate, might destroy the sinner. He said, “Beware of the insignificant sins, like a people who stayed (abode) in a valley, then this one brought a stick, that one brought a stick and others brought sticks too, until they cooked their bread (meal). Verily, the person who commits these (minor) sins will be seized by these sins and be destroyed.” [Musnad Ahmad]

If the believer still emerges safe from his traps, Shaytan seeks to keep him occupied with permissible matters, like sleeping, eating, pursuing worldly affairs, etc. Spending time and effort in these will neither earn him reward nor bring punishment. He will, however, miss the rewards he would have gained if he had spent his time in performing good deeds.

If the believing slave is still not deceived and manages his time well, Shaytan keeps him busy with less virtuous deeds instead of what is more preferable and rewarding in order for him to miss the reward of the best and most virtuous deed.

If after employing all kinds of temptations and deceptive arguments, Shaytan still does not succeed in diverting the son of Adam from his religious commitments, he resorts to corrupt his acts of worship and deprive him from the rewards. He stirs up doubts and makes the person anxious and uncertain. In Saheeh al- Bukharee, it is narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah said, “When the call to prayer is pronounced, the Shaytan runs away breaking wind loudly, so that he will not hear the adhaan.

When the call to prayer ends, he comes back, but when the iqamah starts, he runs away. And when the prayer begins, he comes back until he whispers into the heart of the person, and says to him, ‘Remember such and such,

remember such and such – things that he did not remember before the prayer until he does not know how many raka'ahs he has prayed.” [Saheeh al-Bukharee (608)]

If the person still remains undefeated, Shaytan's next step is to harm the person, for example, by causing him to be persecuted, or by distorting his reputation. By this trick Shaytan intends to discourage the person from his religious commitment. How many scholars have been tortured or killed in prison because of their commitment to Islam!

Shaytaan Never Tries

The above discussion shows the persistence of Shaytaan in achieving his goal! If he fails at one stage, he does not give up and keeps trying, and lies in wait along the path of goodness as he had vowed,

“...surely I will sit in wait against them 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.” [Soorah al-A'raf (7): 16-17]

Ibn Abbas commented, “Then I will come to them from before them,” (means) raising doubts in them concerning their Hereafter, “and (from) behind them”, making them more eager for this life, “from their right”, causing them confusion in the religion, “and from their left” luring them to commit sins.” This is meant to cover all paths of good and evil. Shaytan discourages the people from the path of good and lures them to the path of evil. [See, Tafseer Ibn Katheer]

The Shaytaan lies waiting for a person in all his paths.

In the path of Islam, he will tell him, ‘Will you become a Muslim and leave the religion of your fathers and grandfathers?’

If the person disobeys him, and becomes a Muslim, he will meet him on the path of Hijrah. He will tell him, ‘Will you leave your land and your sky? It is not wise.’

If the person does not submit and continues on his way, Shaytan will wait for him on the road of striving in the path of Allah, saying, ‘Will you go to struggle putting yourself and your wealth at risk?’

Even at the verge of death, Shaytan does not leave the believer alone without making one last attempt to ruin his life’s worship.

Shaytan thus never despairs from diverting people away from the path of Allah. For this reason, he has appointed one devil for each person, the Prophet said, “Every single person has a companion from the jinn, and a companion from the angels.” They said, “Even you, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “Even me. But Allah has supported me, and my jinn companion has become a Muslim. He only encourages me to do good.” [Saheeh Muslim]

Shaitaan Leads to sins gradually & eventually to the Ultimate disobedience of Allah

In order to ease the path of Shirk for the people, Shaytan tempts mankind little by little; beginning with a few steps and eventually leading them to the final downfall. Allah warned us in the Qur’aan, “follow not the of Shaytan. Verily! He is to you a plain enemy.” [Soorah al-Baqarah (2): 208]

While speaking about the idols that were worshiped by the Arab Pagans in the days of Jahiliyah, Ibn Abbas explained that these idols were first worshiped by the people of Nuh, before whom there was no Shirk in the world. Ibn Abbas further elaborated how Shaytan persuaded the people of Nuh into worshiping these idols in stages, he said, “Indeed these five names of righteous men (that have been given to those five idols) are from the people of Nuh.

When they died, Shaytan whispered to the people to make statues of them and to place these statues in their places of gathering as a reminder of the people, so they did this. However, none from amongst them worshiped these statues, until when they died and the purpose of the statues was forgotten. Then (the next generation) began to worship them.” [Agreed upon]

Similarly, in a gradual manner, Shaytan had persuaded Adam and Hawa into eating the forbidden fruit.

Allah commanded, “O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in Paradise and eat both of you freely with pleasure and delight of things therein as wherever

you will, but come not near this tree or you both will be of the Dhalimoon (wrong-doers).” [Soorah al-Baqarah (2): 35]

It is worth pondering that Allah did not say, ‘Do not eat the fruit of this tree,’ rather He commanded them to stay away from the tree itself saying “but come not near His tree.” If they strolled near the tree or sat in its shade there was a greater possibility of them being tempted into eating its fruit.

So Allah commanded them to keep away from the tree absolutely! This is the Sunnah of Allah in all matters. He closes all doors that lead to evil by forbidding the means that can lead His slaves into committing greater sin or evil.

Knowing that Allah prohibited Adam and Hawa from approaching the forbidden tree; Shaytan first enticed them to come near the tree. He then beautified for them its fruits, their color and fragrance, and finally caused Adam and Hawa to eat from it. So, Shaytan enticed them into disobeying Allah in a gradual way.

Shaytan uses the same ploy with the children of Adam and this necessitates extra precaution on our part. We not only have to refrain from committing sins but it is also necessary to keep away from every path that may lead to disobeying Allah, including visiting places and gatherings where the limits of Allah are not respected, keeping bad company or participating in innovated celebrations etc.

Shaitaan enters a person’s heart through his weakness

We know that Shaytan gradually misguides mankind through waswaas (whisperings to commit acts of disobedience to Allah) but he does not use the same approach for everyone. People differ in their nature, personality and ways of thinking; what appeals to one, may not appeal to another.

So Shaytan may seek to conquer someone by exploiting his love for money, while he may subdue another by his lust for fame, or might delude another by emotion. Shaytan has different ways to enter a man’s soul and misguide it; these doorways to a person’s heart are referred to as, ‘weakness.’

It is mentioned in Tafsir Ibn Katheer, that the shaytaan overpower the son of Adam and seize him at times of anger and times of desire.

Imam Ibnul-Qayyim said in Igaathat al-Lahfaam (1/32), “The Shaytan flows through the son of Adam like blood, until it is as if he becomes part of him,

so he finds out what he likes and prefers; once he knows that, he uses it against a person and enters into him through this door.

He also passes this information on to his brothers and allies among mankind, so that when they want to achieve their nefarious aims against one another they do so through means of that which people love and desire. Whoever tries to enter through this door will gain entry, and whoever tries to enter through any other way will find that the door is barred to him and he will not get what he wants.”

It is thus not the way of Shaytān to openly call one to disobedience. He will encourage negligence in prayers by whispering to the person to complete his worldly work before he leaves for prayers. After he has completed his work, Shaytan will remind him of food, and after that he will remind him of something else until the time of prayer has perished.

Similarly, if a person runs a business, Shaytan whispers to him that if he goes for prayer, he might miss some customers. However, if Shaytan finds a man to be zealous in performing Salaat, he comes to him through different means in which he is weak. He whispers to him concerning his wealth and encourages him to unlawfully usurp the wealth of others and forbids him from paying Zakaat while telling him that this will bring him poverty.

Whereas, Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said, “By spending in Zakaat, wealth does not decrease...” [Saheeh Muslim]

Furthermore, if he finds the believer to be strong in his Salaat and Zakaat, he will beautify women for him, until he causes him to commit adultery. Also, if he is strong in all these Shaytan lures him to intoxicants and so on: Ignorance, Ingratitude, Argumentativeness, Overstepping the limits, Carelessness, Pride, Doubt, Suspicion, Despair, Hopelessness, Recklessness, Haste, Inappropriate joy, Self-admiration, Wrong-doings, Oppression, Negligence, Miserliness, Covetousness, Extreme hostility in cases of dispute, Panic, Fear, Rebellion, Tyranny, Love of wealth are doorways of Shaytan into a man’s heart.

How Shaitaan Tries to Steal from Our Prayers

As you stand in Salah, in Allah’s hands, during such sacred moments, during such a grand encounter, no one is more envious of you now than Shaitan. So his mission is to steal every sweet moment you might have with The One you love, to steal every reward! So that you will finish your prayer, but only 1/3rd has been accepted, or 1/5th or 1/9th or 1/10th since the sobering

reality of the matter is: Only the parts of Salah you are mindful of are accepted by Allah.

Imam Ahmad (18415) narrated that ‘Ammar ibn Yaasir said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: A person may offer a prayer and nothing of it is recorded for him except one tenth of it, one ninth of it, one eighth of it, one seventh of it, one sixth of it, one fifth of it, one quarter of it, one third of it, or half of it.’ Classed as hasan by al-Albaani.

Uses laziness and procrastination to keep one away from good deeds

The first thing that Satan tries is to make us rebel against the key truths of Islam and its obligations and when he fails, 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 ﷺ 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)).

Do not procrastinate in doing good, especially for Salah, there is simply no room to do that with Salah.

Pushes obligatory deeds to the background – makes us delay Salah.

Now he has seen that you are not abandoning Salah nor are you being lazy, so now he tries to do his utmost to make us delay it. Sometimes makes us get busy with other good deeds (like Dawah or etc) but we should be mindful that obligatory deeds should take precedence.

Makes us not relieve ourselves and rush through prayer

Now we are not abandoning it, nor are we delaying it so now his mission is to make us get the least we can from our prayers. So if we feel a little bit of urge to relieve ourselves (use the washroom), he reminds us that we have Wudoo lets just pray this prayer and then we will go to the toilet and renew our wudoo which will be intact till the next prayer.

He makes us feel a little lazy to make wudoo. But it was narrated that ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: “There is no prayer when food is ready, or when one is resisting the urge to relieve oneself (by urinating or defecating).” Narrated by Muslim (560).

Repeating Wudoo again and again

Some people suffer from waswas (whispers from Shaitan) where they are in doubt about their wudoo and once they start making wudoo they tend to repeat it again and again because of doubts. If shaitaan asking you to spend more time in wudoo, do the opposite. Let us not inflict trouble on the ‘angels’ (kiraman katibeen) with us by spending too much time in the impure washroom, in the name of ‘purity’.

Feeling that you have broken Wudoo in Prayer

Now the Slave of Allah has won all the battles and gotten into prayer, Shaitaan tries to make you break the prayer by giving you the feeling that you have passed wind and your wudoo is broken and so you need to leave your prayer to renew your wudoo.

Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, “If one of you finds a disturbance in his abdomen and is not certain if he has released any gas or not, he should not leave the mosque unless he hears its sound or smells its scent.” (Sahih Muslim)

The urge to Show off in Worship

This next one is the most dangerous of them all. Shaitaan comes to you and tells you that so and so is watching, prolong your prayer, make it beautiful. Or he tells you look at the one praying beside you, you are going faster than him/her, he/she will notice you rushing through your prayer;

make your prayer better so that he/she sees that you are also very good at your prayer. This is the worst of his tricks, as once a person falls prey to this, the Salah is rejected altogether, as a matter of fact this is considered as Minor Shirk.

But Allah is the Most Just and the Most Merciful, when Allah knows that we have tried to ward off the idea of showing off and did not give in to it, rather we tried to turn away from it and hated it. This does not have any effect on us, because the Prophet ﷺ said: “Allah has forgiven my ummah for what crosses their minds, so long as they do not act upon it or speak of it.”

So fight the thoughts and resist, hate it by your heart but still prolong and beautify your prayer for the Sake of Allah alone.

Wandering whilst praying

Either by letting one's mind wander or by physically looking around. When shaitan sees the slave of Allah has not abandoned his prayer, has not delayed it, is doing it only for the Sake of Allah, he turns to the next trick which is to try and steal from our prayer.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: –

About looking around whilst praying, “That is something that the Shaytaan steals from a person's prayer.” (Bukhaari)

“Allah is turning towards His slave so long as he does not look around, so when you pray, do not look around.” Narrated by Ahmad

Yawning in Prayer

This is something we see, that if one yawns the one next to him also does in a while, Abu Hurayrah reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Yawning is from the Shaytaan. If any of you feels the urge to yawn, let him resist it as much as possible, for if any of you says ‘Ha’ (makes a noise when yawning), the Shaytaan laughs.” (al-Bukhari no. 3289)

Forgetting the number of Rakahs & Sujood Sahw

Another one of the tricks is he disturbs us enough and makes us forget the Rakah we are in, again the Sunnah has explained us a way out of this problem.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “When anyone of you stands for the prayers, Satan comes and puts him in doubts till he forgets how many Rakat he has prayed. So if this happens to anyone of you, he should perform two prostrations of Sahu while sitting.” (Bukhari)

In the case of being uncertain and you are not confident then just go with the smaller number which is a certainty, the key is to not indulge in thinking for too long and losing your concentration, and at the end of the prayer we should make two Prostrations of Sajdah Sahw before Tasleem, so our hearts are at rest and we are not worried about the mistake which shaitaan tries us to keep us tangled in and lose out on the rewards of prayer.

Other tricks are

Unnecessary movements

Wearing things that distracts others

What to do when Shaitaan tries to distract us in prayers?

Shaitaan continues to play his tricks to disturb us and lose concentration. We have been shown a way to fight it. Uthman Bin Abi Al-Aas, (may Allah be pleased with him), so he came complaining to the Prophet ﷺ, and he said: “The Shaitan comes between me and my salat and causes me problems with my recitation.”

So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “That is a shaitan called Khanzab, so if you feel his presence, seek refuge in Allah and blow a mist to your left three times.” He said: “I applied this advice and Allah has rid me off him.” (Sahih Muslim)

Allah Knows Best.