

The whispers of the Devil and its cure

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Source: Treatise "The Cure of the Whispers" - Fataawah Ibn Uthaymeen (رحمه الله), via Markaz at-Tawheed was-Sunnah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: What are the reasons for the occurrence of whispers in the prayer and other than that?

Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)¹: All praise is due to Allaah, Lord of the worlds, and I send peace and blessings upon our Prophet Muhammad, seal of the prophets and the Imaam of the righteous, and upon his family and his companions and those who follow them in goodness until the Day of Judgment.

As to what follows:

Indeed whispers in the heart are a chronic sickness, and it attacks every believer except for the one Allaah (سبحانه)² wills. And because of this Allaah (تعالى)³ revealed a complete chapter:

[Say: I seek refuge with (Allaah) the Lord of mankind, The King of mankind, The Ilah (God) of mankind, From the evil of the whisperer (devil who whispers evil in the hearts of men) who withdraws (from his whispering in one's heart after one remembers Allaah) - Who whispers in the breasts of mankind. Of jinn and men.]⁴

And the whisper befalls (a person) in matters of worship and other than that.

The Devil Comes To Mankind in 'Aqeedah and Tawheed

Indeed, Satan comes to the heart of the slave through whispers surrounding this issue. He would prefer the slave to fall from the sky and be broken into pieces or be burned until he becomes a piece of coal rather than speak about these issues.

Most of the time, this falls upon the believer so Satan can ruin his faith and conviction, this even befell some of the companions (رضي الله عنهم)⁵.

¹ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him

² (سبحانه) (Subhanahu) Exalted be He

³ (تعالى) Ta'aala (He, The Most High)

⁴ سورة الناس – Soorah an-Naas (the 114th Chapter of the Qur'aan)

⁵ (رضي الله عنهم) (rad iyallahu 'anhum) May Allaah the Most High be pleased with them

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It has been reported in the authentic ahadeeth from the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), and we will mention some here from what Allaah (سبحانه) has made easy:

In Saheeh Muslim on the authority of Aboo Hurairah (رضي الله عنه)⁶ who said: People came from the companions to the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and asked him, 'O Messenger of Allaah, we find ourselves that which is grave and serious, and it makes us speak about it.' He (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **'Have you all found this thing?'** They said, 'Yes.' The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **'This is pure faith.'**

Sincere faith does not come to an individual except that his faith is pure and sincere; having no doubt, such that the heart can be so over taken that it will leave.

And what has been reported in the two Saheehs⁷ on the authority of Aboo Hurairah (رضي الله عنه), the Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **'Satan comes to one of you and says, 'Who created this? Who created that? Until he says, 'who created Allaah?'** The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **'If it reaches him (meaning if it gets to this point), then seek refuge in Allaah from Satan, and turn away from him.'**

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) mentioned two cures here:

The First Cure: Seeking refuge in Allaah, and this is sticking firm to Allaah (سبحانه) and relying upon Him until he (the slave) is saved from evil.

The Second Cure: Turning away from the thought and this whisper. So he turns away from it and proceeds with his life and work. And if you were to ask the individual concerning these whispers, "Do you believe this?" he will certainly say, "I seek refuge in Allaah from believing that. I pray, I fast, I give charity, and I make Hajj seeking Allaah's (عزوجل)⁸ pleasure." So we say continue upon your path and leave these whispers, and do not take heed to them.

This affair will be hard on you in the beginning but be patient and Allaah will remove it from you (إن شاء الله)⁹.

So seek refuge in Allaah, leave it, and turn away as the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) commanded you. So we say to the one who has been afflicted with this powerful disease to turn away from this after seeking refuge in Allaah (عزوجل). And verily, He will remove it from you if He wills because the one who described the cure was Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and he is the one who has the most insight about its cure.

⁶ (رضي الله عنه) (rad iyallaahu `anhu) May Allaah the Most High be pleased with him

⁷ Bukhaaree and Muslim

⁸ (عزوجل) (Azza wa Jaal) Mighty and Majestic is He

⁹ (إن شاء الله) (in'sha'allaah) If Allaah wills

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Satan Comes To Man in Matters Related To His Purification

Firstly, he causes him to doubt his intention. So you find him making wudoo, and Satan will say to him, "Surely you did not make your intention."¹⁰

Mankind does not realise that such thoughts are more than absurdity in his mind, and misguidance in the religion.

Exactly what was it that brought the individual to the place (of wudoo), caused him to turn the tap on and made him begin to wash the limbs for wudoo except that it was the intention that occurred in his heart and a complete willingness to do the action?!

This is sufficient for the individual to reject what he has thought about and realise that it was a doubt and incorrect whisper.

A man came to some of the people of knowledge and asked, "O sir, verily I have fallen into a state of sexual impurity, so I went to the river and immersed myself in it to become pure. Then, when I came out of it, in my heart I thought, 'Did I purify myself?' So the Shaykh said, 'I do not think that you should pray,' so the man asked, 'Why?' The Shaykh replied by saying, 'The Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **'The pen is lifted from three; the one that is asleep until he awakes; the small child until he reaches puberty; and the one who is insane (until his insanity returns).'**' And you are insane! How can you go to the river and bathe to remove sexual impurity then ask, 'Have I purified myself?'"

So if an individual doubts his wudoo or whether he made the intention for it or not, he should simply continue and complete his wudoo and disregard the doubt.

Satan comes from another angle as well. He comes to the heart during wudoo and will make one think he did not blow water into his nose, for example, and by this point he is now wiping over his head. So we say do not respond to this; rather complete your wudoo for verily this is a whisper.

Satan may also come to him after he finishes his wudoo and say, "You did not make your intention," or, "You did not wash your face," or, "You did not breathe the water into your nose," or other whispers and doubts similar to this. So seek refuge with Allaah and do not stop, and continue on your way and ignore it.

Likewise, Satan comes to an individual during his ghusl saying, "You did not complete your ghusl." Consequently, you find him washing his body many times. This is from hardship. It is upon the individual to ignore this even if the Satan says you did not wash or you did not complete washing this or that part of the body and other similar whispers. So continue and do not pay any attention to this.

¹⁰ Raising your hand for the intention is not permissible

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If the servant over thinks about this, surely this issue will cause hardship and cause him to become exhausted and annoyed. But if he turns away from these whispers and continues on his way, this hardship will become a way out for him, if Allaah wills. So be patient with this hardship and do not take heed to it.

Satan Will Come To an Individual While Praying

He will deceive him firstly in his intention such that the one praying says, "I do not know if I made my intention or not."

Subhaanallaah!¹¹ How could you not know if you made your intentions or not and you came to the place of prayer. Isn't this your intention? This is the intention. The intention doesn't require formalities. When an individual does an action on his own accord and he is sane, then this is his intention.

Next the Satan comes to him within prayer. When he begins reading a Soorah after the Faatihah, Satan says to him, "You did not read al-Faatihah," or, "You forgot a letter from it," or, "You did not pronounce a letter properly," and similar to this. Continue in your prayer and do not pay these whispers any mind.

Satan also comes (and deceives the individuals) in the number of rakaats he has prayed. He says, "You did not pray except one rakaat," but indeed he has prayed two. Or, "You did not pray except two rakaats," but indeed he has prayed three. Or, "You did not pray except three rakaats," but indeed he prayed four. Maybe he will pray ten rakaats or fifteen rakaats in accordance with these whispers.

The cure for such is that he should seek refuge in Allaah (سبحانه) from the accursed Satan, and leave off, and turn away from the whispers. If he does this, the whispers will go away.

Satan Comes To the People and Whispers during the Fast

He says, "Indeed, you did not make your intention to fast," despite the fact one has made Sahoor and began to fast.

He then says, "You did not make intentions," or he says, "You have indeed cut out the intention," or similar to this. Thus, it is upon the individual to turn away from all of these and not turn back and seek refuge in Allaah from Satan Ar-Rajeem (the outcast).

Satan Comes To the People in Tawwaf¹² Of the Ka'bah and Sa'ee¹³

He says, "You did not make your intention," or, "You did not go around except three times," or, "You did not go back and forth between Safwah and Marwah except three times," and so forth.

¹¹ (سبحان الله) (Subhaanallaah) Allaah is free from imperfection

¹² At-Tawaaf: the circumvention of the Ka'bah seven times during al-Hajj and al-Umrah.

¹³ As-Saee: the ceremony of running back and forth seven times between as-Safwah and al-Marwah.

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It is incumbent on the people to do what the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) commanded in all of these matters, and seek refuge in Allaah and abandon the doubts and whispers.

Satan Comes To the People Regarding Marriage and Family

He says, "Verily, you have divorced your wife," until some of them are afflicted so much so that even when the door is opened the individual says, "I said to my wife, 'You are divorced,'" or he opens the Mus_haf simply to read it and he says, "Verily, I said to my wife, 'You are divorced.'"¹⁴

He is affected by this as well as other important matters that are not detached from the heart of a servant except that he does what the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), his family and his companions commanded - seeking refuge with Allaah, leaving off these whispers and doubtful matters and turning away from them.

This individual will no doubt find hardship in this, however, he is to be patient and anticipate a reward from Allaah in the hereafter and seek refuge in Allaah from Satan Ar-Rajeem to strengthen the inner-self.

I recall some of the people mentioning that because of the strong whispers and the difficulties they cause, one stops praying - Allaah's refuge is sought. This is indeed what the Satan wants.

When he stands for prayer, he may say, "This affair causes me great difficulty. (First I wonder) if I made my intent, (then I wonder) whether I made takbeer, or whether I read al-Faatihah," and so on.

We say, turn away from this, be patient, and deal with this hardship even if you have to cry to become better. Be patient and continue what you are upon. Allaah will drive Satan away and keep him from you if you do what Allaah and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) commanded you with - seeking refuge in Allaah from Satan Ar-Rajeem, leaving off the doubtful matters, and turning away from [the doubtful matters].

This is what I advise my brothers whom Allaah (تعالى) has tested with these whispers. Do what the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) commanded you with by seeking refuge in Allaah and leaving off these whispers, and to continue with their affairs and with their lives.

I ask Allaah (تبارك وتعالى)¹⁵ to cure our brothers from this chronic disease and to make their affairs easy. Verily, He has power over all things.

¹⁴ [Meaning he cannot stop thinking about it, even when reading the Qur`aan]

¹⁵ (تبارك وتعالى) (Tabaraka wa Ta'ala) The Blessed and the Most High

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Advice for Curing the Whisper¹⁶

1- Seeking refuge in Allaah and refraining completely from these whispers, as the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) commanded.

2- Remembrance of Allaah the Most High, and restraining the soul from the continuation of these whispers.

3- Serious absorption of worship and actions in obedience to Allaah and seeking His Face and pleasure. So the turning to the worship to Allaah makes one forget these whispers. If Allaah wills.

4- Seeking much refuge in Allaah and making dua for the pardoning of these affairs.

¹⁶ Source: Fatawaa al-'Aqeedah by Ibn Uthaymeen (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ), pg. 793.