

# **Ayatullah Sayyid Dastghaib al-Shirazi on SEEKING THE PROTECTION OF ALLAH FROM SHAYTAN**

- The topic that has received the maximum attention in the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet (S) and his Vicegerents (AS) is Ista-aaza or seeking Allah's help to protect one against the maneuverings of the Satan.
- This is done by saying the words *AUDHU BILLAHI MINASSH SHAYTANIR RAJIM*. But it is necessary that one should seek this protection from the depths of one's heart. That is true Ista-aaza.
- To highlight the importance of Ista-aaza, Allah says in the Holy Book:

When you commence reciting the Qur'an, seek protection from Allah against the accursed Satan.

- In any prayer, Ista-aaza after Takbiratul Ihram is recommended. Therefore, Ista-aaza is one of the most important aspects of prayer that has to be performed in the truest sense, and implicitly, that Allah's protection from the accursed Satan is assured.
- In every situation, however lowly and futile, or elevated and likeable, one should seek protection from the Satan – before entering the mosque, before wearing clothes and before eating.

One pious person said that he noticed Satan, in apocalyptic revelation, standing at the threshold of the mosque. He asked him; *O accursed one! What are you doing here?* The Satan replied; *Some of my associates have been missed in these environs and I am waiting for them!*

The pious person understood that they must be intelligent persons who have gone into the mosque and the accursed Satan was unable to follow them inside. They must have taken care to say the Ista-aaza before entering the mosque.

- Ista-aaza is absolutely essential when one is going out of the residence. At that time Satan awaits for the person outside.

In the Holy Qur'an it is said with great emphasis that:

Shaytan and his group watch your actions intently and you remain oblivious of their activity. You must consider him (the Satan) your enemy because We have made the satans the friend of the faithless.)

Allah has ordered the Prophet (S):

Say O Prophet! O Allah! I seek your protection from the fears of the satans and their dominance on my heart and spirit.

- Therefore when the enemy is so powerful and strong, we should not be complacent and unmindful of him.
- We should gather all our faculties and plan to save ourselves by seeking the Protection of Allah. Otherwise, one would find to his surprise that the place where he was prostrating himself for long was, in fact, the Satan's abode and in his ignorance he thought that he was prostrating to god.
- When, in such a situation, he uttered: O god! In actual fact he had been submitting himself to Satan!
- When a person is alone with a strange and young woman, it is imperative that he seeks Allah's protection from Satan (Ista-aaza) because in such a situation the accursed Satan makes his utmost effort to lead the person astray.
- When a person is in a frenzy of anger, his blood boils and the Satan dominates him with full force.
- The Satan says; *The frenzy of anger in a man for me is like a ball in a child's hand!* You must have seen that a child throws the ball whichever way he wants, wherever he wants! In the same Satan overpowers men in the frenzy of anger and makes them commit taboo (haram) acts. There is no wonder if Satan makes persons commit acts of kufr (infidelity) in a frenzy of anger! Only those lucky persons escape from such situations who have Allah's particular Blessing because they say the Ista-aaza in such situations.
- In certain circumstances the efforts of the satanic forces are redoubled. These situations are when one delivers justice, when one is alone with a young strange woman and at the moment when a person is in a rage of anger. As illustrated in the previous talk, Satan tries all the subterfuges to destroy the human being.

Satan makes the best efforts to nullify three actions. They are:

- Ahad : Promises or resolutions,
  - Nazr : Or offerings,
  - Sadaqa : Or charity.
- When a person resolves to Allah for performing a certain act and to give a nazr (offering) after its fulfillment in accordance with the norms of fiqh, the Satan tries all the subterfuges at his command to prevent him from offering the promised nazr!
  - Similarly when one wants to give a sadaqa in Allah's way, Satan tries his level best to prevent the person from giving it. It has been oft recorded that when a person puts his hand in his pocket then Satan, and his numerous retainers, cling to the person's hand and put all sorts of fears in his mind. As the Holy Qur'an warns:

The Satan threatens you with poverty and enjoins on you sordidness.

- Reward for the good turn. To achieve this end, Satan would use all his skills to persuade the person to publicly brag about his charitable act. For example, Satan will put in the mind of the person to tell to the beneficiary of the charity; *It was I who came to your rescue in time of need!* None else would have helped you!' Or Satan would make him belittle the receiver of the charity by saying; *Take this money now. But please don't come to me for help again!* Therefore, Allah categorically says in the Holy Quran:

Render not your charities worthless by obligation and injuries (laid on them).

- In all commentaries, and particularly in Majma al Bayan, it is narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) that Satan always has an eye on the heart of a mumin (believer). When he finds the person busy in prayer, he flees. The Prophet (S) has said:

Satan has put a halter on the hearts of men. But when man remembers Allah, Satan escapes from him. When a person ignores remembrance of Allah, Satan would swallow his heart. Satan plans to swallow the heart of a mumin. But when the mumin remembers Allah, Satan runs away from him.

- Although man is mad of the four elements---- fire, water, soil and air---- but the content of soil is prominent in his make-up. This gives volume and weight to the human body. Therefore the power of comprehension and action in a human being are limited.

- Contrary to this, Satan is made of fire, with the fire and air being predominant components in his make-up. Therefore, Satan is absolutely rare (lateef) and light and, therefore, has a very wide range of actions and mobility in his control.
- Man thinks that he has great faculties at his command, but Satan has such incredible capabilities that he can become so small as to easily pass through a tiny crevice. He can also become so huge as to entirely encompass a vast place!
- The distances that a man can travel over a month with difficulty, Satan can traverse in the time taken to blink the eyes once! The heavy weights that man is incapable of lifting, Satan can lift effortlessly!
- There is an objection that if Satan exists, then why men are unable to see him? This is an invalid objection. Human eyes cannot see rare things. They can only visualize things that have volume. Can we see the air that is absolutely rare. Can we see the waves of the wind, although we feel them blowing. The human eye is made of soil and it can only see the voluminous things. Therefore the Holy Qur'an says:

He and his troops look at you from such a place where you cannot see them.

- Yes! At certain times the satans can make themselves visible to people. Many prophets such as Hazrat Nuh (AS), Hazrat Yahya (AS), Hazrat Muammad (S) and many men of high piety have seen Satan and even now some pious persons must be there who have this experience.
- The creation of Satan (and his ilk) is to test the felicity of the human beings. When men ward away the subterfuges of Satan, they ear a place in the Heaven and those who are misled by him, will be Hell bound!
- Allah has ordered men to do charity. Satan asked people not to do charity lest their horde of wealth diminishes! Those who have wisdom and strong faith snub Satan and tell him, Allah says:

Whatever you spend, We shall replenish. We are the Best of Providers.

- If you are steadfast in determination and patience like a mountain, then wisdom and knowledge will take you to such a place that it becomes evident if youwere irresolute, the Satanic fears would sway your feet! It is the existence of Satan that proves the felicity of men of piety and wisdom who are steadfast despite all the stratagems of the accursed one!

- Definitely, the purpose of the creation of Satan is to test the human beings as to their determination to be steadfast on the right path. Those who are fickle minded and susceptible to be led astray by Satan are also tested by Satan! Thus Allah gets a proof of who is mumin (pious) and who is fajir (hypocrite.)
- Satan can never force anyone to do misdeeds. He has no such faculties. He can only operate through creating doubts in the minds of persons and tempting them to go astray with his subterfuges. Satan says (in al-Qur'an):

I have no suzerainty over you!

- The Satan's job is only to create doubts and fears in the human mind. If a person goes to the mosque, it is with his own conviction and decision. When he goes to the cinema theatre, it is his own choice and decision. It is the fault of the man who is tempted by Satan to make decisions that make him a sinner. On the Day of Judgement when people surround Satan and blame him for leading them astray, he will give a simple and clear reply that he did not drag them into the Hell. They had themselves decided to act the way they did! Satan would then ask men to curse themselves rather than cursing him!

I had no authority over you except I called you and you responded unto me: so blame me not, but (rather) blame yourselves.

And you say ' O my Lord! I seek refuge unto You from the (evil) prompting of the satans' ' I seek refuge unto You O my Lord! From their access to Me.'

- The human being wishes to achieve nearness to the Creator through prayer. But Satan tries with all his faculties and stratagems to create hurdles in the way of the person's progress towards the goal. This he does to satisfy his instinct of jealousy.
- Satan is such an accursed creature that if he is unable to cause major impediments to the efforts of the person, he will satisfy himself even with small disturbances to the man. For example, if Satan is unable to turn a person into an infidel or hypocrite, he will satisfy himself with making the person commit lesser sins.

It is narrated that when Satan was ordered out of the Heaven, he submitted to Allah in the following manner:

O Allah! What has happened to my supplications offered over a long span of seven thousand years?

Allah replied:

We shall reward you what you ask for as a compensation for your prayers.

Satan said:

O Allah! Give me respite till the Day of Judgement.

Allah replied:

You are given the respite!

Satan said:

My second wish is that I am given the faculty to create doubts and fears in the hearts of the human beings.

This wish of Satan too was also granted. In granting this wish Allah had a strategy in view. Hazrat Adam (AS) beseeched Allah thus:

O Creator! You have not only provided respite to this formidable enemy of my progeny till the Day of Judgement, you have also given him faculty to cause fears and temptations in the hearts of poor progeny! They will be helpless at the mercy of Satan!

Allah said:

O Adam (AS)! Don't be disturbed! With every Satan there will be an angel created by us. These angels will help your progeny to guard against the trap set by Satan.

- Whenever Satan creates doubts in the hearts of men, the angels inspire virtue in their heart. Satan says; *Don't go to the mosque!* The angel encourages the person to go there. Satan encourages the person to commit certain sins that he can make reparation later on. The angel says that the person might die before he expresses his repentance for the sins. And even if he expresses repentance there is no guarantee of acceptance by Allah.
- Give attention to your own hearts! Whether there are thoughts of good or of evil in your heart, you will always have doubts about these thoughts! When Satan upbraids you to commit a sinful act, the angels guide you against it. If Satan tries to prevent you from doing a good turn, the angels encourage you to go ahead with it.

- Allah has categorically said in the Holy Quran:

Allah is never unjust with men. It is the men who do injustice to themselves.

Allah has further said:

*If We had imposed Iblees over your progeny and have given him respite till the Day of Reckoning, we have kept the doors of repentance open for you progeny too. If men are caught in the web of the accursed Satan, they can express repentance like their ancestor, Adam (AS) and seek forgiveness from Allah. Remember that Adam (AS) after doing repentance reached the august status of Prophet-hood and was one of the choicest of Allah.* Allah says:

Repentant men too can achieve the status of tawwabeen (penitents) and become the dear ones of Allah.

Allah, as such says:

Allah likes the penitents

- All the people of the previous epochs had the doors of repentance open for them. But the conditions for acceptance of their penitence were very severe. It is the felicity of the presence of the Last of Prophet (S) that his people, who are called the *Ummat-e-Marhuma*, have a very wide door for repentance available to them. This concession is because their Prophet (AS) is *Rahmat-lil-Aalameen* (the Blessing for All the Worlds) and Tauba, and its acceptance, too is one of the aspects of blessing.

Bihar al-Anwar, volume three, quotes a tradition of the Prophet of Islam (S):

Every person who repents for his past sins one year before his death, will be pardoned.

Then said:

One year is too long a period. If a person repents for his sins a month before his death, he may be pardoned.

The Prophet (S) further added:

One month too is rather a long period. If the person repents a day prior to his death, his sins might be pardoned.

The Prophet (S) then said:

A day too is a long time. If the person repents at the moment of death, in the Barzakh (the interregnum) or before Izrail (Angel of Death (AS) looks into his eyes, the person might be pardoned by Allah.

There are three ways the Ista-aaza is done:

1. There are persons who neither have the right spirit of doing Ista-aaza nor are they aware of the meaning of the words of Ista-aaza. But, all the same, as a force of habit, they utter the words: *AUDHU BILLAHI MINASSH SHAYTANIR RAJIM*. Unless the Ista-aaza comes with feelings, understanding and from the heart, it becomes a satanic joke!
2. There are persons who know the meanings and purport of the words of Ista-aaza and are capable of saying them properly, but they haven't the right feelings in their heart and also their actions are in obedience of Satan. Such Ista-aaza will be for Satan rather than a submission to Allah for His protection against Satan!
3. There is a third group of persons who say the words of Ista-aaza from the depths of their hearts and are fully aware of their meaning, purport and spirit. These persons will be fully aware of the Greatness and Omnipotence of Allah. The Ista-aaza of these persons will always get the accepted by Allah.

A disciple of Sheikh Ansari has said that when he was studying under him, one night he saw the accursed Satan in a dream. Satan was carrying some bridles in his hand. He asked Satan; *Why are you holding these bridles in your hand?* He replied; *I put them in the necks of people and drag them!*

Yesterday I put a bridle around the neck of one Sheikh Murtada Ansari and dragged him out of his house into the lane. But he escaped from me from the middle of the lane and returned home!

When he awoke in the morning, he went to the Sheikh and related to him the dream. The Sheik said:

Satan has told you the truth. The accursed one did try to tempt me with his glib talk. In fact, at home we needed certain things and I had no money handy at the time. I thought that from the Sahm-e-Imam I had with me a copy of the Holy Qur'an. I thought that I would sell it and use the money for my need as a loan to be reimbursed later. I took the copy of the Qur'an and went into the lane. While buying my needs a thought came to me why I was doing such a thing. I felt penitent, returned home and put back the copy of the Qur'an in its original place.

This incidence is quoted from the biography of the Sheikh – Seerat-wa-Shaqsiat Sheikh Ansari - pages 88-89)

Qur'an:

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from the Satan afflicteth them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They are forthright.

When we consider carefully the spirit of Ista-aaza, we find that it has five welldefined aspects:

1. Taqwa or piety.
2. Tadhakkar or remembrance of Allah.
3. Tawakkal or trust in Allah.
4. Ikhlas or sincerity.
5. Aajizi or humility towards Allah.

- When all these five aspects are practiced by a person, his Ista-aaza will be accepted by Allah. Then, the accursed Satan will remain a long distance away from the person whether he says: *AUDHU BILLAHI MINASSH SHAYTANIR RAJIM* or not. In other words, when Satan comes to a mumin he becomes scared of man as an ordinary human being gets scared of the company of Jinns.

Qur'an:

When the men of piety have any fear from Satan, then they busy themselves in prayer and they instantaneously get enlightened.

- Therefore, the very first condition for keeping oneself safe from form Satan is to become pious. Those who adopted piety, busy themselves in prayer whenever they fear Satan in their hearts. They get enlightened that Satan created the fears. They also realize that because of their prayer Satan had fled and that they are in the protection of Allah. The ayat mentioned above is a pointer to the believers towards adoption of piety and remembrance of Allah.

Qur'an:

While reciting the Qur'an seek Allah's protection from the accursed Satan. O believers! On those who trust (tawakkal) in Allah, Satan has no influence or control.

- One who has trust in Allah , Shaitan will have no control on him. Satan can influence only those who who don't trust on Allah and all their confidence is on material and worldly aspects of their lives. If the same person has trust on Allah, then Satan becomes helpless in his maneuvers.

- When a person doesn't trust Allah from the depths of his heart, then all his pleadings for protection will be of no avail. According to the verse quoted above, Satan would gain ascendancy over him. In the later verse of the Qur'an there is a reference towards this aspect:

Verily, his authority is only over those who befriend him  
and those who associate others with Him.

- One who has forgotten the Munificent Allah and befriended Satan, he has no concern for Ista-aaza or seeking protection from Satan.
- Another important aspect of Ista-aaza is sincerity. This saying of Satan is recorded in the Holy Qur'an:

By Your Honor O Sustainer! Excepting your sincere  
creatures, I shall tempt (lead astray) everyone else.

- A woman who can come to the bazaar wearing indecent dress is satanic from head to toe! And the man who chaperons such a woman in public can never escape from the attention of Satan. It goes to prove that one who doesn't save himself from the illegitimate (Haram) can never prevent himself from the influence of Satan. If a person dwells in a usurped house, he cannot escape from the Satan unless he quits the occupation of that house. If a person is in habit of doing taboo things, he cannot do Ista-aaza.
- As long as even one morsel of haram (unlawful) food is in the body of a person, he is himself like the Satan. Beating drums seeking protection from Satan is his hypocrisy. As long as he is not able to shake away the influence of Satan from his person, all his prayers are mere pretences.
- About *Rizq-e-Halal* (legitimate food) there are several traditions of Ahlul-Bayt (AS). *Rizq-e-Halal* is like a seed on which the quality of the plant will depend. Care must be exercised and good seed to ensure the health and sturdiness of the tree.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

O people! Eat pure and halal food and don't tread the  
footprints of Satan.

- When one has doubt about the food being halal, he should rather abstain from eating it. Avoid using haram food and clothes. The use of these will have such deleterious effect on the person that he becomes the victim of fears and doubts.

- The foods we consume take us to darkness. There is no light in them that can give nourishment to our spirits. Our tongues too are influenced by these foods that we utter falsehoods and abusive language. We indulge in misguiding games and play. Backbiting has become our habit. All our limbs and organs have been exposed to the effects of haram and unsavory (makrooh) foods. The body has therefore become insensitive to the instinct of remembrance of Allah. The limbs and organs have thus turned into the playthings of Satan.
- One type of haram food is najis (impure) food. If impure food goes down the throat, Satan will transmit his effect throughout the body.
- Even babes in arms should not be fed with najis food. One should not think that a child is innocent and free from the incidence of the rules of Shariah.
- Remember, the adults are bound with the requirements of the Shariah and it is their duty to take care to nourish their children with pure food. When a child is brought up on najis food, he will develop negative and un-Islamic tendencies as he grows up. It is to be borne in minds that only animals can take Najis food.
- The occasion when one is required to abstain even from Halal food is when he is fully satiated and can eat no more at that moment. Over-eating is a taboo and a satanic trait.
- Syed Taoos has recommended application of this verse to all foods, although the verse pertains only to animal foods. Syed Taoos says; *All the edibles that are prepared without taking the name of Allah before commencing the preparation, I don't partake of! How can a mumin eat the bread that has been cooked by the baker without taking the name of Allah.*

Qur'an:

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from the Satan afflicts them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They see (aright).

- The people who are in the process of escaping from sinful acts, and Satan tries to overwhelm them, they instantaneously busy themselves in the remembrance of Allah. With the felicity (baraka) of this act, the curtains of thoughtlessness are raised from their eyes and they comprehend the evil schemes of Satan very clearly. Thus they are able to save themselves from the evil bait of Satan.

- We have mentioned that piety is a very important tool concerning our food habits. Our food, or nutrition, is like the seed of plants. The type of food one takes nourishes good or satanic tendencies in a person. If the seed is satanic, then the body acquires evil tendencies. If a haram morsel goes down the throat, then the control over the body will come into the hands of Satan. Till the time that morsel remains in the body, Satan too will occupy it.
- He is your enemy from the beginning. You too should reciprocate with enmity. Don't befriend him. But if you commit sins, it will be obedience to your enemy, the Satan. And obedience is a component of friendship. Always beware that your treacherous enemy is keeping an eye on you. No man is safe from him for a single moment. If you think that you are safe from him, it is nothing but complaisance.
- Someone asked a pious scholar whether it is mentioned in any traditions about Satan sleeping and taking rest. The learned scholar smiled and gave a very interesting reply; *If that accursed creature ever slept, I would have some respite!*
- When you sleep, the accursed Satan is fully awake. He never sleeps. He always guards over men and looks for opportunities to bring harm them.

He, and his retainers, watch over you from such a place  
that they can see you and you can't see them.

When the enemy is so powerful and stealthy and can attack through hidden means, it becomes our duty to become fully armed and fortified against Satan. When the enemy is looking for your slightest fault or negligence, then you too must guard against him fully armed. The ammunition for men against Satan is taqwa or piety. Adopt piety to meet the onslaughts of Iblis!

- Offering non-obligatory prayers, to the best of one's physical capabilities, is very effective for warding off the enemy, Satan. Similarly, abstaining from doing or using things, although permissible but not desirable, is very useful. *Tark-e-Ghaflat* or avoidance of carelessness too might help.
- The initial attempts of Satan will be to tempt the mumin to commit unsavory things (makruhat). Then he will open the way of the minor sins (Gunahan-e -Saghira) to the person. He puts into the mind of the person that the sins he was committing were very trivial and thus encourages him to inadvertently commit major sins (Gunahan-e-Kabira).

- He attacks the mumin's faith and puts him in severe doubts and fears. Thus Satan makes him his helpless prey. He doesn't keep the person capable of comprehending that he is the victim of Satan's plot. Only the people of taqwa (piety), with their effective defences, can save themselves from the maneuvers of Satan. The poor ignorant person cannot meet the onslaught of Satan.
- Of several non-obligatory things that can come to the aid of a mumin is to always maintain the state of wudhu. The Prophet of Islam (AS) says; *Wudhu is the weapon of a mumin!* It is the duty of a mumin to confront the satans that he is in mortal combat with them. Therefore, he must always be clean and with valid wudhu.
- A person should always be with wudhu, and if some time has passed after performing the ablution, he should renew it as a measure of carefulness that it might have gone void without the person noticing it. It is said; *Wudhu is a noor or light and performing a wudhu over another is a bigger light.* This is the light that dispels the darkness created by Satan in the hearts of the persons.
- In the armory of a mumin there are certain arms about which the Prophet (S) has made a particular mention. The Prophet (S) said; *Fasts of a mumin blacken the face of Satan. Sadaqa or charity breaks the backbone of Satan. Istaghfar—entreaty with Allah for mercy—will cut the Satan's vein of life, and love of Allah and good deeds of the person uproot Satan.* Safinat al-Bihar, vol 2, page 62
- When you fast the face of Satan, your enemy, will be blackened. If the curtains are raised from your eyes, you will notice that Satan's face has turned black on account of your fasts. But Satan is not so weak and emaciated that only by fasting you get his face blackened and with a strike of charity you shatter his backbone.
- You have to perform every action with absolute sincerity that they pass through the seven curtains and break Satan's backbone and destroy him. Now let us talk about Sadaqa or charity. According to what the Prophet (S) has said, it does break the backbone of Satan. But there is a condition that your charity should be acceptable to Allah.

It is narrated in Anwar Jazairi that once during an acute famine a preacher was speaking from the pulpit in a mosque. He said; *If someone wants to give sadaqa, seventy satans cling to his hand and try to prevent him from doing the good turn.*

One believer who was seated very near the foot of the pulpit told to his friends with surprise; *What has Satan to do with sadaqa? I have some wheat at home. I shall go home just now and bring it to the mosque to give away in charity. I shall see how the satans prevent me from doing it!*

The man got up and went home. On reaching home, when his wife became aware of his intention, she shouted at him; *In these days of acute famine you have no care of your wife and children! Perhaps the famine conditions might prolong and we might all die of starvation because of shortage of wheat.* Therefore, getting engulfed with doubts the momin returned to the mosque empty handed.

The friends asked him; What has happened. You have returned from home without the wheat? Alas! The seventy satans had clung to your hands and prevented you from doing the sadaqa. The man said; *I didn't see the satans, but definitely I have seen their mother who came in the way of my doing the good deed!*

- Two more weapons that, according to the Prophet of Allah (S), are most effective in defeating Satan are: Sincere obedience of Allah and steadfastness in doing good deeds.
- Al-Sajjad (AS) says in one of his supplications:

O Allah! I seek you protection from my enemy! O Master of the House! The ferocious dog is attacking me. Come to my rescue and save me from the harm that it can cause to me!

In Madinat al-Muajiz it is said that the fourth Imam al-Sajjad (AS) was busy one day in his prayer. Iblis wanted to cause disturbance to the Imam's concentration. He ordered one of his retainers to disrupt the Imam's concentration by causing him bodily harm. The narrator says that the accursed satan came to the Imam in the shape of a big python. We have already mentioned earlier that satans have the faculty to appear in any shape and form they wish to.

Anyway, he went near the Imam (AS) who was fully absorbed in his prayer. The accursed creature bit one of the toes of the Imam (AS). But the pain of the bite was not felt by the Imam (AS) nor was his concentration disturbed an iota. At that moment a loud sound of Allah's anger was heard and the accursed creature was punished. Then the Herald said; *Anta Zain al-Abedeen-verily you are the adornment of the pious ones and the source of pride for them.*

It is narrated from the Prophet of Allah that the bazaar is the play ground of Satan:

The worst part of the earth is the bazaar. This is the play ground of Satan where he hosts his standard in the mornings and places his chair, and spreads his chess-board. He cheats in the weighing and measuring of things. He sells away adulterated things.  
(Safinat al-Bihar, Vol 1, Page 8)

This is the reason that the Infallible Imams have exhorted people not to linger for long in the bazaars. They say that bazaar is a place only for negotiations and making deals. It is not proper for people with learning to associate themselves with the bazaar.

Being the first to enter a bazaar and emerging from it the last of all is an undesirable act because in this period Satan will be the companion of the person.

It has been narrated in the traditions that Hazrat Amir al-Mu'mineen (AS) found Abdur Rahman Ibn-e-Muljim, the accursed, gallivanting in the bazar on 18th Ramadan. The Imam (AS) inquired as to what he was doing there? He said; *I am going round the bazaar!* The Imam (AS) said:

The bazaar is the place for Satan.

Aimlessly loitering in the bazaar motivates a person to indulge in undesirable activities. Even today loafing in the bazaar is not considered a good activity. If you wish to be a man of piety you have to tread carefully in the bazaar, as does a person on a road full of thorns.

- One person quotes from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (AS). He says; I asked the Imam (AS) that I have business transactions with a woman and I have to, perforce, negotiate with her face to face. Is my looking at her face legitimate or not? The Imam replied; *Attiq Allah! Keep Allah's fear in your heart and exercise care!*
- Women are the most formidable traps of Satan. The only exceptions are those women who have confronted and fought with Satan all their lives. It takes some time for Satan to snare men out of the right path. But women is more vulnerable and aid and abet the involvement of men too. Have you not heard that Satan was not able to tempt Adam (AS) with all his stratagems. Then he turned his attention towards Hazrat Hawwa (AS) and succeeded in making both of them to do the forbidden. It is narrated that Satan said to Hazrat Yahya (AS):

Whenever I fail in trapping anyone, I use women to fulfill my plans!

- This doesn't mean that men should totally shun the company of women. But care must be exercised because nearness to women is one of the traps that are used by Satan. You must have observed that a single word from a woman can drastically change the thinking of a man! Can render the person emotional and turn him inadvertently towards many sinful acts.

One imposter, whose name was Bars-isa, always used to make the pretense of prayer and lived in seclusion. People used to say that his prayers would help in the fulfillment of their wishes.

The daughter of the king of the time once fell seriously ill. All treatments proved futile. In the end it was thought that the only way for curing her of the illness was the prayer of Bars-isa. But the hermit refused to come out of his seclusion to the city or the palace of the king. In the end they reluctantly took the sick princess to his hermitage. They left her alone with the hermit. If this unfortunate hermit was a true man of piety he would have objected to the leaving of the young princess alone with him. But he fell in the trap of Satan.

He looked at the girl and was attracted by her beauty. He had not experienced such a situation throughout his life. He could not control his base instinct and raped the girl. But Satan didn't stop at this. He put doubts in the heart of Bars-isa that when people learn of his foul act they would lynch him. To save himself from death he thought of killing the girl and burying her. He also thought that if inquiries are made about the girl, he would say that he didn't know where she had gone.

With these doubts and fears in his mind, Bars-isa killed the princess while she was asleep. Then he dug up a trench and buried her. It is narrated that Satan came in human form to the persons who were searching for the princess and said; *I know where the girl is!* He then guided them to the place where the grave was. The angry team demolished Bars-isa's hermitage and dragged him to the court of the king. People started spitting on his face.

The king ordered him to be hanged. In the olden days the hanging of criminals was not such an easy and fast process as it is now. It was a prolonged and torturous procedure. When Bars-isa was about to die Satan came to him and said; *Even now if you prostrate to me, I shall save you!* To save himself from death, Bars-isa agreed to prostrate to Satan. In his last breaths Satan tempted Bars-isa to commit a major sin and earn a place for himself in the fiery Hell.

- A heart that has not experienced piety, believe me, is the abode of Satan. Satan doesn't relinquish such a heart easily.

- A heart without piety is the heart that doesn't remember Allah. It is in fact crowded with worldly desires like greed, selfishness and Satanic fears. Such hearts are the repositories of wishes for the worldly glitter and show. These hearts are also the shelter for Satan and the sources of his evil designs. Unless the heart cures itself of these satanic instincts and withdraws from supporting and advancing Satan's foul schemes, it is impossible that the environment for Ista-aaza takes shape in it.

You might have experienced that a hungry dog will not leave your side if you are having with you some tasty food. However much you try to chase away the dog, it will return to you. Even if you pick up a stick to chase it away, it will stubbornly stay on. If you don't have any food with you, and a dog chances to come near you, then it will run away if you chase but once. The reason for this lack of interest is that the dogs have a very strong sense of smell and they would know where there is a bone for them!

- Your heart is under the observation of Satan. If he feels that there is food for him in your heart that it has craving for worldly riches and pomp, then certainly it is the ideal place for him to entrench himself in. If he notices that your heart is having so much avarice that even after acquiring a lot it has craving for more and is envious of others, then he is very pleased to dwell therein.

It is narrated that once Satan came to the presence of Hazrat Yahya (AS). Prophet Yahya (AS) asked him about his treatment of Adam (AS)'s progeny. He replied that men are divided into three groups.

The first group consists of the revered persons who are always out of his reach. These are the Prophets (AS) and the Infallible.

Then Satan said that the second group consists of the people over whom he can have his sway. But with penitence they nullify his maneuvers.

The third group of people is of those in whose hearts he, Satan, lives. These form the vast majority of people. O believers! Do such acts that Satan is unable to find an entry into your hearts! Otherwise, mere utterance of the words of Ista-aaza will not be of any use.

- There are four things that prevent the light entering the heart and as long as we don't guard against these four things, darkness will prevail on our hearts. *The very first thing that must be avoided is impurity of the body. The second important thing is that we should refrain from disobedience to Allah. The third is to guard against the fears and doubts created by Satan. The last, but not the least, is abstaining from bad manners that can turn a man into animal.* As long as a heart remains under the spell of bad manners, it will not understand the spirit of Ista-aaza.

It is narrated that when the following verse was revealed:

Allah forgives those who repent after committing sins.

Satan cried out and his retainer assembled around him and asked; What has happened? Why are you shouting? The accursed one said:

Why shouldn't I shout and cry! We work so hard to make a man commit sins. And he expresses penitence that renders our efforts null and void!

- Satan strives hard to find a place in the heart of a believer. It is narrated that even if a believer escapes unscathed from the trap of Satan because of his good deeds ninety nine times, he might become the victim on the hundredth attempt!
- It is quite possible that the instigation for the good deeds ninety nine times too was by Satan only to make the person complacent that he fell into the trap on the hundredth attempt! Thus Satan derives satisfaction from destroying in one stroke the effects of the good actions of the person spread over long period. The dividing line between the good and the evil is very narrow and one must take great care not to falter towards evil. Therefore the Imams (AS) supplicate to Allah thus; *O sustainer, give me vision in the matter of Faith! That during performance of good deeds Satan doesn't involve me in fears and misapprehensions and thus push me into the morass of evil.*

It is mentioned in Bihar al-Anwar from Usul al-Kafi that Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (AS) narrated about a person, in the olden times, who kept himself busy in prayer and supplication to Allah. He was so deeply engrossed in prayer that Satan, despite all the efforts, was unable to disrupt this activity. Upset at his failure, Satan called a meeting of his retainers to devise ways and means of achieving his desire. He said:

I have not succeeded tempting the pious person despite all my efforts. Can you think of a stratagem to unnerve him!

One of his disciples said; *By creating evil desires in his mind I shall motivate him to commit adultery.* Satan replied; *There is no use. The desire for women has been extinguished from his heart.*

Another disciple said; *I shall tempt him with delicacies and drinks that he gets destroyed consuming haram food and alcohol.* Satan said; *No use! After years of penance he has lost palate for good food.*

A third retainer said; *Perhaps he can be tricked through the way of prayer which is his favorite activity!* Satan said; *Yes. We might succeed this way.*

Anyway, the result of this confabulation was that Satan himself took the responsibility to do the job. He adopted the garb of a human being, suspended himself in the atmosphere sitting on a prayer mat and pretended to be busy in prayer.

When the pious person saw this, he went to inquire of Satan about the prayer that he performed to get the faculty of suspending himself in the atmosphere. But Satan appeared so intently engrossed in prayer that even after repeated calls he did not give any attention to the pious person. Fed up of waiting, the person asked Satan to respond to him under an oath. Satan took a respite from his pretended prayer. The pious person asked; *What great task you have performed that you are at such an elevated place?*

He replied:

I have achieved this status through commitment of a sin. After committing the sin I have repented and done penance. Even now I continue to be penitent. With my worship I am growing stronger by day. If you desire to achieve the same status you too must commit adultery and then busy yourself in penitence.

The pious man said; *Neither do I know the way of doing adultery nor have I money for the purpose.* Satan gave him two Dirhams and explained the way to the house of a woman of ill repute.

The pious person entered the town and inquired from the people about the exact location of the woman's house. People thought that he was intending to visit her to sermon the woman to give up her foul ways. The man went to the woman and gave her the money and demanded to do adultery with her. At this point Allah's help came to his rescue that the woman thought of preventing him from committing the sinful act. The woman saw piety written large on the face of the person and that he was not habituated of going to such houses of ill repute.

She asked him; *How have you come here?* The man replied; *This is not your concern. I have given you the money and you must comply.* The woman said; *As long as I don't know the real reason of your coming here, I shall not submit to you.*

Alas, the pious man yielded and told the entire story to her.

The woman said; *I might be losing custom by dissuading you from your resolve, but I am sure it was only Satan who has sent you here.* The man said; *You are wrong because he has assured me that I shall be able to get the same status as enjoyed by him if I commit the sin of adultery.* The woman said; *Don't be foolish! How are you sure that after committing adultery you will ever get a chance to be penitent and your penitence will get accepted? Believe me! You are under the spell of Satan's temptation.*

When the pious person was persistent, the woman said; *I am ready to yield to you. But go back to the place once and see if the person is still busy in prayer suspended in the atmosphere. If you find him there, then you can come back to me. But if he is not there, then you must believe that it was Satan who wants to deter you from the path of piety.*

When the pious person reached the place, he found no trace of Satan there. Then it dawned on him that the woman had saved him from falling into the abyss of sin. He offered a sincere prayer for the fallen woman.

It has been said in the tradition that when the woman died, a revelation came to the Prophet (S) of the time that he should join her funeral procession. The Prophet (S) protested to Allah that she was a fallen woman. The reply was; *Yes! But she was responsible for sending back to Us a pious person who was running away from piety under the deceit of Satan!*

- Sermons and moralizing are very valuable. Every effort must be made to dissuade persons from committing sins. Motivate them to be penitent. Allah will reward them as well as those who make effort to reform such persons. It is a matter of great surprise that when we look at the temptations of Satan and our moral weaknesses, we fail to understand what will be our end! Will we be able to reach Him? We only need Allah's Mercy and Munificence for our deliverance.

It is narrated that Satan came to Hazrat Isa (AS) when he was standing on the peak of a hill. He addressed The Prophet (AS) saying; *O Spirit of Allah! If you fall from this peak, can Allah save your life!* He replied; *I can tell you with my vision and Understanding that Allah would most certainly save me.* Satan added; *If you are so certain, dive down from here that He saves you!*

Hazrat Isa (AS) understood that Satan was up to his tricks. Therefore he said; *O accursed one! Do you intend to put Allah to test! My Faith is strong. Allah is Omnipotent and has control over every thing. You have come here with the purpose of testing whether saving me is possible or not.*

Hazrat also added;

My Creator has commanded me not to do such things. Purposely falling from the top of the hill will be an attempt at suicide that is haram. If one falls from the hill accidentally, and Allah wishes him to live on, then He will save him!

It is narrated that once Satan came to Hazrat Isa (AS) and said; *O Spirit of Allah! You are yourself the Omnipotent and Omniscient God.* Hazrat Isa (AS) reprimanded him for this talk and said; *I am Allah's creation and slave on whose prayer He brings back the dead to life!*

When Hazrat Isa (AS) tried to remove doubts of Satan in this manner, he ran away from there crying. Satan puts such doubts and fears in the minds of the pious persons. But they understand his tricks with the light of piety that they are only satanic doubts.

- For example; sometimes he puts a doubt in the heart of a believer that a particular person, despite being young and strong, has resorted to begging. Why has he turned a beggar? Satan's purpose of creating such doubts is to create apprehensions in the minds of believers about the will of Allah. But if the person is a believer aware of Allah's Greatness he will say; *Asthaqfirullah! How can I dare to question the Will of Allah? My Faith is that His acts are all replete with wisdom beyond our comprehension.*
- Every pious person strives to perform good deeds and Satan tries his best to dissuade him from doing so. If a person performs a good deed, Satan tries to neutralize its good effects through his tricks. For example; he will encourage the person to express pride after doing some good turn. Satan is thus the sworn enemy of all good deeds.
- When a believer suddenly gets the thought of crime in his mind, the Satan and his retainers make their maximum efforts to make the person put his thought to action. But in that moment the pious person remembers Allah and he abandons the thought of committing the sin. The second aspect of Ista-aaza is Tadhakkar, the remembrance and talk about Allah. A person who acquires Taqwa or piety becomes free of the domination of Satan. As long as the influence of Satan on the person persists, he remains incapable of effective Ista-aaza.

Qur'an:

Did I not enjoin on you O' children of Adam! That you should not worship Satan for he is your open enemy. And yet he has led astray a great multitude of you. Did you not then understand.

- At another place in the Holy Qur'an it is said that Allah has decided that those who follow Satan, Satan will push them into the abyss of darkness and take them into the blistering Fires of Hell. When a person adopts satanic thoughts and considers the temptations of Iblees worth pursuing, then Allah closes all the avenues of salvation for him and consigns him to the Hell.
- It is very necessary that one's own conscience becomes his warner. In the Islamic Shariah it has been very strongly prescribed to visit the graves, particularly those of one's parents. Why this exhortation? This is because one recitation al-Fateha at the graveside of his parents will result in rewards for them. He should give sadaqa (alms) for the propitiation of their souls. The Prophet of Islam (S) has asked people to visit the grave of their parents that it is the place from where prayers made by them will be answered.
- The biggest benefit of visiting the graves of the parents is that it will make the person aware of the fact if the parent is not there with him, he too will have to follow suit some time in the future. This will give him the realization that he should not be attracted much to the transient world. He will then learn to dispel the satanic fears and apprehensions. He will start remembering Allah and think of the Day of Judgement!
- The topic of Tawakkal is one of the most important of the aspects of the Religion of Islam because the essential part of monotheism is absolute trust in Allah. In other words a Muslim is one who seeks succor only from Allah for deriving benefits and warding off of losses. In fact this is the meaning and purport of *la ilaha illa Allah wa la haula wa la quwwata illa billa al ali al adheem*.
- *Hauqala* or saying *la haula wa la quwatta illa billah* is the key to the Heaven and the practical expression of monotheism by the believer. Thus it is the expression by the person that he is not an independent entity who has to depend on Allah's Wish in all matters. It is his duty to believe in the *musab a bab asbaab* (the doer of things), that is Allah, the Creator of the Existence.

- He should realize and believe in the fact that with the utterance of a single word, "Kun", became the cause of creation of the creatures in the Universe. He should also have belief in the fact that the very existence of the universe is the miraculous phenomenon of the *Musab ba bab Haqeeqi* or the real doer of things and the absolute Creator, that is Allah and not something that evolved by itself.
- Man must strive to achieve objectives but he must leave the success or failure of his efforts to *Musab ba bab Asbaab*. The source of strength for the worldly gains or losses and the Rewards in the Hereafter for the person should be the absolute trust in Allah. His faith about the worldly affairs should be that if Allah Wished he would certainly be successful in his efforts. About the Rewards of the Hereafter, he should always remember that he has to abide by Allah's Commands implicitly and trust in His beneficence.
- It has been narrated that when a person stirs out of his house in the morning, the satans will be waiting for him at the threshold. But when he steps out of the house and says, "Aamantu billahi tawakkaltu al Allah—have faith only on You and only on Your trust I go to transact my worldly affairs." Then the satans will slink away.
- These words can be said in any language, it doesn't matter. The words are a support for the heart and surety for the life of the person. It is a fact that if you trust your Wakil, He is Omnipotent and can keep away from you all difficulties and hardships. He will help you get all the profits that He deems are legitimate. There is none more generous and powerful than Allah.