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HEART

THERAPY



HEART THERAPY

Diseases of the Heart and their Cures

Table of Contents

Part 1: The 3 Components of Man & the Reality of Religion	3
The components of Man.....	3
The components of the Religion	4
The 3 levels of the dīn.....	6
Part 2: Ihsan.....	7
The levels of ihsan	8
Witnessing Allah's (ﷻ) names and attributes in His Creation	9
Part 3: Tazkiyah: Concepts and Terms.....	10
Cleansing and Purifying	11
Remedies and Cures	12
Importance and Significance	13
Part 4: The Traps of Shaytān.....	16
Evil: Origins and Wisdoms	16
Why did Allah (ﷻ) create evil?	16
Shaytān's First Ploy	17
Iblīs' Ploy.....	18
Repentance and its Conditions	21
Iblīs' Last Attack.....	24
Part 5: Diseases & Vices of the Heart.....	25
Ghadab (Anger)	25
Anger Management	29
Backbiting, Slander and Tale-Carrying.....	32
Ghibah (Backbiting)	32
Namīmah (Tale-Carrying)	40
Case Study: The Slander of A'ishah	42
The Slander of A'ishah / Surah Nur.....	46
Hasad (Envy).....	60
Lying (Kadhib).....	66
Riyā' (Ostentation).....	72
Riyā' and its Types.....	75
Love of this World	81
Bukhl (Miserliness).....	85
Bughd (Hatred).....	88

Part I: The 3 Components of 'Man' and the Reality of Religion (the Dīn)

THE COMPONENTS OF MAN (al-Insān)

Allah (ﷻ) created man in three components:

1. Rūh	<p>The noblest of these is the <i>rūh</i> (soul). The <i>rūh</i> is from the matters of <i>al-ghayb</i> (the unseen), the reality of which none has knowledge of except Allah (ﷻ). In <i>Sūrat al-Isrā</i>, 17:85, we have:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا</p> <p style="text-align: center;">They ask you about the <i>rūh</i>. Say: The <i>rūh</i> is from the command of my Lord and you have not been given of knowledge except a little</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[Surat al-Isra' 17:85]</p>
2. 'Aql	<p>The '<i>aql</i> (intellect and rationale). The '<i>aql</i> is that by which Allah (ﷻ) has distinguished mankind from other animals.</p>
3. Badan	<p>The <i>badan</i> (body), which is created from clay.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[Allah] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[Surah al-A'raf 7:12]</p>

These three components are joined together to form *insān* (man).

THE COMPONENTS OF THE RELIGION (al-Dīn)

The religion of Islam is also categorised into three components, each component being connected to one of the three components of man. The *Hadīth* of Jibrīl (عليه السلام), related by 'Umar (عليه السلام) explains this point.

عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: بَيْنَمَا نَحْنُ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ، إِذْ طَلَعَ رَجُلٌ شَدِيدُ بَيَاضِ الثِّيَابِ، شَدِيدُ سَوَادِ الشَّعْرِ، لَا يُرَى عَلَيْهِ أَثَرُ السَّفَرِ، وَلَا يَعْرِفُهُ مِنَّا أَحَدٌ، حَتَّى جَلَسَ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَأَسْنَدَ رُكْبَتَيْهِ إِلَى رُكْبَتَيْهِ، وَوَضَعَ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى فَخْذَيْهِ، وَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ، أَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ.

فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: الْإِسْلَامُ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَتُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةَ، وَتُؤْتِيَ الزَّكَاةَ، وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ، وَتَحُجَّ الْبَيْتَ إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا. قَالَ: صَدَقْتَ، قَالَ: فَعَجَبْنَا لَهُ يَسْأَلُهُ وَيُصَدِّقُهُ.

قَالَ فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِيمَانِ. قَالَ: أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ، وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرَةِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدَرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ. قَالَ: صَدَقْتَ.

قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِحْسَانِ، قَالَ: أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ.

قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ السَّاعَةِ؟

قَالَ: مَا الْمَسْئُولُ عَنْهَا بِأَعْلَمَ مِنَ السَّائِلِ.

قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ أَمَارَتِهَا.

قَالَ: أَنْ تَلِدَ الْأُمَّةَ رَبَّتْهَا، وَأَنْ تَرَى الْحُفَاةَ الْعُرَاةَ الْعَالَةَ رُعَاءَ الشَّيْءِ يَتَطَاوُلُونَ فِي الْبُنْيَانِ.

ثُمَّ انْطَلَقَ، فَلَبِثْتُ مَلِيًّا، ثُمَّ قَالَ لِي: يَا عُمَرُ، أَتَدْرِي مَنْ السَّائِلُ؟
قُلْتُ: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ.

قَالَ: فَإِنَّهُ جِبْرِيلُ أَتَاكُمْ يُعَلِّمُكُمْ دِينَكُمْ. [رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ]

One day while we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) there appeared before us a man whose clothes were exceedingly white and whose hair was exceedingly black; no signs of journey were to be seen on him and none of us knew him.

He walked up and sat down in front of the Prophet (ﷺ), put his knees against his knees and the palms of his hands on his thighs and he said, 'O Muḥammad, tell me about *islām*.'

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: '*Islām* is to testify that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allah (ﷻ) and Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah; to perform prayers, to give *zakāt*; to fast in Ramaḍān; and to make the pilgrimage to the House if you are able to do so.'

He said: 'You have spoken rightly'; and we were amazed at him asking him the question and then saying that he had spoken rightly.

He [the man] said: 'Tell me about *īmān*.' He [the Prophet] said, 'It is to believe in Allah (ﷻ); His Angels; His Books; His Messengers; and the Last Day; and to believe in divine destiny (*qadr*), both the good and the evil of it.'

He [the man] said: 'You have spoken rightly.' He, then, said, 'Then tell me about *iḥsān*.'

He [the Prophet] said: 'It is to worship Allah (ﷻ) as though you see Him, and if you do not see Him, then [knowing that] truly He sees you.'

He said: 'Then tell me about the Hour.' He said: 'The one questioned about it knows no better than the questioner.' He said: 'Then tell me about its signs.' He said: 'That the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress, and that you will see barefooted, naked destitute shepherds competing in constructing lofty buildings.' Then he (the man) left, and I stayed for a time.

Then he (the Prophet) said: O 'Umar, do you know who the questioner was?' I said: 'Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger know best.' He said: 'It was Jibrīl, he came to teach you your religion.'

[Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]



Why did 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) mention these four characteristics with regards to Jibrīl: white clothes, black hair, no signs of journey and not known to anyone?

The 3 levels of the dīn

Islām	<i>Islām</i> is linked with the outer actions and is for the benefit of the body
Īmān	<i>īmān</i> is linked with the inward belief system and is for the benefit of the intellect
Ihsān	<i>ihsān</i> is linked with purification and perfection and is for the benefit of the soul

Note	<p>General <i>Islām</i> contains the specific meaning of <i>Islām</i>. When <i>Islām</i> is mentioned alone, it refers to the general term and when it is mentioned along with <i>īmān</i> or <i>ihsān</i>, it refers to its specific meaning – as in this <i>ḥadīth</i>.</p> <p>Thus, if <i>Islām</i> and <i>Īmān</i> are mentioned individually, each encompasses the meaning of the other, encompassing the whole dīn and all of its 3 levels. This is because one cannot have <i>Īmān</i> without <i>islām</i> and neither can one have <i>Islām</i> without <i>īmān</i>.</p> <p>Hence, when mentioned individually, <i>Īmān</i> includes both belief <i>and</i> action. Likewise, <i>Islām</i>, when mentioned individually, includes both action <i>and</i> belief. However, when mentioned together, as in the <i>ḥadīth</i> of Jibrīl, <i>islām</i> is referring to a manifestation of the outer actions while <i>īmān</i> is manifested in one's beliefs.</p>
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A general issue can be split into sub-issues where the sub-issue may have the same name as the general issue.






This is why you find some people only taking care of their intellects and delving deeply into the Islamic creed and belief system – and this is a good thing – but they ignore the aspect of purification of their souls. Likewise, others delve deeply into purifying their souls but ignore the Islamic belief system. Further others perform acts of worship with their bodies while their hearts are devoid of any concentration or humility towards Allah (ﷻ): they have left out the aspect of purifying their souls.

It is important to give due care to each of these components. So much so, that disregarding one aspect of the religion over the others would result in an imbalance and such a person would not be holistic in their approach to their dīn.

This series is primarily concerned with the first and, perhaps, most important component of man: the ruh or soul. Hence, we will be concerned with purifying the soul and with what the Prophet (ﷺ) called Ihsan, perfection.

Part II: Ihsān

Ihsan in the Qur'an	<p><i>Ihsān</i> occurs in the Qur'an, on its own and often paired with other concepts such as <i>taqwā</i> and righteous actions (<i>‘amal ṣāliḥ</i>):</p> <p>  إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ </p> <p>for God is with those who are mindful of Him and who do good [Q. 16:128]</p> <p>  لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ ... </p> <p>those who did well will have the best reward and more besides [Q. 10:26]</p> <p>Note: ‘<i>ihsān</i> of the actions’ is the making good and perfecting of one’s actions. The Prophetic statement, ‘Worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not see Him, then [realise that] He sees you’ instructs us as to the <i>method</i> by which <i>ihsān</i> might be attained.</p>
	<p>People differ in their <i>ihsān</i> and the levels of it, however, there is a minimum required level of <i>ihsān</i> that the <i>sharī‘ah</i> obliges upon the believers for their deeds to be acceptable and good (i.e. <i>ḥasan</i>).</p>
	<p>Levels above this, minimum required level, allow the believer to achieve the ‘station’ of being a <i>muḥsin</i>.</p>

 What is the obligatory portion of *ihsān*?

The levels of *ihsān*

Obligatory level	<p>The obligatory level of <i>ihsān</i>, whereby the deeds of the believer are made <i>ḥasan</i>, requires that the intention for the act be sincerely for Allah and that the action itself be completed in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intention: ‘إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ’ وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى ... ‘Actions are but by intentions and every man shall have only that which he intended...’ [Reported in al-Bukhārī and Muslim] • Compliance with the Sunnah: ‘مَنْ أَحْدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ’ ‘He who innovates something in this matter of ours that which is not of it will have it rejected’ [reported by al-Bukhārī] or in another narration, ‘مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ’ ‘He who does an act we have not commanded will have it rejected.’ [reported by Muslim]
Recommended level	<p>It is to perform one’s actions in the station of <i>murāqabah</i> [مُرَاقَبَة] (being watched). This is mentioned in the <i>Ḥadīth</i> of Jibrīl ‘... if you do not see Him then [remember] that He sees you’ and is achieved when the person worships Allah knowing and feeling that He is continually watching over him. The greater this perception, the greater the level of <i>ihsān</i>.</p>
Highest level	<p>The highest level of <i>ihsān</i> is the performing of one’s actions in the state of <i>mushāhadah</i> [مُشَاهَدَة] (witnessing) and this is attained, as mentioned in the <i>Ḥadīth</i> of Jibrīl, when one worships Allah ‘...as if you see Him...’ It is to witness the consequence of Allah’s attributes in His creation. The more a person’s certainty and knowledge of Allah’s names and attributes increases, the more he ascribes anything that occurs in creation to a name or attribute of Allah, and this leads to attaining the ‘station’ of <i>mushādah</i>. This leads to one having <i>ḥaqq al-yaqīn</i> [حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ], the Reality of absolute certainty.</p>



It is for this reason that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, that shyness is a part of *īmān* and ‘Allah is more deserving of (you) being shy from Him’ [al-Bukhārī], so a person is so conscious of Allah and His knowledge that he feels shy even to uncover his ‘*awrah*’ in seclusion.

Witnessing Allah's (ﷻ) names and attributes in His Creation:

- Mother feeding her child: we think of the mercy of that mother towards her child and then remember the Mercy of Allah towards his slaves (al-Raḥmān).
- When we eat our food, we remember that Allah (ﷻ) is the giver of sustenance (al-Razzāq).
- When we see someone committing a sin we remember that Allah is Shadīd al-‘iqāb (Severe in Punishment) and that helps us avoid sinning.
- When we hear of someone being blessed with a newborn child we remember that Allah is the one who: yuHyee wa yumeet (gives life and death)
- When we hear of someone's death, we remember that Allah is ever living (Al-Hayy). This is why, when the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) died, Abu Bakr made that amazing statement: "Whoever used to worship Muhammad, let him know that Muhammad has died. And whoever used to worship Allah, let him know that Allah is Ever-Living and never dies".

Part III: Tazkiyah: Concepts and Terms

Ihsān, as a science, relates to the matters pertaining to purification of the soul (i.e., *tazkiyat al-nafs*).

Linguistic	<p>The term <i>tazkiyat</i> is derived from the Arabic root <i>za-ka-wa</i> which occurs in the following linguistic connotations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 'to clean and purify from something filthy' in <i>zakkaytu hādha al-thawb</i> meaning 'I cleaned this garment.' 2. 'to increase and/or become more in number' in <i>zakā al-māl</i> meaning 'the wealth has increased.'
Technical	
Zakah	<p>In the <i>shar'ī</i> use of the ter, <i>zakāt</i> is the charity that is obliged on the wealth of a Muslim when it reaches the <i>niṣāb</i>. Even in this context it carries both meanings of <i>tazkiyah</i>, i.e., 'to clean/purify' and 'to increase'. Thus, through paying the <i>zakāt</i> one would purify and increase their wealth as Allah (ﷻ) blesses wealth from which <i>zakāt</i> has been paid.</p>
Tazkiyat al-nafs	<p>Likewise, <i>tazkiyah</i> in the context of <i>tazkiyat al-nafs</i> (purification of the soul) carries both of these connotations; and in order that one might succeed in purifying the soul one would need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cleanse and purify the soul from diseases and reprehensible characteristics. 2. Nourish the soul by increasing in good and praiseworthy characteristics.



What has purification of the soul (*tazkiyah*) got to do with cleansing and increasing?

Cleansing and Purifying the Soul from Diseases and Reprehensible Characteristics

Regarding this the scholars have two opinions:

Fard 'ayn	One group of scholars said that it is incumbent and obligatory on every individual (<i>farḍ 'ayn</i>) to learn all the diseases of the heart and reprehensible characteristics of the soul so that he may purify himself from them all.
Fard kifayah	Another group of scholars said that it is a communal obligation (<i>farḍ kifayah</i>) to learn these diseases and reprehensible characteristics of the heart and soul and not an individual obligation. Thus, if a sufficient number people learn about these diseases, along with their causes and cures, this would relieve the whole <i>ummah</i> from this obligation.
Agreement	However, both groups agree that the one who possesses or is afflicted by any one of these reprehensible characteristics or diseases of the heart must, by way of individual obligation (<i>wujūb</i>), learn about this characteristic/disease as well as how to rid himself of it and must act to apply the remedy, that he has learnt, to cure his disease.

Remedies and Cures

Proof	Every disease has a remedy, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'Allah did not send down a disease from the sky except that he sent its cure with it; so seek [medical] treatment O worshippers of Allah.'
HUKM (RULING)	
Spiritual Diseases	The scholars state that it is obligatory (<i>wājib</i>) to seek treatment for diseases that a person has in his heart
Physical Diseases	The scholars say it is recommended (<i>mustaḥabb</i>) to seek treatment for diseases of the body if the person can remain patient.

Importance and Significance

Seeking to purify one's soul is important for a number of reasons:

Allah (ﷻ) swore that the person who purifies himself will be successful

Emphasising the importance that He assigns to tazkiyat al-Nafs, Allah (ﷻ) took eleven oaths in *Sūrat al-Shams* (Q. 91) before stating that the one who purifies his soul will be successful and the one who does not will fail:

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا ﴿١﴾

By the sun and its brightness;

وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا ﴿٢﴾

by the moon as it follows it (the sun);

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّلَهَا ﴿٣﴾

by the day as it shows up (the sun's) brightness;

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا ﴿٤﴾

by the night as it conceals it (the sun);

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا ﴿٥﴾

by the heaven and Him Who built it;

وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا ﴿٦﴾

by the earth and Him Who spread it,

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ﴿٧﴾

by the nafs (Adam or a person or a soul, etc.), and Him Who perfected him in proportion;

فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ﴿٨﴾

Then He showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him;

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ﴿٩﴾

Indeed he succeeds who purifies his ownself

وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ﴿١٠﴾

And indeed he fails who corrupts his ownself

[*Sūrat al-Shams* 91:1-10]

<p>Precondition to enter Paradise</p>	<p>Purifying one's soul and prohibiting it from following its desires is a precondition for entering Paradise, and this alone is sufficient reason to seek purification of one's soul.</p> <p>وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ</p> <p style="text-align: center;">﴿١﴾</p> <p style="text-align: center;">فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿٢﴾</p> <p><i>for anyone who feared the meeting with his Lord and restrained himself from the base desires, [then] Paradise will be his home</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">[Sūrat al-Nāzi'āt 79:40-1]</p>
<p>Enables one to control and take charge of the soul</p>	<p>The soul is like a riding beast; if a person ignores it and does not train it, it will take charge and rebel against him, he will become one who is constantly seeking the fulfilment of his own desires and his <i>nafs</i> will become his master.</p> <p>وَمَا أُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِي ۚ إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١﴾</p> <p><i>I do not pretend to be blameless, for man's very soul incites him to evil unless my Lord shows mercy: He is most forgiving, most merciful</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">[Sūrat Yūsuf 12:53]</p> <p>As such we are instructed to 'seek refuge in Allah from the evil in our souls and from the sinfulness of our deeds' (وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا) [reported by al-Tirmidhī; al-Nasa'ī; Abu Dā'ūd and Ibn Mājah]</p> <p>However, if the person takes control of his <i>nafs</i> and trains it, it will show obedience to that which it is commanded to do, such a soul will lead the person to Paradise. 'This soul is obedient to Allah, pleased with what He has decreed and reliant on Him alone,' Allah calls this soul <i>al-nafs al-muṭma'innah</i> in the Qur'an:</p>

	<p>يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ﴿٨٩﴾</p> <p>أَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ﴿٩٠﴾</p> <p><i>‘[But] you, soul at peace: return to your Lord well pleased and well pleasing.’</i></p> <p>[Surat al-Fajr 89:27-8]</p>
This Life	<p>In this life, the person who purifies his soul will find himself free of grief and depression:</p> <p><i>Unquestionably, [for] the allies of Allah there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve</i></p> <p><i>Those who believed and were fearing Allah</i></p> <p>[Surat Yunus 10: 62-63]</p>

Note

Learning to purify oneself allows one to safeguard oneself against the diseases of the soul and heart and to cleanse and purify himself against those he is afflicted by. Likewise, it is also important to recognise the good characteristics and virtues of the soul that one might strive to achieve them.

Part IV: The Traps of Shaytān

Evil: Origins and Wisdoms

Arabic Saying

مُضِدُّهُ لَتَتَفَيَّرُ الْأَشْيَاءُ

Things are known by their opposites.

Why did Allah (ﷻ) create evil?

The answer to this question is quite simple: if there was no evil we would not know what good is. Moreover, in the absence of evil there would be no test! And in the absence of tests humankind would, like the angels, be forever obedient to Allah (ﷻ). Yet the angels were created before man, and they have continued to obey Allah from that time without choice. Rather, Allah wanted to create man and jinn giving them a choice between obedience and disobedience.

Furthermore, if there was no evil on the earth, there would be:

- No *da'wah* – there would be no one to give *da'wah* to if everyone was good.
- No martyrs – there would be no call for *jihād* if everyone was Muslim.
- No *amr bi'l-ma'rūf wa'l-nahī 'an al-munkar* (enjoining of the good and forbidding that which is evil)
- No test against following one's desires (as no evil temptation such as alcohol, *zina*, music, etc. would exist), thus, one would not be rewarded for avoiding evil, because there would be no evil!

THUS

Iblīs (Shaytān) has many ways of entrapping a person into following his desires. One should know these traps and recognise their evils in order to succeed in avoiding them.

Shaytān's First Ploy

Allah (ﷻ) created Ādam (عليه السلام) and placed in Ādam his soul, when it reached his head he sneezed. The angels, who were present, said, 'Say, "al-ḥamdu li'llāhi"' (all praise is due to Allah), which he said; Allah responded, 'yarḥamuku'llāh' (may Allah have mercy on you).



Who were the first individuals to be trapped by Shaytān?

Allah then ordered the angels to prostrate to Ādam, Iblīs was with them and was also ordered to do so but he refused. As a result of his disobedience Iblīs was promised an eternity in hellfire. But Iblīs pleaded for respite till the Day of Judgement, that he might mislead both man and jinn as well and Allah (ﷻ) granted it to him; since then, the struggle began between him and Adam (and his progeny) and will continue until the Day of Judgement.

From Ādam, Allah (ﷻ) created Hawwa' (Eve); housing them both in Paradise, He prohibited them from approaching [and eating] from a tree in Paradise. Shaytān attempted to mislead them into disobeying this injunction, at first without success, but when he swore that the fruit of this tree would grant them the immortality of the angels they succumbed.

وَقَاسَمُهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

And he took an oath to them both that I am definitely from among the sincere advisors

[Sūrat al-A'rāf 7:21]

And this is what convinced Ādam, he could not conceive that Iblīs could swear by Allah and lie. He and Hawwa' ate from the forbidden tree and were thus expelled from Paradise. Ādam begged Allah's forgiveness – and this is the crux of the difference between Ādam and Iblīs - Iblīs sinned but refused to repent, Ādam, on the other hand, sinned and repented. He invoked Allah's mercy and said: 'O Allah, did You not create me and say that Your mercy overcomes your anger? When I sneezed did You not say "yarḥamuku'llāh"?,' In response, Allah forgave him.

This clearly illustrates the importance to learn of the traps of Iblīs so we do not fall into them. Having this knowledge is integral to purifying our souls as well as cleansing ourselves from sin and transgression.

Iblīs' Ploy

Iblīs' ploy is of six types; he perseveres with the human beings until he gets them to do one or more of these six evils:

1. Kufr, Shirk or Enmity to Allah and His Messenger

The first is *kufr* (disbelief) and *Shirk* (enjoining partners with Allah) and enmity to Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ). If he gains this from the person, he has achieved his main goal with this individual.

This is the first thing Iblīs wants from a person and he tries his hardest to convince the person to associate partners with Allah, whether this be by means of negating Allah's very existence or by directing acts of worship to other than Allah.

Examples

The Christians worship 'Īsa (عليه السلام), and have thus fallen into his trap, as have the Hindus who worship many idols. Likewise, the atheists who believe that there is no God.

Unfortunately, even some Muslims have fallen into this trap. And yet we are told,

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا ۖ

the places of worship belong to Allah [alone], so do not make du'ā to anyone alongside Allah.

[Sūrat Jinn 72:18]

Moreover, we repeatedly declare in our *ṣalāts* that, 'You alone [O Allah] we worship and You alone we seek aid from' (Q. 1:5). In spite of the Qur'an's explicit injunctions to direct all worship and *du'ās* exclusively to Allah, many Muslims direct their *du'ā* to the Prophet or to those they consider as being righteous servants of Allah; claiming that this is not worship, even though the Prophet said, 'Du'ā is worship.' Some slaughter animals, sacrificing them for other than Allah, and others still take oaths by other than Allah, even though the Prophet said, 'Whoever takes an oath by other than Allah has certainly committed *kufr* or *shirk*.' All this is *shirk*, the first trap of Shayṭān.



Shirk: is the assigning of one of the rights of Allah to other than Allah

<p>2. Bid'ah (innovation)</p>	<p>When unsuccessful in tempting the believer into <i>kufr</i>, <i>shirk</i>, or <i>bid'ah</i> Iblīs resorts to his second ploy and this is to entice the believer into committing <i>bid'ah</i> (innovation in the Religion).</p> <p>The Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'The worst of affairs are the newly invented matters in the religion...' as well as, 'Whoever introduces in this affair [i.e. religion] of ours that which is not from it, it will be rejected [from him].'</p> <p>Important Notes</p> <p>Iblīs loves <i>bid'ah</i> more than immorality and disobedience because <i>bid'ah</i> harms the religion as well as the person who does it as, with the passing of time, people begin to attribute the <i>bid'ah</i> to Islam. This means that often those who partake in a <i>bid'ah</i> do not repent from it. In fact they think it to be a good and acceptable deed, one worthy of reward and acceptance from Allah, where as it is, in fact, a sin. We do not fully appreciate that the <i>bid'ah</i> is actually against the Message revealed to Muḥammad being something other than that which was revealed to him.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More crucially, however, the <i>bid'ah</i> is a gate to disbelief and polytheism. <p>The transition from tawḥīd to shirk</p> <p>We know that Adam (عليه السلام) was upon <i>tawḥīd</i>. Yet when Nūḥ (عليه السلام) was sent, he gave <i>da'wah</i> to his people who were <i>mushrikūn</i>, deifying the idols Wadd, Suwā', Yaghūth, Ya'ūq, and Nasr (Q. 71:23).</p> <p>Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) explained this. He said that for ten generations people were upon <i>tawḥīd</i> and then, after that, Shayṭān came to the people as a sincere advisor, encouraging them to commemorate their pious elders of old by depicting their form in pictures and statues. So initially these names belonged to righteous men: Wadd, Suwā', Yaghūth, Ya'ūq and Nasr and their resemblance was created as a reminder of their pity so people would take them as an example.</p> <p>Then, when this generation had passed away, Shayṭān returned counselling the next generation that their forefathers would worship and invoke these statues.</p> <p>So from this we can see the evils of <i>bid'ah</i>.</p>
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Why would Iblīs love *bid'ah* over some types of disobedience and immorality?

How did humanity come to practice *shirk* when Ādam (عليه السلام) practiced *tawḥīd*?

	<p>In the same way, Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام), and his son Ismā'īl (عليه السلام) were upon <i>tawhīd</i> and they built the Ka'bah as a house, sanctified for the worship of Allah alone. Yet on the advent of Muḥammad's (ﷺ) mission, idolatry was rife in the Arabian Peninsula, and 360 idols were deified in the Ka'bah and Ḥajj incorporated pagan rites and rituals.</p>
<p>3. Al-Kabā'ir (Major Sins)</p>	<p>If Iblīs fails to entice the believer to commit <i>shirk</i> or <i>kufr</i> and cannot get him to practice that which is <i>bid'ah</i>, he seeks, instead, to occupy him with major sins.</p> <p>Iblīs is all the more eager of getting a scholar to fall into a major sin as he is a person who is followed, in fact were such a person to fall into major sins people would be repelled from him and also the religion. Such a person is an agent of Iblīs, as without realising it he is, via his sins, directing people away from knowledge and its scholars.</p> <p>Major sins include things like adultery, which can ruin families and homes; drinking wine and taking intoxicants, which can also ruin a person's life and family; gambling; being proud and arrogant, and so on.</p> <p>Important Benefit</p> <p>Every person sins but we should strive to be the best of sinners. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'All the children of Adam are sinners. But the best of the sinners are those who repent.'</p> <p>Iblīs likes a person to fall into major sin and then despair of the mercy of Allah. This is because such a person will not repent and will persist in his sin. This would be a misconception, however, as Allah tells Muḥammad (ﷺ) to tell the believers (Q. 39:53-4):</p>

❓ Do you know of the story of the man who killed 99 people and was forgiven?

	<p> ﴿قُلْ يَاعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾ </p> <p> <i>Say, 'O my slaves who have transgressed against their own selves. Do not despair from the mercy of Allah. Indeed Allah forgives all sins. Indeed He is the Oft-Forgiver, the All-Merciful.'</i> </p> <p> <i>However, there is a condition to this forgiveness and the next verse offers it,</i> </p> <p> ﴿وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ ...﴾ </p> <p> <i>and turn back to Allah in repentance and submit to Him...</i> </p>
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Repentance and its Conditions

The scholars mention four conditions of repentance:

1. Desisting from the sin with immediate effect
2. Feeling remorse and regret at perpetrating the sin
3. Firmly resolving not to return to that sin
4. Seeking forgiveness: were the sin to involve the welfare of other than just the perpetrator then the forgiveness of those injured (in honour, wealth, life etc.) must be sought, as well as Allah's, for as we are told, Allah does not forgive a person until the one he has injured has forgiven him.

4. Al-Şaghā'ir (Minor Sins)	<p>Being unsuccessful in enticing the believer into <i>kufr</i>, <i>shirk</i>, <i>bid'ah</i>, or major sins, Iblīs now seeks to entrap the believer in that of minor sins. These sins may ruin a person if they accumulate, that is why the Prophet (ﷺ) likened them to small sticks which when stacked together and kindled create a huge fire. Likewise, minor sins stack up, little by little, eventually destroying the person, thus, one should be more wary of them. However, because people consider them to be minor, they fall into them easily and consider them inconsequential, and one is likely to persist in them without repentance. It is for this reason that a person having committed a major sin, fearing its effect and repenting from it, is in a better condition than someone persistent in minor sins.</p>
5. Distracting with the Permissible actions	<p>Being unable to lead the believer to his fall with disbelief, innovations, and sins etc. Iblīs now seeks to entrap him by concerning him with permissible actions that incur neither reward nor punishment. This person is at a loss because he is being prevented from doing rewardable, recommended deeds that will earn him Allah's pleasure. Such a person might occupy himself with 'permissible' computer games, reading 'permissible' books etc. and yet he is losing out as he could have occupied himself with the rewardable instead.</p>

**6. Occupying
One with Good
Deeds of Lesser
Reward**

Failing to even distract the believer with permissible actions Iblīs resorts to his sixth ploy and attempts to occupy him with good deeds that are of lesser reward. The believer who falls into this trap is at a loss because this preoccupation with ‘good deeds of lesser rewards’ prevents him from doing those things with greater rewards. People are generally unaware of this ploy; rather they consider the urge to do the ‘lesser good’ as an opportunity of gaining closeness with Allah. He does not attribute this urge to Iblīs as he anticipates Iblīs to only call to that which is prohibited, harmful or bad.

This emphasises that one should be very careful in prioritising his deeds, and consciously concern himself with the more rewardable (perhaps those restricted to a specific time or place etc).

Examples

One should not give *da'wah* to the exclusion of performing the prayers on time, nor should one occupy himself with *nawāfil* to the exclusion of disobeying one's parents, etc.

📌 Iblīs' desperation is self-evident here, for he is encouraging a person to rush towards good deeds of lesser reward in order to prevent him from doing those which have the higher reward.

Iblīs' Last Attack

Upon failing to mislead the believer with any of his six ploys, Iblīs now utilises other persons, entrapping them in the sin of back-biting or slandering against this believer. As such he attacks the person's character in order to weaken his standing with the people and to disturb his heart, aiming thereby to confuse him and deter others from benefitting from him.

As a matter of fact this is how the *mushrikūn* of Quraysh and Makkah attacked Muḥammad (ﷺ); they called him 'a liar', 'a madman', 'a soothsayer', 'a magician', 'a poet', and 'one possessed by jinn' etc.

Important Point

The believer is forever at war with Shayṭān, from the point of his birth until he dies, as such it is upon him to struggle upon the right path of Islam and to seek a death firm in *īmān*.