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The Ninth Talk

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from Satan afflicts them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They see (aright). (Sura al-A'raaf, 7:201)

Isti'adha is Effective Only With Piety

The summary of the previous evening's talk is that the prime and the first aspect of *Isti'adha* is *Taqwa* or piety. If a person is pious, then seeking Allah (S.w.T.)'s protection from Satan by saying *audhu billahi min al-Shaitanir rajeem* is effective. Otherwise reiterating these words a thousand times over will not bring any results.

Today I shall tell you about another meaning derived from the verse that I have mentioned above and also at a few places in my previous talks.

A Heart Without Piety is The Abode Of Satan

A heart that has not experienced piety, believe me, is the abode of Satan. Satan doesn't relinquish such a heart easily.

A heart without piety is the heart that doesn't remember Allah (S.w.T.). It is in fact crowded with worldly desires like greed, selfishness and Satanic fears. Such hearts are the repositories of wishes for the worldly glitter and show. These hearts are also the shelter for Satan and the sources of his evil designs. Unless the heart cures itself of these satanic instincts and withdraws from supporting and advancing Satan's foul schemes, it is impossible that the environment for *Isti'adha* takes shape in it.

Sumptuous Food & Hungry Dog

You might have experienced that a hungry dog will not leave your side if you are having with you some tasty food. However much you try to chase away the dog, it will return to you. Even if you pick up a stick to chase it away, it will stubbornly stay on. If you don't have any food with you, and a dog chances to come near you, then it will run away if you chase but once. The reason for this lack of interest is that the dogs have a very strong sense of smell and they would know where there is a bone for them!

A Sick Heart is The Eating Place For Satan

Your heart is under the observation of Satan. If he feels that there is food for him in your heart that it has craving for worldly riches and pomp, then certainly it is the ideal place for him to entrench himself in. If he notices that your heart is having so much avarice that even after acquiring a lot it has craving for more and is envious of others, then he is very pleased to dwell therein. You may say '*audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem* a hundred thousand times, Satan will tenaciously stay on!

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

Shaitan is your open enemy! (Sura al-A'raaf, 7:22)

The only remedy is that you should dispel from your heart all the thoughts of things that attract him. Then with one utterance of the words '*audhu billahi* Satan will run away.

The Majority are Entrapped

It is narrated that once Satan came to the presence of Hadrat Yahya (a.s.). Prophet Yahya (a.s.) asked him about his treatment of Adam (a.s.)'s progeny. He replied that men are divided into three groups.

The first group consists of the revered persons who are always out of his reach. These are the Prophets (a.s.) and the Infallible.

Then Satan said that the second group consists of the people over whom he can have his sway. But with penitence they nullify his maneuvers.

The third group of people is of those in whose hearts he, Satan, lives. These form the vast majority of people.

O believers! Do such acts that Satan is unable to find an entry into your hearts! Otherwise, mere utterance of the words of *Isti'adha* will not be of any use.

The Thief on the Look Out For Breaking into the House

To prevent Satan from entrenching into your heart you will have to adopt piety. Shun all things that are not liked by Allah (S.w.T.). Shun avarice, immoral acts, bad habits and all such evil traits that take you towards illegitimate acts and illegitimate food. The heart will then be pure and clean.

Once the heart is cleansed of these things, then piety will find its way into it. It will now have the fear of Allah (S.w.T.) and the fear of the Day of Reckoning. Now Satan will be rendered absolutely helpless. He does have the extreme desire to enter such hearts and waits for the slightest chance that the person commits a mistake and opens the way for him.

Satan is like a thief who does reconnaissance of the fort to find a foothold or the slightest of openings to break in. But when he notices that the keeper of the fort is alert he escapes from the ramparts disappointed.

Iblis Around The Heart

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ

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إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil)

This is said about those whose hearts are free of the thoughts of sin. When the heart is pure and clean, then automatically all other organs get into sound repair. Therefore, the tongue, the eyes, the ears and the limbs do not get associated with any wrong act.

إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ

when an evil thought

- Taa-if

is a person who does

tawaaf

or circumambulates. Here it is meant Satan going round the heart in search of a hole to break in.

مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ

from Satan

-

it is the mention of the retainers of Satan who go round the heart in search of an opening to barge in.

But

تَذَكَّرُوا

(t

hey become mindful)

-

The owner of the heart, a

mu'min,

is busy in Remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.) and says, “

Ya Allah, astaghfirullah- ‘audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem – O Allah! Protect me from the harm that Satan can cause me!”

Hence,

فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ

then lo! They see (aright)

-

Their eyes instantaneously illuminate with the light of vision and they get warned of the thief in their environs.

Here I wish to point at the words *Taa-ifun min ash-shaitan* that connote that the one who takes rounds of the heart of a *mu'min* to find an entry is from the group of Satan.

Remember! If there is piety (*Taqwa*) for Allah (S.w.T.) in the heart, then it will be pure and clean. The bright light of piety will put the thief to shame and he escapes from there. Pity the heart that is devoid of piety and full of worldly desires. Such a person will fall into the clutches of Satan and meet a sad end.

Why the Suicide?

One avaricious trader sold his goods worth thirty thousand for one hundred thousand. Later on he learned that the first buyer sold the merchandise for three hundred thousand within three days. He was distraught with remorse that the opportunity of making a huge profit was missed by him. He was jealous and envious of the traders who made the big gain. He started crying and was restless during the day and in the nights. He was so upset that at last he consumed lime mixed with sulfur and committed suicide. The sole reason for the tragedy is that the person was wedded only to worldly gains and was devoid of Allah (S.w.T.)'s fear.

Why Isti'adha is not Effective?

We should all awake from the slumber of carelessness because the root cause of all sins is the love for the world.

Keep your heart free of all pollutants. Because, if only the use of the tongue sufficed, then saying *audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem* prior to every mandatory prayer would do! This goes to prove that only saying the *Isti'adha* from the tongue is not sufficient.

What is the reason that when people stand for prayer, their attention hovers around everywhere and is not focused on the prayer! This despite reiteration of Allah (S.w.T.)'s name by the tongue time and again. It proves the point that the mind and heart of the person should be as much present as the person uses his tongue during the prayer.

A person once lost his wallet. He searched for it the whole day. Around the time of *Maghrib* prayer in the evening he remembered the place where he had left the wallet. Immediately after saying the salutations at the end of the prayer he called his servant to look for the wallet in a particular place. The servant said, "Sir! Were you offering your prayer or searching for your wallet?"

Remember! There are four things that prevent the light entering the heart:

As long as we don't guard against these four things, darkness will prevail on our hearts. The very first thing that must be avoided is impurity of the body. The second important thing is that we should refrain

from disobedience to Allah (S.w.T.). The third is to guard against the fears and doubts created by Satan. The last, but not the least, is abstaining from bad manners that can turn a man into animal. As long as a heart remains under the spell of bad manners, it will not understand the spirit of *Isti'adha*.

Such persons remain under the influence of Satan and away from Allah (S.w.T.) even at the time of their death. It has been mentioned in the traditions that, "*Yuhshar an-naas 'ala niyyaatihim*" – "People will be raised (on the Day of Judgement) based on their intentions". Allah (S.w.T.) gauges the intentions of the heart rather than the actions that result from these intentions.

Remember That Death is A Reality

There are very few sermons of Amr al-Mu'min (a.s.), in *Nahj al-Balagha*, that don't throw light on this fact of life. He says, "Don't forget death because it is the best cure for the ailments of the heart and the spirit. One who always keeps this fact in view, it is like he has opened the door to guidance and reform."

After the day's toil when you reach home, then remember that perhaps your body might be carried to the grave next morning. When you leave home for work in the morning, keep in mind the possibility that you might not return home alive.

If man inculcates this spirit in his nature, then slowly he will overcome the traits of jealousy, parsimony, avarice, hypocrisy, satanic fears and carelessness.

When I am not sure whether I will be alive till tomorrow or not, then what is the use of avarice and unnecessarily displeasing others with my actions?

Flies Buzz Around Honey

Another example is sited for you. You must have noticed the way ants and other insects hover around sweet things. No matter how much you try to chase them away, they return to pester you. The only way to get rid of them is to remove the things that attract them.

O Mu'min! Clean your heart of all impurities that Satan runs away with one *Isti'adha* from you.

Hadrat Imam as-Sajjad (a.s.) used to recite *Du'a al-Hazeen* after the nightly prayer (*Salat al-Layl, Namaz-e-Shab*). He supplicates to Allah (S.w.T.) thus, "*O Allah help me! Satan is attacking my heart!*"

When a *mu'min* has nothing in his heart that interests Satan, and he remembers Allah (S.w.T.), then only one *Isti'adha* would suffice to chase the accursed enemy away.

Satan, a Stumbling Block in the Way of Penitence

It is narrated that when the following verse was revealed:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ

And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults... (Sura Aal Imran, 3: 135)

Satan cried out and his retainer assembled around him and asked, “What has happened? Why are you shouting?” The accursed one said, “Why shouldn’t I shout and cry! We work so hard to make a man commit sins. And he expresses penitence that renders our efforts null and void!”

Every individual from his retainers gave his own advice on the matter. But Satan was not satisfied with any of those. Then someone said, “The only way will be to prevent man from reaching the threshold of the door of penitence!” Satan said, “Your suggestion is right! If there is any way for us, this is the way!”

The Practice of Imam as-Sajjad (a.s.)

Imam as-Sajjad (a.s.) used to supplicate to Allah (S.w.T.) in the following way: *“O Allah (S.w.T.)! Keep me in your shelter from this enemy who is after my life! O Helper of all the helpless! I am forlorn and supportless! Come to my rescue. From one side this dog is attacking me and on the other is the world tempting me with all its glitter and attractions! There is pressure of avarice and greed on my heart! I seek your help against all these!”*

The Supplication of Ghareeq during the Absence of Imam al-Mahdi (a.j.)

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.), while predicting the period of the absence of the Last Imam (a.j.), says, “During that troublesome period there will be so much of sedition that the angels would be astonished at the very few deaths of men of piety!” The narrator asked the Imam (a.s.), “What should the people do in that difficult time?” The Imam (a.s.) replied, “They should recite the *Du’a al-Ghareeq*. This consists in saying ‘*Ya Allahu ya Rahmanu, ya Raheemu ya Muqallibul Quloob, thabbit qalbi ‘ala deenik – O Allah, O Beneficent, O Merciful, O Overturner of hearts! Keep my heart steadfast on Your religion!*’”

Man should think that he is really helpless in times when Satan’s retainers are roaming free. No heart is

safe from their onslaught. O Allah (S.w.T.)! Guard our hearts from the effects of these Shayateen!

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