

‘How Shaitaan tries to Steal from our Prayers’

Expelling the intruder

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 Shaitaan. 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 ‘Ammaar 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.

It is because of Shaitaan that we begin to drift. Do you not notice that every worldly thought, matter, issue, predicament suddenly makes its way to your thoughts in Salah? Items you have lost for days or months are suddenly remembered and maybe even found! Even the designs on the prayer rug start to tell all sorts of entertaining stories! And when you are watching a movie nothing absolutely nothing comes to disturb you? That’s because Shaitaan has where he wants you to be, unlike in Salah where he is jealous and being the clear Enemy that he is will do anything and everything to make us lose out on the rewards of Salah.

We list below some of the Tricks Shaitaan attacks us by and try to steal from our prayers. This is important because if we know the tricks of our enemy we can be better prepared to fight.

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 Shaitaan 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)).

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

The best deed to perform

The greatest type of worship is to perform that which Allah makes obligatory on His servants and to refrain from all that He forbids. Abu Hurayrah narrated that Prophet ﷺ said: *"Allah says: 'The most beloved deeds with which my slave comes nearer to me are what I have enjoined on him.'"* (Al-Bukhari).

Also in another hadeeth Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported: I asked, "O Messenger of Allah, which deed is best?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, *"Prayer in its proper time...."* (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 2630, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 85)

Ibn Al-Qayyim said:

"Since the righteous predecessors lived their whole life in worship, it is then necessary for us to know with which type of worship they started, and which one have they given priority." He then answered: "The best acts of worship are the most pleasing to Allah in that particular time. The best act of worship during the presence of a guest is to take care of him and not to be distracted from that by other recommended acts of worship. This is also in performing one's duties towards one's wife and family. The best act of worship in the night is to be occupied with prayer, reciting the Quran, supplication and Thikr. The best thing during the time of the Athaan (i.e. the call for prayer) is to leave whatever worship one is doing and answer the Mu'aththin (i.e. the one calling the Athaan) by repeating what he says. The best thing during the time of the five obligatory prayers is to exert one's efforts in their prompt performance. The best thing when the poor is in dire need of assistance is to assist him and give that preference over supererogatory Thikr. The best thing to do when your brother is sick or dead is to visit him, attend his funeral, and give that priority over your supererogatory Thikr. And the best thing to do when you are afflicted and suffer people's harm is to be patient and not to run away from them." [End of quote]

SubhaanAllah a beautiful advice by the sheikh, this is something we generally miss out on, as one of the tricks of Shaitaan to steal from one who is busy with Ibaadah is to get us busy in something is least beneficial.

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).

Imam an-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his commentary on *Saheeh Muslim* (5/46):

In these hadeeths we see that it is makrooh to pray when food is ready that one wants to eat, because this is a distraction and it causes one to not have proper focus. It is also makrooh when one is resisting the urge to relieve oneself – which refers to urine and stools. End quote

Repeating Wudoo again and again

Some people suffer from waswas (whispers from Shaitaan) 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 *wudu*, 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'.

Ibn al-Mubarak, "If one is uncertain about his condition of purity, he does not need to perform a new ablution."

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)

'Abbad ibn Tameem related that his uncle queried the Prophet ﷺ about a person who feels something in his abdomen while praying. Said the Prophet, *"He should not leave (the prayer) until he hears it or smells it."* (Sahih Muslim)

Shaitaan goes to all lengths to make us come out of this beautiful prayer, even as filthy as making us feel the passing of wind. Repel the enemy and just focus on your prayer, the Deen has been made easy for us.

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.

One of the things that will be of benefit in this matter is seeking the help of Allah and calling upon Him. The Prophet ﷺ said: *"O people, beware of this shirk (form of polytheism), for it is more subtle than the footsteps of an ant"*. The one whom Allah willed should speak said to him, "How can we beware of it when it is more subtle than the footsteps of an ant, O Messenger of Allah?" He said,

"Say, Allahumma innaa na'oodhu bika min an nushrika bika shay'an na'lamuhu wa nastaghfiruka limaa laa na'lam

(O Allah, we seek refuge with You from knowingly associating anything with You, and we seek Your forgiveness for that which we do unknowingly)."

(Narrated by Ahmad, 4/403; classed as saheeh (authentic) by Shaykh al-Albaani).

Wandering whilst praying

Either by letting one's mind wander or by physically looking around.

When Shaitaan 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.

Al-Bukhaari (751) narrated that 'Aa'ishah said: I asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about looking around whilst praying, and he said: *"That is something that the Shaitaan steals from a person's prayer."*

According to another hadith: *"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 (17800); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh al-Jaami'* (1724).

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The kind of wandering that is prohibited whilst praying falls into two categories:

1. When the mind wanders and the heart is distracted from Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, towards something other than Allah, may He be exalted.
2. When the gaze wanders and one looks around.

Both are not allowed.

Allah continues to turn towards His slave so long as the slave is focusing on his prayer, but if his mind or gaze wanders, Allah, may He be exalted, turns away from him. End quote from *al-Waabil as-Sayyib* (p. 20)

SubhaanAllah where are you looking O Slave of Allah when your Rubb is looking at you? Lower your gaze and be Mindful of Allah!

Distraction during salaah by Shaitaan (Dry Spitting to ward him off)

Shaitaan continues to play his tricks to disturb us and lose concentration. We have been shown a way to fight it. This happened to one of the companions of the prophet (*sahabah*) whose name is Uthman Bin Abi Al-Aas, (may Allah be pleased with him), so he came complaining to the Prophet ﷺ, and he said: "The Shaitaan comes between me and my salat and causes me problems with my recitation." So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *"That is a Shaitaan 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) This hadith includes two ways to get rid off the Shaitaan of salat. The first is asking refuge in Allah from the Shaitaan's evil by pronouncing the words of seeking refuge (*Aoudhubillah.....*) and this is OK in this case. And the second: blowing with mist to the left three times (*Dry Spitting*), on the condition that this does not disturb or bother the person next to him.

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 Shaitaan. 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 Shaitaan laughs."* (al-Bukhari no. 3289)

Also Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *"If any of you feels the urge to yawn, let him resist it as much as possible, lest the Shaitaan enter his mouth."* (Imaam Ahmad).

According to another report also narrated by Imaam Ahmad, Shaitaan enters when a person yawns. (Saheeh al-Jaami', 426)

The person who is praying must take care of the following:

1. He should resist yawning.
2. He should cover his mouth
3. He should suppress his voice (not make a sound).

Unnecessary Movements in Prayer

The Shaitaan tries to make us focus on anything and everything apart from Allah, he reminds us to look at our clothes, accessories etc, this happens more when we wear something new. This is something that is seen in many cases, so you may see a person fiddling with his watch or pen or ghutrah or clothes or nose or beard and so on. All of that comes under the heading of makrooh, and it detracts from prayer. If it is done a great deal and is continuous, in which case it is haraam and invalidates the prayer.

Wear something nice to please Allah, don't be in awe of it yourself, you are standing in front of the One who granted that to you.

Wearing things that distract others

Do not help Shaitaan by wearing things that are too eye catchy or has somethings written on your back, that the fellow worshipper indulges in reading it while praying. It is makrooh to pray in these garments, because it is proven that the Prophet ﷺ forbade anything that will distract one when praying, as it says in the hadeeth of 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her): The Prophet ﷺ prayed in a garment that had markings, and he glanced at its markings. When he finished praying, he said: *"Take this garment of mine to Abu Jahm, and bring me the plain garment of Abu Jahm, because it distracted me just now when I was praying."* (al-Bukhaari)

This ruling is applied for something that can distract you or others.

Doing Sujood Al-Sahw (prostration of forgetfulness) before Tasleem when in doubt on the number of Rakahs offered

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 one should think and if he is confident with one then should go with it but the key is to not indulge in thinking for too long and losing your concentration. If you are not

confident then just go with the smaller number which is a certainty 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.

These are some of the tricks of Shaitaan by which he tries to steal from our Prayers. Now we know of them, what do we do? We try to fight him and refocus. But he comes back. We fight him again. He comes back like a fly that will not leave us alone.

What is the solution for we are so weak!? We seek the help of our Beloved from the evils of his creature. With His Name is barakah! With His Name is total protection from all harm. Thus, any time we feel distracted, we recite: "Aoothu billahi mina-Shaitaan arrajeem" (I seek Allah's protection from Satan the accursed). Feel its power as you say it!

If a person is strong in his faith and observes the limits of Allah, he can defeat Shaitaan. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, *"The believer can seize the forelock of his Shaitaan as one of you seizes the forelock of his camel whilst traveling."* [Musnad Ahmad]

Imam Ibn Katheer explained, *"What is meant by seizing his forelock is defeating him and overwhelming him, as one does with a camel when it runs away, then you seize it and overpower it."* [al- Bidayah wan-Nihayah (1/73)]

A Muslim who wants to save himself from the Shaitaan and his tricks has to work on strengthening his faith and seek the protection of Allah, his Lord and turn to Him, as there is no power and no strength except with Allah.

Please join our free Certificate course ["THE PROTECTOR & THE CLEAR ENEMY"](https://learn-islam.org/the-protector-and-the-clear-enemy), to learn about the Allah, His likes, Dislikes, Rights & Rewards along with the things about the Clear Enemy, the shaitaan, his tricks and how to dispel him. : <https://learn-islam.org/the-protector-and-the-clear-enemy> (available online now, register and learn)

TIPS FOR THE TEST

1. Do not have to memorize the Ayahs or Hadeeths word for word, get a good understanding of the message in it.
2. Remember his tricks and dispel/defeat him in real life.