

Shaikh Fadhlullah Haeri on **SEEKING THE PROTECTION OF ALLAH** **FROM SHAYTAN**

There is a great deal written about the word *waswas* which are subtle whisperings in one's innermost that incite one to evil. In one reference ten meanings are given for al-waswasah, denoting ten different attributes of the whisperer. If we overcome them we will understand the shirk of *waswas*, and we will be able to truly take refuge from it.

Waswas is an onomatopoeic word imitative of the sound of whispering. Whispering is one of the actions which, in our din and in our adab, is very much repudiated, because something worth saying should be shared by saying it out loud.

Khannas is an epithet of shaytan, and means "slinking away," specifically, when the Name of Allah is mentioned.

There are sources or rivers which feed the *waswas*. just as the Garden has underground rivers which feed it, so too has the *waswas*.

- One of these rivers is *hirs* (greed or covetousness). That river can be fought, blocked, and dammed by *tawakkul wa qana* (trustful dependence (on Allah) and contentment).
- Another river is *amal*, which means "expectation." This river, too, can be dammed by constant remembrance, *dhikr*. Our hope for things of this world can be stopped by remembering that each breath may be our last. This remembrance will cut the flow of that river which feeds the whisperer who pours distracting suggestions into our ears.
- The third river is *shahawat ad-dunya* or "worldly desires." These desires can be killed by remembering that the *ni'am* (favours, bounties) will all eventually leave us, and that the *hisab* (account) will have to be made by us. We will have to account for the way in which we spent the bounty and goodness that was given to us. It will be a lengthy account - we are told 50 thousand years - in which every minute detail will be reviewed and examined, and in which even something as seemingly minor as a twitch can be a witness for or against us.
- The fourth river, or source, of *waswas* is *tahsil*, meaning "acquisition." This river can be stopped by seeing the justice of each person's situation. What a person reaps arises from the justice of his own situation, and we cannot alter it.

- The fifth river is *bala'*, "affliction." The flow of this can be stemmed by not looking at the affliction in a situation, but rather by seeing the bestowal of the good in it.
- The sixth river is *kibr*, or "pride," which can be fought by humility. Whenever *kibr* rises up in us, we should immediately call upon the humility within ourselves, so that we break its effect on us.
- The seventh river is *tahqir*, that which entices us to belittle the honorable position of the believers, as well as anything that the believer possesses, anything that is in his domain, and that which is *halal* (permitted) for him and *haram* (forbidden) for others. This river can be stopped by considering their honor to be great and by respecting it.
- The eighth source of waswas is the love of dunya (this world), including the desire to be acknowledged and admired by others. This love and desire can be undone by bringing oneself to the state of abasement.
- The ninth source of waswas which encourages shaytan is separation and stinginess (*bukhl*). This can be fought by generosity. *Sakha'* means "giving according to what the occasion demands;" *jud* means "giving without being asked;" and *karam* is "giving whatever has been asked." These three are attributes of Allah. The fourth is *ithar*, "giving what one needs oneself," and this is an attribute which only man can have. Allah cannot have this attribute, for Allah has no need whatsoever of anything. Thus, we can take on this final attribute, which is a great aid for our inner, upward mobility toward that noble state which befits the *khalifah*, or viceregent, of Allah