

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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Our most ardent enemy

[2:208] *O you who believe, you shall embrace total submission; do not follow the steps of Satan, for he is your most ardent enemy.*

We are told many times in the Quran that Satan is our most ardent enemy. This is God's warning to us to avoid falling into any of Satan's traps. Satan vowed that he would work extremely hard to lure all of God's servants away (7:12-17; 38:67-83).

There's a quote that's generally attributed to Charles Baudelaire, a French poet and essayist from the 19th century. It also appeared in a 1995 movie called "The Usual Suspects". I think the quote is very appropriate: "The greatest trick the Devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn't exist".

Before I came into Submission, my idea of the devil was a cartoonish figure with horns and a tail, carrying a trident. Satan allowed himself to be portrayed this way, to become a harmless, ridiculous cartoon. Why would anyone take such a creature seriously? How could this imp do any harm? You can't really believe in such a being, any more than you believe in the



tooth fairy or the Easter bunny.

What a perfect disguise. What a clever trick to

pull on mankind. How incredibly smart Satan really is.

He has many tricks up his sleeve, many different ways that he can lure people away from worshiping God alone. He's been perfecting his craft for centuries, and he has found most people willing victims.

One of his tricks is to give you the impression that there's lots of time. You can enjoy your youth, your middle age; there will be plenty of time to think about God later. Don't worry about it now. But God reminds us that this life is short and we are inevitably heading for a meeting with God.

This Life is Very Short

[16:77] *To GOD belongs the future of the heavens and the earth. As far as*

He is concerned, the end of the world (the Hour) is a blink of an eye away, or even closer. GOD is Omnipotent.

[84:6] *O humans, you are irreversibly heading for a meeting with your Lord.*

Before our creation, Satan showed his true colors of arrogance and racism (see SP August 2000). He claimed that he was better than Adam. [7:12] *He said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I ordered you?" He said, "I am better than he; You created me from fire, and created him from mud."*

All of the angels readily obeyed God's command and prostrated before Adam [38:74] *except Satan; he refused, and was too arrogant, unappreciative.* This is one of Satan's traps. He convinces people to believe they are better than someone else. It gives a feeling of superiority, of power, and that emotion can act like a drug. Arrogance piles on and soon the person has no thought of God, only of dominance and control.

Satan takes that even farther by pitting one person against another, or one group against another group. We have constant wars, struggles for power,

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road rage, suicide bombings, school shootings, down to a neighbor punching a neighbor because he didn't cut his grass soon enough. Satan's goal is to drive wedges among people so they can't stand united against him. And he makes all kinds of promises to be there to support them, but his promises are all false.

[17:53] Tell My servants to treat each other in the best possible manner, for the devil will always try to drive a wedge among them. Surely, the devil is man's most ardent enemy.

[58:10] Secret conspiracy is the devil's idea, through which he seeks to hurt those who believed. However, he cannot hurt them against GOD's will. In GOD the believers shall trust.

[8:48] The devil had adorned their works in their eyes, and said, "You cannot be defeated by any people today," and "I will be fighting along with you." But as soon as the two armies faced each other, he turned back on his heels and fled, saying, "I disown you. I see what you do not see. I am afraid of GOD. GOD's retribution is awesome."

It all began when we were not firm in our support of God before creation. We waffled and so we became humans. Even then, we were in Paradise, but we listened to Satan's lies as he told us that we could have more. He convinced us that God was keeping something from us.

[20:116] Recall that we said to the angels, "Fall prostrate before Adam." They fell prostrate, except Satan; he refused. [20:117] We then said, "O Adam, this is an enemy of you and your wife. Do not let him evict you from Paradise, lest you become miserable. [20:118] "You are guaranteed never to hunger therein, nor go unsheltered. [20:119] "Nor will you thirst therein, nor suffer from any heat." [20:120] But the devil whispered to him, saying, "O Adam, let me show you the tree of eternity and unending kingship."

[7:19] "As for you, Adam, dwell with your wife in Paradise, and eat therefrom as you please, but do not approach this one tree, lest you fall in sin." [7:20] The devil whispered to them, in order to reveal their bodies, which were invisible to them. He said, "Your Lord did not forbid you from this tree, except to prevent you from becoming angels, and from attaining eternal existence." [7:21] He swore to them, "I am giving you good advice." [7:22] He thus duped them with lies. As soon as they tasted the tree, their bodies became visible to them, and they tried to cover themselves with the leaves of Paradise. Their Lord called upon them: "Did I not enjoin you from that tree, and warn you that the devil is your most ardent enemy?"

We failed the test. We listened to Satan's blasphemous whispers and so we became humans. The system that God then instituted called for us to be exposed to the devil, as the footnote for 22:52 reminds us: *Throughout this worldly test, Satan is allowed to present his point of view (we are born with a representative of Satan in our bodies). This allows the people to make a choice between God's evidence and Satan's evidence. Satan's evidence is invariably based on lies.*

We are assigned a jinn companion who represents Satan's point of view (43:36), and God tells us that the majority of people will follow the devil (34:20). God warns us in 3:175 that Satan will use fear as a tool, to frighten people to follow him. But we are to fear only God. If we ignore God's warnings, Satan will hound us.

[7:175] Recite for them the news of one who was given our proofs, but chose to disregard them. Consequently, the devil pursued him, until he became a strayer.

One of Satan's most effective traps plays on our tendency to be idolatrous. He convinces us that God isn't enough. We need an intercessor. He masks it in the idea that God is too great, too busy to have time to bother with our mundane needs, so we need a go-between to lighten God's burden.

This is totally blasphemous, but millions fall for it. They implore Jesus or Muhammad or the saints to help them here on earth and to intercede for them on the Day of Resurrection.

Satan's Most Effective Bait: The Myth of Intercession

*[9:80] Whether you ask forgiveness for them, or do not ask forgiveness for them—even if you ask forgiveness for them seventy times—GOD will not forgive them. This is because they disbelieve in GOD and His messenger. GOD does not guide the wicked people. *9:80 If Muhammad could not intercede on behalf of his own uncles and cousins, what makes strangers who never met him think that he will intercede on their behalf? Abraham could not intercede on behalf of his father, nor could Noah intercede on behalf of his son (11:46 & 60:4).*

Satan uses prohibitions as a means of repelling from God's path. He has convinced traditional Muslims that every part of the pig is prohibited; shellfish is prohibited, although 5:96 tells us: *All fish of the sea are made lawful for you to eat.* They have made other prohibitions, such as birds of prey, animals with fangs, reptiles. You may choose not to eat any of these creatures, but God prohibits only the meat of the pig, carrion, running blood and food dedicated to other than God (6:145). Satan has led people astray with all these extra prohibitions.

Satan Prohibits Lawful Things

[2:168] O people, eat from the earth's products all that is lawful and good, and do not follow the steps of Satan; he is your most ardent enemy.

If prohibition doesn't work, he'll go the other way and convince people to do more. He will couch it as though it's more righteous to be more miserable. Why stop with 4 rakats in the night prayer when you can do ten or more? Obviously, it's more righteous to do more. But God has given us the number of prayers to do, a number that conforms to the 19-based mathematical code. It's a reasonable number, which makes it a pleasure and

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a privilege to perform. I remember one brother talking about his mother falling asleep in prostration during the night prayer because there were so many extra rakats. It can become too difficult so that some people will drop out—exactly what Satan wants. The same is true for ablution (5:6). God gave us four simple steps as a ritual to perform before we pray, I think to get us in a good frame of mind for prayer. But tradition demands a lengthy process that many people cannot do, so they may simply quit doing Salat altogether. God doesn't want worship to be difficult.

Satan has perpetrated a general idea, across many religions, that hell is only for a few days (3:24), or it's only for the really really bad people. He also makes it seem as if sinners are having more fun. There's an idea that hell will be full of fun-loving criminals having a grand old time. And he makes people feel that God's prohibitions are only to deprive us of fun or profitable things. God tells us to avoid usury (2:275). Yes, it might bring wealth but at the expense of others and to the detriment of our soul.

Satan tells us that rumors and innuendo are just harmless fun, but God lets us know it's from the devil (4:83). It might seem amusing to make fun of someone, and as long as they don't hear, what's the harm? God tells us that it can damage our soul. (49:6, 24:11). In 49:11 God calls it evil and wickedness.

Satan convinces most people that casually taking God's name in conversation or laughing at a good joke that mocks God is innocuous. But it can lead you astray or cause someone listening to be turned off. This is what Satan is hoping for. [6:68] *If you see those who mock our revelations, you shall avoid them until they delve into another subject. If the devil causes you to forget, then, as soon as you remember, do not sit with such evil people.*

Satan works hard convincing people that alcohol and gambling are

harmless pastimes. Everyone drinks. It makes you feel good. Gambling is fun. All the glitz and glitter of a casino, the lure of a lottery card. The devil blinds people to the problems these vices cause. [5:90] *O you who believe, intoxicants, and gambling, and the altars of idols, and the games of chance are abominations of the devil; you shall avoid them, that you may succeed. [5:91] The devil wants to provoke animosity and hatred among you through intoxicants and gambling, and to distract you from remembering GOD, and from observing the Contact Prayers (Salat). Will you then refrain?*

Satan is always whispering to us. He has a connection to us through our jinn companion, a direct line. Satan works hard to keep us from doing those things that will grow our soul, like doing our prayers or reading the Quran. We are told to seek refuge in God from Satan the rejected (16:98, 23:97-98). [7:200] *When the devil whispers to you any whisper, seek refuge in GOD; He is Hearer, Omniscient.*

We can all be caught by these whispers, they are insidious. Even the prophets were not immune. Abraham believed the dream (37:102); Joseph forgot to implore God alone (12:42); Moses was enticed to commit manslaughter (28:15); and the Queen of Sheba and her people were seduced into worshipping the sun (27:24).

Whispers come in all shapes and sizes, with all kinds of sweet enticements. But if we are steadfast and implore God: [7:201] *Those who are righteous, whenever the devil approaches them with an idea, they remember, whereupon they become seers.*

In the end, of course, our only salvation is God. Our only protection from all of these tricks of Satan. We know that Satan is false and everything he promises is a lie.

[14:22] *And the devil will say, after the judgment had been issued, "GOD has promised you the truthful promise, and I promised you, but I broke my promise. I had no power over you; I simply invited you, and you accepted*

my invitation. Therefore, do not blame me, and blame only yourselves. My complaining cannot help you, nor can your complaining help me. I have disbelieved in your idolizing me. The transgressors have incurred a painful retribution."

[2:268] *The devil promises you poverty and commands you to commit evil, while GOD promises you forgiveness from Him and grace. GOD is Bounteous, Omniscient.*

[35:6] *The devil is your enemy, so treat him as an enemy. He only invites his party to be the dwellers of Hell.*

We certainly don't want to be in hell. No matter how Satan tries to spin it, hell is awful. [21:39] *If only those who disbelieve could envision themselves when they try to ward off the fire; off their faces and their backs! No one will help them then.*

Of all these many tricks of Satan—intercession, idolatry, prohibitions, good times—surely the quote at the beginning of this article encompasses them all. He has convinced the world that he doesn't exist. Therefore, he poses no threat; there's no reason to be concerned or take him seriously. So his whispers slip into our unconscious and without realizing it, we're seduced. [58:19] *The devil has possessed them, and has caused them to disregard GOD's message. These are the party of the devil. Absolutely, the party of the devil are the losers.*

But we know we can fight that, by recognizing Satan for what he is—our most ardent enemy.

[36:60] *Did I not covenant with you, O Children of Adam, that you shall not worship the devil? That he is your most ardent enemy?*

[43:62] *Let not the devil repel you; he is your most ardent enemy.*

We must seek refuge in God. That's our protection, our salvation.

[41:36] *When the devil whispers an idea to you, you shall seek refuge in GOD. He is the Hearer, the Omniscient.*

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TOOLS IN OUR TOOLBOX

[Ed. note: This is a summary with excerpts from an article in Submitter's Perspective March 2015. It's always helpful to consider the tools God gives us in our toolbox to help fight Satan's influence.]

A good carpenter or mechanic will have a box full of good tools perfect for any job he might need to perform. A good submitter needs a toolbox as well, and God has provided us with the tools we need to keep in there. Our number one priority here is to remember God. GOD ALONE. Everything else will fall in place. Everything is about God; everything belongs to God; is controlled by God. Only God guides, provides, protects and heals. God is Omnipotent.

- ◆ Remember God. Whatever occupies your mind most of the time is your god (33:41, 7:205).
- ◆ Wake up praising God. Say, "Bismillah" whenever you eat or drink. Thank Him for subduing your car as you drive to work.
- ◆ Appreciate the beauty around you and thank God for His creations. Everything we see, hear, smell, taste and feel should instantly remind us of God, our Creator.

- ◆ Be thankful for your practices. Salat prayer pulls us away from this world and brings our focus back on God; Zakat charity reminds us that what we have is a gift from God and is meant to be shared; Fasting makes us appreciative of His blessings of food and water and inspires us to remember God frequently.
- ◆ Seek forgiveness. [3:133-36] *You should eagerly race towards forgiveness from your Lord and a Paradise whose width encompasses the heavens and the earth; it awaits the righteous, who give to charity during the good times, as well as the bad times. They are suppressors of anger, and pardoners of the people. GOD loves the charitable. If they fall in sin or wrong their souls, they remember GOD and ask forgiveness for their sins—and who forgives the sins except GOD—and they do not persist in sins, knowingly. Their recompense is forgiveness from their Lord, and gardens with flowing streams; they abide therein forever. What a blessed reward for the workers!*
- ◆ Be appreciative. [14:7] *Your Lord has decreed: "The more you thank Me, the more I give you." But if you turn unappreciative, then My retribution is severe.*
- ◆ Find the best tools for your own journey. The tools in your toolbox can come from many places,

whatever you find that works for your soul. We need to depend totally on God (22:15), remembering that this life is an illusion (57:20) and that we will be tested (2:214, 3:186), but that God never burdens any soul beyond what it can handle (2:286).

With the subtitle: *Conditions for Staying Within God's Protection*, 5:12 makes it clear what we need to do to earn God's support and favor. [5:12] **GOD had taken a covenant from the Children of Israel, and we raised among them twelve patriarchs. And GOD said, "I am with you, so long as you observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and believe in My messengers and respect them, and continue to lend GOD a loan of righteousness. I will then remit your sins, and admit you into gardens with flowing streams. Anyone who disbelieves after this, has indeed strayed off the right path."**

When we do the things we need to do, then God puts a protective force field around believers. We have to keep the field fully charged by using the tools in our toolbox. Satan will try to weaken the force field and slip in through the smallest crack.

Use the tools in your toolbox regularly. They will never break or wear out. With use, they become increasingly more useful.

Mike