

[Home](#) > [Isti'adha: Seeking Allah's Protection from Satan](#) > [The First Talk](#) > Isti'adha during the execution of Justice (Qadhawat), when in privacy with non-Mahram and while in a frenzy of anger

The First Talk

[The Importance of Isti'adha in the Qur'an and the Traditions](#)

The topic that has received the maximum attention in the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet (S) and his Vicegerents (a.s.) is *Isti'adha* or seeking Allah (S.w.T.)'s help to protect one against the manoeuvrings of Satan.

This is done by saying the words *audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem*. But it is necessary that one should seek this protection from the depths of one's heart. That is true *Isti'adha*.

To highlight the importance of *Isti'adha*, Allah (S.w.T.) says in the Holy Book:

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

So when you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Shaitan. (Sura an-Nahl, 16:98)

During a prayer, it is mandated, that after saying the *takbirat al-ihraam* (Allahu Akbar) one should say the *Isti'adha* in a low tone. The commentators are of opinion that the *Isti'adha* in this situation has to be in a low tone because it will be like the person wishing to keep himself hidden and at the same time escape from the machinations of the enemy (Satan)! The pointer is towards the fact that the supplicant should seek protection against his mortal enemy who is waiting for an opportunity to overpower him. This is done best by quietly tapping the door of the Great Place of Succor!

[Isti'adha before commencing a Prayer](#)

One most important time for *Isti'adha* is the moment of commencement of a prayer. Whenever a person has to offer prayer to Allah (S.w.T.), he should seek protection from Him against *Iblis* who is always bent on misguiding and taking him astray from the right path. *Iblis* makes his utmost efforts to destroy

the good deeds of the human being that he is deprived of the rewards that he might earn. At least, *Iblis* or Satan tries to make the person proud or deceitful about prayers.

For example, if one wishes to do the ablutions, he must do the *Isti'adha* before commencing to do it by asking for Allah (S.w.T.)'s Protection against the accursed Satan. The ablution should be done only after doing *Isti'adha*. You must have noticed that many a time the same ablution becomes Satan's area of operation that he puts many lurking fears or temptations in the mind of the person that make his entire prayer null and void.

Therefore, *Isti'adha* is one of the most important aspects of prayer that has to be performed in the truest sense, and implicitly, that Allah (S.w.T.)'s protection from the accursed Satan is assured.

Absolute necessity of Isti'adha in permissible affairs

In permissible (*mustahab*), or day-to-day, affairs like eating food, drinking water or wearing the clothes, *Isti'adha* is mandated. For example, at the time of wearing the clothes one should recite:

Allahummas-stur awrati wa laa taj'al ash-shaitan lahu naseeba

(O Allah! Keep my private parts hidden and save them from the interference of shaitan)

In every situation, however lowly and futile, or elevated and likeable, one should seek protection from Satan. While entering into the mosque, one should do the *Isti'adha* lest the persistent Satan chases you even at that threshold! Even while going to a washroom it is required to do the *Isti'adha* as follows:

Allahumma inni audhu bika minal khabeesil khabs ar-rijs al-khabs ash-shaitanir rajeem

(O Allah I seek Your Protection from the accursed Satan and the defiled impurities)

Satan at the Threshold of the Mosque

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?" 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 *Isti'adha* before entering the mosque.

Reciting the Isti'adha before starting out of one's House

Isti'adha is absolutely essential when one is going out of the residence. At that time Satan awaits for the person outside. One should do the *Isti'adha* and recite the following supplication at the moment of

emerging out of the house:

Bismillahi wa billahi aamantu billahi tawakkaltu 'alal laahi wa la hawla wa la quwawata illa billaah
(In the name of Allah (S.w.T.) and with His Help; I believe in Allah and place my trust in Him. And there is no power besides Him)

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

إِنَّهُ يَرَاكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوُهُمْ إِنَّآ جَعَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

He (shaitan) surely sees you, he as well as his host, from whence you cannot see them; surely We have made the shaitans to be the guardians of those who do not believe. (Sura al-A'raaf, 7:27)

Only one thing can save you from Satan the accursed. That is *Isti'adha*. Besides Allah (S.w.T.)'s Protection there is no way of saving oneself from the tricks and deceptions of Satan.

The Prophet of Islam (S) exhorted by Allah (S.w.T.) to do

Isti'adha

Man wishes to have access to the Presence of Allah (S.w.T.), but Satan tries his best to prevent him from achieving this end. He puts so many hurdles and impediments in the way of men that it becomes impossible to reach the desired destination. The one and only way of precluding this risk is to seek Allah (S.w.T.)'s protection against Satan.

Allah (S.w.T.) has ordered the Prophet (S):

وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ

And say: O my Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from the evil suggestions of the Shaitans; and I seek refuge in Thee! O my Lord from their presence. (Sura al-Muminun, 23:97-8)

Similarly elsewhere in the Qur'an, Allah (S.w.T.) says:

مِن شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ

Say I seek refuge from the evil of the whisperings of the slinking (Shaitan). (Sura an-Naas, 114:4)

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

(S.w.T.). Otherwise, one would find to his surprise that the place where he was prostrating himself for long was, in fact, 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!

Worshipping Satan the whole Life

An incident is narrated in *Muntakhab al-Tawareekh*. My mentor, Ustadh 'Ali al-Haeri, told in one of his lectures, "In a village of the Isfahan province a rustic villager was in the last throes of his life. The pious person of the village was requested to say the *talqeen*, or pronounce the creed to the dying person to repeat it. During the *talqeen* when the sick person said *la ilaha illa Allah* to bear witness to the Unity of Allah (S.w.T.), from a corner of the room a sound came – *Sadaqat 'abdi* – 'My creature says the truth!' When the sick man said, '*Ya Allah* – O God!' Then again the sound came from the same corner of the room, '*labbayk 'abdi*' – 'My creature I am here!' The pious person asked, 'Who are you that calls?' The reply was, 'I am the one whom this person had worshipped all his life! I am Satan!'

Yes! It is a fact that the man worshipped Satan his entire life. He was always responding to the call of Satan. His tongue spoke at Satan's orders. His eyes saw things in response to Satan's wishes. His heart responded to Satan's wishes. When throughout his life the person was at the beck and call of Satan, then at the time of the *talqeen* whether he said '*Ya Rabb*' or '*Ya Iblis*' his respondent can only be Satan. Even if the curtains got raised in the person's last moments, and he was repentant, even then he would get only disappointment! Of what use will be this repentance!

O believers! Try to be steadfast in doing the *Isti'adha*. Don't underestimate your enemy, Satan! Don't be under the illusion that only repeating the words '*Audhu billahi minash-shaitanir rajeem*' is sufficient. Remember! Unless you understand the purport of these words and mould your actions as per the Commandments of Allah (S.w.T.), the *Isti'adha* will not be of any utility.

Isti'adha during the execution of Justice (Qadhawat), when in privacy with non-Mahram and while in a frenzy of anger

In the traditions of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, particular attention is drawn for *Isti'adha* in the following delicate situations:

Qadawat: The qadi or judge has to say the *Isti'adha* when he adjudicates a case and gives his judgment.

Khalwat ba na-mahram: When a person is alone with a stranger from the opposite gender (such as a man with a young woman), it is imperative that he seeks Allah (S.w.T.)'s protection from Satan (*Isti'adha*) because in such a situation the accursed Satan makes his utmost effort to lead the person

astray.

Frenzy of anger: When a person is in a frenzy of anger, his blood boils and Satan dominates him with full force. Because Satan is created fiery and subtle (*latif*), he enters into the person of the man with great stealth. We quote here the example of Hadrat Nuh (a.s.) to explain our point. Satan says, 'In his frenzy of anger 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 frenzy of anger and makes them commit prohibited (*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 that have Allah (S.w.T.)'s particular Blessing because they say the *Isti'adha* in such situations.

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