Synopsis of the Friday Sermon delivered by Ameer Mustapha Elturk on Feb 17, 2012

Satan - The Devil (Know your Enemy) Part 8

We are informed in Surat al-Mujadilah that Satan has gained control over people and made them forget Allah (SWT). Such people belong to the party of Satan and it is he and his followers who will be the losers. “Satan has gained control over them and made them forget God. They are on Satan’s side, and Satan’s side will be the losers” (al-Mujadilah, 58:19). We have to keep reminding ourselves that Iblis (Satan), the accursed, as a part of his strategy, has avowed to avenge his own doom by deviating the children of Adam from the straight path through all possible means. “And then Iblis said, Because You have put me in the wrong, I will lie in wait for them all on Your straight path. I will come at them- from their front and their back, from their right and their left, and You will find that most of them are ungrateful.” (al-A’raf, 7:16-17). Satan’s assault on man is from all sides. He takes advantage of man’s every weak point and lures him into the snares of evil. He sets snares on the straight way to which Allah (SWT) directs men.

In another ayah, the Qur’an says, “Iblis then said to God, ‘Because You have put me in the wrong, I will lure mankind on earth and put them in the wrong, all except Your devoted servants’ (al-Hijr, 15:39-40). This means that only the truly sincere and devoted (mukhlas) slaves of Allah (SWT) are able to save themselves from being ensnared by Satan. They are mainly the prophets and messengers of Allah (SWT) endowed with sound hearts and nature. However, being humans, they too are affected by Satan’s crafty designs, but they are cognizant of Satan’s machinations and begin to seek Allah’s help and protection against his intrigues as soon as they are distressed by him. And indeed, Allah (SWT) comes to their succor and relieves them of their sorrow and agony. A few examples of how the prophets and messengers of Allah reacted as soon as they were afflicted by Satan’s plots and tricks will make this point clear. Referring to the sufferings of Prophet Ayub (AS), and his reaction to the same, the Qur’an says, “And remember Our servant Ayub who cried to his Lord, ‘Satan has afflicted me with weariness and suffering’” (Saad, 38:41). Responded to his cry Allah (SWT) said, “Stamp your foot! Here is cool water for you to wash in and drink” (Saad, 38:42). Thus, Allah (SWT) not only relieved Ayub (AS) of his pain and suffering, but also rewarded him amply in both worlds for the patience and fortitude with which he had endured his trial.

We also learn from the Qur’an that when Musa (AS) had mistakenly and unintentionally killed a non-Israelite man while helping a man from the Israelites, he immediately realized that what he did was a part of Satan’s handiwork, and turned to Allah (SWT), seeking His forgiveness. “He entered the city at a time when its inhabitants were unaware and found two men fighting there — one from his party and the other from his enemy. The one from his party asked for his support against the other from his enemy. So Musa hit him, dealing him a fatal blow. He said, ‘This must be Satan’s work: clearly he is a misleading enemy. He said, ‘Lord, I have wronged myself. Forgive me,’ so He forgave him; He is truly the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful’” (a-Qasas, 28:15-16).

The more knowledgeable a believer is about matters of deen, the more difficult it is for Satan to make him or her play to his tune, and the more ignorant a person is, the more vulnerable he or she is in the hands of Satan. One of the ways Satan approaches the lay people is to cast doubts in their minds about the very being and essence of Allah (SWT). There are several hadith that tell us how Satan goes about doing this: It is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA) that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, “Men will continue to question one another
till this is propounded: Allah created all things but who created Allah? He who found himself confronted with such a situation should say: I affirm my faith in Allah and His messenger.”

Satan also puts doubts in people’s minds about Allah’s attributes that are anthropomorphic in nature (attributes resembling or made to resemble a human form) by presenting or depicting Him as actually having ears, eyes, and hands like human beings. It is true that Allah (SWT) Himself says that He hears, He sees, and He acts, but that does not mean that He does so in the manner human beings do. Little do people realize or comprehend that Allah (SWT) is transcendent. He is beyond the realm of time and space, and beyond the figment of their imagination. It is futile to dispute over a matter that has been so clearly stated in the Qur’an: “There is nothing like Him: He is the All Hearing, the All Seeing” (al-Shura, 42:11).

Satan has also been successful in sowing the seeds of dissent and enmity among different madhahib (schools of thought) on peripheral issues that have no real significance to the deen per se. We have to be mindful of Allah’s admonition, “The believers are brothers, so make peace between your two brothers and be mindful of God, so that you may be given mercy” (al-Hujurat, 49:10). While there may be differences in the thoughts and methodologies of different schools of thought, there is no justification for one group or section of believers to consider itself only as being on the right path and consider all other groups of believers to be deviated from the right path. Such thinking smacks of arrogance, and the Qur’an tells us, “He (Allah) does not like the arrogant” (al-Nahl, 16:23).

Another ploy of Satan is to put the disobedient ones among the Muslims in a comfort zone by suggesting to them that Allah is the most forgiving and merciful; hence He will overlook their sins. Little do they realize that Allah’s mercy embraces those who sincerely repent to Him and seek His forgiveness while they do not stubbornly and deliberately persist in various acts of disobedience. “And I am most forgiving towards those who repent, believe, do righteous deeds, and stay on the right path” (Ta Ha, 20:82). That is why it is incumbent upon us to turn to Allah (SWT) in sincere repentance. “O you who believe, turn to God in sincere repentance” (al-Tahrim, 68:8). We should be aware that while Allah (SWT) is full of love, mercy and compassion towards His slaves, He is also very severe in punishing. “Be mindful of God, for His punishment is severe” (al-Ma’idah, 5:2). Allah (SWT) also says, “Tell My servants that I am the Forbearing, the Merciful, but My torment is the truly painful one” (al-Hijr, 15:50).

Another trick that Satan plays on people is to make them unduly proud of the nobility of their lineage and the piety and righteousness of their ancestors. They harbor false hopes that their pious ancestors coming from a genealogy going back to well-known saints, righteous companions, or even to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) will intercede on their behalf on the Day of Judgment. The truth is otherwise. Nobody on the Day of Judgment can avail himself or herself of anybody’s intercession except with the permission of Allah (SWT). “He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot intercede without His permission—indeed they themselves stand in awe of Him. (al-Anbiya’, 21:28). We have only to look up the Qur’an and see that Nuh (AS) could not be of any help to his son who was disobedient to Allah (SWT). When Nuh (AS) pleaded to Allah (SWT) to save his son against the torment of the flood, he was told that his son was not of his family, and Nuh (AS)’s son drowned before his very eyes. “He said, ‘Nuh, he is definitely not of your family. He is someone whose action was not righteous’” (Hud, 11:46). Similarly Ibrahim (AS)’s polytheist father could not be saved from the wrath of Allah (SWT). It is only when all is said and done on the Day of Judgment that Allah (SWT) will grant permission to His beloved Prophet (SAW) to intercede on behalf of his ummah—a privilege that is exclusive to Muhammad (SAW).

A study of the Prophet’s Sirah reveals that when Allah (SWT) revealed the ayah: “And warn your closest kin” (al-Shu’ara’, 26:214), Allah’s Messenger got up and said, “O people of Quraish! Buy (i.e. save) yourselves (from the Hellfire) as I cannot save you from Allah's punishment; O Bani ‘Abd Manaf! I cannot save you from Allah's punishment; O Safiyya, the aunt of Allah's Messenger! I cannot save you from Allah's punishment; O Fatima bint Muhammad! Ask me anything from my wealth, but I cannot save you from Allah's Punishment…”

Do we not read in the Qur’an that on the Day of Judgment all relations of kinship will be broken? “The Day man will flee from his own brother, his mother, his father, his wife, his children; each of them will be absorbed in concerns of their own on that Day” (‘Abasa, 80:34-37).

Whatever is created has to perish. “All that is on the earth is doomed to perish” (al-Rahman, 55:26). We all have to die. Indeed, the life of this world is ephemeral and the world itself is a temporary abode of illusive
pleasure. “Every soul shall taste death and you will be paid in full only on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever is kept away from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have triumphed. The present world is only an illusory pleasure” (Aal ‘Imran, 3:185). Let us wake up and pay heed to the teachings of the Qur’an and the Sunnah lest death overtakes us and it gets too late to mend our ways. Allah (SWT) advises us to seek His refuge whenever we feel that Satan is prompting us towards evil. “If Satan should prompt you to do something, seek refuge with God- He is all hearing, all knowing” (al-A’raf, 7:200).

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