

Chapter 5: Protecting The Worships From Satan's Intrusion

One of the important cordial disciplines of the *Salat* and other worships which is of the chief cordial disciplines, and to implement it is one of the great affairs and minute problems, is protecting the worships against the intrusion of Satan. The noble **ayah**:

“And those who keep guard on their Salats”¹

Probably refers to all degrees of keeping guard, a degree of which, or rather the most important one of them, is to guard against Satan's intrusion.

To go into details, we say that it is quite explicit to the people of knowledge and the men of heart that as bodies require material food for nourishment, and that the food should be suitable for their disposition so that they may be brought up corporeally and have vegetable growth, similarly the hearts and the souls require a particular food to suit them both, so that they may be educated with it, and feed on it to grow up spiritually and progress inwardly.

The nutrition suitable for the growth [*nash'ah*] of the souls is the divine knowledge [*ma'rif*] from the beginning of existence till the ultimate end of the system of existence. It is expressed in defining philosophy by the great experts that: “It is man's development into a mental world matching the material world in its form and perfection.”² This is an indication of the said spiritual nutrition, as the hearts feed on spiritual merits and divine rites.

It must be noted that each one of these foods, if kept away from Satan's intrusion and prepared by the hands of the guardianship of the Seal of the Prophets and Allah's great friend (*s*), the soul and the heart would be nourished by them and would attain the perfection becoming of humanity and ascend to the proximity of Allah.

Getting rid of Satan's intrusion, which is a preliminary step to sincerity, cannot really be brought about,

unless the *sālik* is in quest of Allah in his *sulūk*, and tread upon his selfishness and self-conceit, which are the origin of all evils and the inner diseases. This, in its full meaning, is not possible except by the Perfect Man, or, rather, by the sincere holy men [*awliyā'*] (*'a*).

But the *sālik* must not despair of the inner kindness of Allah, because to despair of Allah's mercy is the beginning of all coldnesses and weaknesses, and it is one of the great sins. That which is possible for the common people, too, is the delight of eyes of "the people of knowledge" [*ahl-i ma'rifat*].

So, it is a must for the *sālik* on the road to the other world to act very seriously to rid his knowledge [*ma'rif*] and rites [*manāsik*] of the intrusion of Satan and the commanding soul [*nafs-i ammārah*], and to go deep into his doings, quests and desires, with strictness and examination, so as to find out the ultimate objective of his journey, learning the principles of his inner activities and spiritual nutrition.

He is not to neglect the tricks of the soul and Satan, as well as the snares of the commanding soul and *iblis*. He is always to distrust his self in all his doings and activities, and never to let it go willfully. It is quite possible that, with a little negligence, it may overcome man, knock him down and drive him to perdition and annihilation. If the spiritual foods were not free from Satan's intrusion, and if he shared in preparing them, the souls and hearts would not be educated with them nor can they reach their becoming perfection, let alone the irreparable insufficiency that would befall them.

Such foods may probably cause man to join the group of Satans or the quadruped and beasts of prey. Then whatever is the capital of happiness, the source of the human perfection and the means of attaining to high ranks, results in the opposite, and drives man to the dark abyss of misfortune. Actually we did come across some of the so called gnostics who had been led astray because of their deep indulgence in the gnostic terminology, such that their hearts became inverted and their interiors were darkened.

Their gnostic practices strengthened their selfishness and Oneness, and they uttered improper allegations and abnormal expressions. Similarly, among the ascetics and the devotees there were persons who practiced asceticism and self-purification, yet their exercises only aggravated their hearts' impurity and their interiors' darkness. This is because they did not keep on their divine spiritual journey and migration to Allah, and their scholarly and ascetic *sulūk* (journey) was subject to the intrusion of Satan and the self's desire, and so, it was to Satan and self.

We also noted that among the students of religious sciences there were some who had badly been affected by their studies, which increased their moral corruption; and knowledge, which should have guided them to success and salvation, had driven them to annihilation and led them to ignorance, hypocrisy, arrogance and deception.

Likewise, it is seen that among the people of worship and ceremonies, who persist in observing disciplines and traditions, there were those whose worship and sacrifices which are the source of reforming the conditions and souls had affected their hearts with impurity and darkness, causing them to

be conceited, egotistic, arrogant, pampered, slanderous, ill-tempered and distrusting the servants of Allah. These are also caused by neglecting to observe those divine mixtures [*ma'jūn*].

Naturally, the mixture [*ma'jūn*] prepared by Satan's filthy hand and the meddling of the obstinate self can give birth to nothing but Satanic character, and since the heart gets its nourishment from them, in any case, and they become the inner image of the soul, after a while of man's continuing so, he becomes an offspring of Satan, and will be brought up under his patronage. And when the visible eye of such a man is closed and his invisible eye is opened, he will see himself among the Satans. Thus, the result will be nothing but a loss, and his regret and repent will avail him to nothing.

Consequently, the traveler on the road to the Hereafter, notwithstanding his religious branch or divine method, has, firstly to be on the alert, like a kind doctor or a compassionate nurse, to take full care of his moods, looking for the faults of his conduct with strictness, and secondly, as he does so, he is not to neglect seeking refuge in the Sacred Essence of Allah, the Glorified and Most High, in his privacy, and supplicating in the presence of His Sanctity and Majesty.

O Lord! You do know our weakness and helplessness. You do know that without your helping hand we cannot find our way out of the hands of such a powerful enemy who covets the great prophets and the perfect and high holy men. Without Your spark of kindness and mercy, this strong-handed enemy will knock us down on the ground of annihilation and hurl us into the pit of darkness and wretchedness.

We adjure you by your distinguished favorites and intimate confidants to extend Your helping hand to us, the bewildered in the valley of error and the fallen down in the desert of seduction. Purge our hearts of rancor, deceit, polytheism and doubt. Surely you are the Patron of Guidance!

1. Sūrah al-Ma'rij 70:34; Sūrah al-Mu'minīn 23:9.

2. Mullā Sadr and his disciples used this expression to define philosophy, to which some added the phrase: "in its image and perfection."

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