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# THE CONCEPT OF TEMPTATION AND ITS SOLUTION IN ISLAM

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## **ABSTRACT**

Basically temptation means attraction to evil, and evil itself is injurious to the individual and the society. In Islam, temptation is a problem though. not an intractable one .

This paper is a study of, the. problem with examples, from the pre-Islamic people of God and from-the. Prophet Muhammad's life. The paper highlights the fact that Satan has no authority on the people of God.

Islam amour against temptation is hinged on absolute, faith in Allah determination to do to do His will, good deeds to fellow creatures and constant prayers. With the above., Satan evil machinations are rewarded and the society is better for it.

## INTRODUCTION

Temptations arise in human life in different dimensions and ways. They are a test which the people of God often pass and become victorious and much stronger. On the other hand, weak minds often fail when confronted by temptation. Thus the variations in human thoughts, actions and reactions become manifest.

In this study, the concept of temptation is examined from the Islamic perspective. After this preamble, we define the term "temptation" in section II. The chief tempter of people, i.e. the devil (Iblis or Shaytan) is introduced. Section III contains a discussion of a number of cases of temptation faced by righteous people in the pre-Islamic era. Illustrations are given from the lives of Prophets Adam, Ayyub, Ibrahim, Ismail, Yusuf, Sulayman and Zakariyya' as well as from the story of Ashabu 'l-Kahf (people of the Cave).

Similarly, some cases of temptation faced by the Prophet Muhammad are examined in Section IV. For space economy, no further examples are given from the Islamic- era proper. It should be noted that countless examples abound in Islam to illustrate the thesis of this paper but those of the Prophet Muhammad's era suffice us here. Section V dwells on the conquest of temptation. This section is all-important because if one does not understand the ways of God vis-a-vis human existence on earth, the deluge of temptation can easily sweep him off his feet. The paper ends with a few concluding remarks.

In writing this paper, we have depended mainly on the two major sources of Islamic heritage - the Glories Qur'anic and the Hadith (Traditions) of the Prophet Muhammad. Other sources include authoritative Islamic history books in Arabic by scholars like Ibn Hisham, ath-Tha'labi, Ibn Kathir, Muhammad Haykal and Muhammad Rida. Others include some principal works by old Islamic sages like al-Ghazali and ash-Sha'rani. In addition, modern works on Islam in English by Western orientalist such as W.M. Watt, Maxine Rodinson, P.K. Hitti, 8, Lewis, etc. have been consulted-

It is hoped that the content of the paper would throw some light not only on, the Islamic concept of temptation and its solution, but also on some aspects of Islamic cosmology and historiography. Such would be of some benefit to Islamic scholars and students of Contemporary Religions who may want to compare the concept studied here with those of other faiths.

## THE CONCEPT OF TEMPTATION IN ISLAM

The word "temptation" has diverse shades of meaning which are not ! too far from one another in essence. The COED defines it as "tempting or being tempted"; thing that attracts, attractive course" (Fowler and Fowler, 1955-Pp. 1311-12). A.S. Hornby, also defines the word in an identical manner. Hornby 1991, P. 1323).

In a similar vein, Chambers 20th Century Dictionary defines temptation as "act of tempting; state of being tempted; that which tempts; enticement to evil; trial". (Kirkpatrick, 1983, P. 1331). The last connotations, namely "enticement to evil" and "trial" are not mentioned directly in the two dictionaries earlier referred to. However, the very root of the word", i.e. tempt is defined by Hornby as "persuade somebody to do something wrong or unwise; act rashly; take a risk", (Hornby, P. 1323. Similarly, Chambers 20th century defines the word tempt as "to put to trial; to test; to try or tend to persuade, especially to evil; to entice." (Kirkpatrick, P. 1331). Regarding the active participle of tempting, i.e. the tempter, the three dictionaries agree that the Tempter is the devil or satan. (Fowler & Fowler, P. 1312; Horny, P.1323, and Kirkpatrick, P. 1331).

From the above, it is clear that temptation means enticement to do a wrong thing, a test, a trial. For our purpose in this paper, we shall be referring to these connotations wherever we use the term. It is true that the Chief Tempter is Satan (Shaytan) who is also called Iblis in Islamic circles. He has aides among spirits as well as among men and women. (Qur'an 114: 1-6)

This brings us to the question of the identity of Satan. He is the devil, roughly equated to Esu in Yoruba (Dopamu, 1986). He is called Idobolo among the people of Etsako in Edo State of Nigeria. In English, he is known as "the supreme spirit of evil." (COED.,P- 342.

He is also the chief fallen angel ; the chief evil spirit; adversary of God and tempter of men". (Kirkpatrick P.1149).

In Islamic theology, belief In the angles of God is one of the articles of faith. These angles whose numerical strength is known only to Allah, are winged spiritual beings, created by God from light for His service. They are capable of changing to any form but have no freewill. They obey intoto God's command without any hesitation. (Qur'an 66:6: 33:56: 82: 10-12 and 42:5; Balogun, 1971, Pp. 34-37; and Abdul, 1974 Pp.20-21). Iblis used to be among the angel until" be disobeyed God when he and other angels were ordered to bow to Adam as a mark of respect on. account of his being more learned than . they. (Qur'an 2:30-34; 7:11; and 15:28-30^ see Raji, 1986 too). -Out of arrogance, Iblis refused to bow to Adam, while the angels did. He boasted that^«\*wing been created from fire, he was superior to Adam who was created from clay. He was conscious too of the fact that he was by far senior in age to Adam. Yet he knew that Adam had an edge over him in knowledge. (Qur'an 7:11-13 and 17:61).

For thus disobeying God, Iblis was expelled from the lofty ' . circles of angels and humiliated by God. (Qur'an 7:13-18.) On his own part, the be devil asked for one, favour from God and that was long life. He begged to be spared till the end of the world, and that was granted. He then vowed to

deal sternly with Adam and his children, entice them to evil and attempt to make them perpetually ungrateful to God. (Qur'an 7:14-17 and 62-«3 and Hughes, 1964, P.84).

The Almighty God left him alone but told him that he had no authority over the true, pious servants of His. As regards these, God promised to strengthen them with His impregnable Holy Spirit (ar-Ruhu 'l- Ouds) through angelic promptings (Qur'-an 17:65). That was the beginning of the struggle between good and evil.

From the above, it is evident that, from the Islamic stand-point, the struggle is between the angels and satanic forces not directly between God and Satan since there is absolutely no basis for equating the Creator (God) to the created (Satan) In section III, (No, 1) below, we shall see how the devil tempted Adam and his wife Hawwa (Eve) in the Garden of Eden.

We may now dwell briefly on the purpose of life on earth and the trials which are inevitable. For a lucid explanation, the following two Qur'anic quotations are apposite:

Blessed be He Who owns all sovereignty and He has the ability to do all things. He created life and death so as to try you in order to reveal those among you. who will be most righteous; He is the Mighty, the Forgiving. (Qur'an 67:1-2)

Do people think that they would be left alone when they say "We have faith (in God)", and would not be tested with afflictions? We have indeed tested those who came before them. Allah doubtless knows those who are sincere and knows those who are liars.

(Qur'an 29:2).

From the above verses, it is evident that God did not send man to this world for the fun of it. Man's existence on earth is an avenue of testing his faith, his sense of appreciation to God and his fellow human beings and his ability to resist evil, shun the devil and have a pure, angel-inspired heart filled to the brim with Gods holy words, thoughts, and pleasure and resolve to always be on the side of truth.

It is a truism that God always tries His servants in different ways. It is true too that when being tried Satan acts as a nuisance to man, trying to lure him to always go the wrong way. It has to be explained that trials here may mean death, material losses, famine, diseases etc. It may also mean wealth, high Position, academic excellence or physical strength. In any condition one finds himself, he can either follow the right path and earn eternal salvation or follow Satan's evil (though attractive) promptings and be doomed.

At the end of it all, one's success or failure shall be judged on the basis of his ability or otherwise to resist and shun the devil. Some of the hints on how a Muslim should shun Satan are given below in Section V.

## **TEMPTATION AND GOD'S PEOPLE IN THE PRE-ISLAMIC ERA**

In this section, some cases of temptation faced by a number of God's righteous servants and how they fared are discussed tersely. The term "Pre-Islamic era" here refers to the period before historic Islam or specific Islam which the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.O.H.) brought from God, beginning from the early part of the 7th century C.E. In Islamology, all righteous people-Prophets, apostles and saints who lived from Adams time to Muhammads were all Muslims (people who surrendered themselves to God and did His will to the best of their ability). This explanation is necessary so as not to unjustifiably cut those early generations off the realm of Islam, the complete submission to the will of Allah.

The reason for citing the following cases is to show the veracity of the notion, that Satan does not have power over God's people. (Qur'an 17:65). Regardless of their time and place, if they falter or make mistakes, they quickly make amends and shun the path of error and thereby earn God's eternal forgiveness and pleasure. (See M.M Ali. 1973, Pp. 183-220; Balogun, 1971, P.48; and Oseni, 1981, P.68).

### **1- Ada IT and Hawwa**

The story of Adam and his wife, Hawwa (Eve) is well known. But there are differences between the Christian and the Islamic viewpoints regarding the details of the Story. (Oseni, 1981, Pp.63-64) It is true that Satan vowed to take revenge on Adam and his family. Hence he was able to lure Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, convincing them that the tree was that of immortality and endless sovereignty. (Qur'an 20:120). The couple resisted initially and then, with growing passion and curiosity, succumbed. For disobeying God, they knew that they were in for trouble. They ran helter-skelter when they saw change, in their bodies, having lost the holy± resplendent raiment which hitherto covered their nudity. {Qur'an 20:121).

The couple cried and prayed to God, who decided to send them to earth to toil hard before regaining Paradise which was given to them free Initially without working for it. They were, however, pardoned by God, for He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. (Qur'an 20:122:27).

It is revealing to note that-when God was to create Adam, He informed the angels about it, but they were not too happy with the plan, and God, being the Omniscient, knew this. Perhaps, what made the angel Jealous right from the out set was that.

God was to create man, as the Vicegerent of His on earth, an Idea which put man on a higher plane than theirs, (Qur'an 2:30-31). So to put them in their proper places of God gave Adam some hidden knowledge which the angels did not possess. When God eventually tested them all, Adam proved his worth academically, and the angels failed. Hence as a mark of respect for learning and learned people, God asked the angels to bow to Adam. It should be recalled that Satan refused to do so (Qur'an 2:30-34).

From this story, it is evident that God had made knowledge the criterion of superiority from an early period. Any society that does not recognise the reality regarding the position of knowledge .in the, scheme of things'worldwide, can never make significant progress Such a society is Satanic and consequently doomed.

Adam and his wife, after their exit from the Garden of Eden, learnt their lesson. They lived a righteous life on earth, toiling, praying and doing good. Some of their children are good too while others are devilish, and each group would be rewarded justly by God in the end. (Qur'an 20:122-27).



## 2- The Prophet Ibrahim

In the life of Ibrahim (Abraham), two episodes of trials and how he triumphed are given below. First, when he was to be burnt in a furnace for daring to challenge his idol-worshipping people, he did not lose faith in Allah, his Benefactor. When he was tied up and was about to be thrown into the fire, the Angel Jibril appeared to him and asked if he needed any assistance. His reply was "From you? No." He was eventually thrown into the inferno but God commanded the fire to be cold and granted him peace, safety and tranquility. By that act, God once more vindicated His chosen one. (Qur'an 21:68, 69; 37:97; Ibn Kathir, 1981, I, Pp:204-208; and Ath-Tha'labi n.d., Pp 44-47). Secondly, after a long period of childlessness, Ibrahim had a son from his second wife, Hajar. The boy was named Ismail (Ishmael). When the boy grew up, Ibrahim was reminded in a dream of his old vow to slaughter his child for God's sake if he ever had one. He was not perturbed. Rather, he informed his son about it and the latter submitted himself, like his father, to God's will. (Qur'an 37:100-111).

Ibrahim took his son, out and prepared him for the supreme sacrifice. Odd as the sacrifice was to be, the two pious servants of God did not allow Satan to disturb them. As one should expect, Satan tried to dissuade them from carrying it out Satan even tempted Hajar to go against her husband's plan and foil it, (Ath-Tha'labi, P.56).

Ibrahim attempted to sacrifice his son, but the dagger he used could not cut, though it was properly sharpened. It was at that point that God sent a ram, to ransom Ismail. It was the ram that Ibrahim eventually, sacrificed in place of his son. (Qur'an 37:107; Ath-Tha'labi.P. 5456 and kathir pp. 229-236). That was the origin of the sacrifice of an animal during the idul-kabir festival. The twist in the execution of the sacrifice which occurred by divine intervention, marked the end of human sacrifice in the world, though it is sad to say that some backward Africans and their likes among other not learn such a universal lesson.

Throwing stones at the pillars which symbolise the devil at Muna near Makkah during the hajj season is a commemoration of Ibrahim's aversion to the ever-tempting, evil-prompting devil. It teaches Muslims pilgrims to shun evil for ever(Ath-Thalabi. P. 56)

### **3- The Prophet Ayyub**

Ayyub' (Job) was- a pious servant of God and a Prophet- .He was "very righteous and wealthy and his contemporaries knew this: But he was tried with -various afflictions- diseases, loss of family and wealth, etc. He suffered greatly and yet his faith in God did not wane. At a time of trial such as the one experienced by Ayyub, Satan would normally be at work, trying to make a man fail True' to type he :(Satan) attempted on numerous occasion to discuss him from trusting and worshipping God. But Ayyub steadfast. In the end he was healed by the Supreme Healer (Allah). and granted abundance of wealth and family far more than what he lost. (Qur'an 21:83-84; 38:41-44 Ibn Kathir, Pp. 367-75).

Thus Ayyubs name been immortalised as one who suffered greatly and ultimately triumphed greatly. It is instructive to note- that his prayer to God (which is recovered in the Qur'an) is still as efficacious among Muslim sages as ever in solving the problems of, those in distress. (Qur'an 21:83-84)

#### **4- Sulayman the Prophet and King**

Sulayman was an honourable Prophet of God and a King among the Israelis of yore. He was the son of Dawud (David). God provided him with much wealth and wisdom. Yet he did not allow these to distract his attention from doing what would please his Benefactor.

One day, King Sulayman was busy with high-bred race horses until the time for evening worship was almost over. He grew annoyed with himself and pounced on the horses and killed them. Thus he showed remorse over his perceived neglect of, or lapse, in worshipping God at the appropriate time. The relevant Qur'anic passage reads:

And we gave Dawud (a son named) Sulayman.

What an excellent servant he was surely he was a penitent. (Note) when the standing steeds were presented to him in the evening, And he said "Have I loved .material things so deeply that the sun should set without .my worshipping my Lord? Return them (the horses) to me and he stroked their shanks necks

(Qur'an 38:30-33).

The above incident indicates how a man of God would feel when tempted with the good things\*of life which are essentially ephemeral.

Nevertheless, it has to be stated that A.Y, Ali, the great translator of the Qur'an (into English gave the above story a different interpretation. To him, the Prophet Sulayman was too great a man of God to miss his hour of devotional service to God on account of his love for race horses. He said that Sulayman was busy with the horses but when it was time for his prayers, he left them. When he finished praying, he went back to his horses and said "Return, them to me and he stroked their feet and necks. (A.Y.Ali, 1968 pp 124-5

A.Y Ali also stated that Sulayman's trial was in his wealth. He did not fail to acknowledge the spiritual value and significance of his wealth. So like other righteous servants of God, he was not successfully tempted by Satan.) If people of less character were tried with such abundant wealth and wisdom, they would have committed havoc with an air of arrogance (A.Y. Ali, Pp.1224-5).

In my opinion, both the traditional interpretation found in al-Mahalli & as-Suyuti, (nd.) II, P. 139 and al-Firuzabadl (n.d.), P.359. as well as A.Y.Ali's are valid. The contents of the Qur'an 38:30-33 quoted above (in my English translation ) is capable of being interpreted both ways in the Arabic original. What matters was that Satan had no way on Sulayman, the Prophet and King.

### **5- The Prophet Yusuf**

Yusuf (Joseph) was another fellow who had to face a number of trials. The one we are citing here was in connection with a woman, Zulaykha, his master's wife. It should be noted that among Nigerian Muslims Zulaykha' is sometimes pronounced Zulikha, Sulla, Zeniatu Zaliha, etc. (Osenl, 1981, P.82).

It was a great temptation for Yusuf to have been seduced by his master's wife in Egypt after he had been sold into slavery by his own brothers. On account of Yusuf's good behaviour and handsomeness, "and owing to the fact that the woman's husband was impotent, the young man's attraction proved irresistible to the opulent, though miserable, Zulaykha.

Yusuf did not fall thanks to the spirit of God working in him. Despite the fact that the episode led to his incarceration, he did not mind, (Qur'an 12:33-35). Nevertheless, the imprisonment opened another gate of self-expression and self-fulfillment for Yusuf. (Qur'an 12:36-56).

To fully comprehend the important and significance of the story men know too well how easy it is for them to entice women or allow themselves to be enticed by them Yusuf story is a timeless example of self-restraint, purity, and constant God-consciousness. In such a story there is much food for thought for those who strive hard to follow the ever resplendent light of God and derive guidance from it.

## **6- The Prophet Zakariyya**

This man, of God had a problem similar to Ibrahim's own, namely childlessness. He and his wife became old without any Issue. When God revealed Himself to Zakariyya, he realized His omnipotence and prayed for a child fervently at a time one would have regarded his case as closed, more so when his wife was old too. (Qur'an 3:38, 19:2-11, and 21:89-00).

Nevertheless, God did not disappoint him. After the long trial, God gave the holy man and his wife a holy son, Yahya (John the Baptist) Yahya was a peaceable, level headed, humble pious Prophet of God. (Qur'an 3:39, and 19:12-90).

When people have problems they react in different ways - either positively or negatively. Satan would be trying to work on them ceaselessly until he recruits more followers among the afflicted. But If the person concerned is truly a God-conscious fellow, he would shame Iblis and triumph over his evil promptings. That was how Zakariyya distanced himself from the devil- and consequently won eternal favour.

### **7- The People of the Cave**

The last example to be given from the pre-Islamic era is that of a group of young men who were being persecuted for their faith in one God by their idol-worshipping, vicious traditionalist folks. The young men are popularly known as Asbabu 'l-Kahf (People of the Cave) in Islamic circles. Rather than surrender and be safe, they fled from their city to a cave not too far away and hid themselves therein. Hence their popular epithet.

They prayed to God to have mercy on them and facilitate for them worldly and spiritual affairs. God answered their prayers and made them sleep for about three hundred years. When they eventually woke up, they were in a different world, the world of a new generation who had accepted faith in God and righteousness as a way of life. Initially the Cave People were still afraid of being captured and killed but they later realised that they were with People who believed in the absolute oneness of God. Qur'an 18:19-27 and A.Y. Ali, 1968, Pp.730-37).

The story shows the limitless power of God and His readiness to use His "power to protect His beloved servants. This story is very important to the youths some of whom may wrongly think that knowing God and serving Him zealously is the business of elders alone. (Ath-Tha'labi, Pp. 231-242 and Tawfiqul 'l-Hakim, n.d.)

## **CASES OF TEMPTATION FACED BY THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD**

In the history of the holy Prophet Muhammad (P.B.O.H.) there are many cases of -temptation, but he was triumphant to the end, having shunned the tempting devil all his life. Below are seven of such cases.





### **1- Break in Transmission**

The Prophet's career as the Apostle of God par Excellence began at Cave Hira in 610 C.E. when he was forty years old. He received the first revelation which constitutes the first portion of the Qur'an. When he returned home from the cave he was frightened initially owing to his inexperience in such matters. However, he soon recovered and was able to Convert his household and his in-law Nawfal ibn Waraqah, an old man versed in Judaeo Christian scriptures to Islam. In point of fact, Nawfal assured him of the great role he was to play in human life (Rida,.1961, Pp. 67-68; Haykal, Pp. 79-81;and Ibn Hlsham, I.rpp. 153-58).

After the Initial revelations, there was a break for some time and nothing was forthcoming from God. When his Quraysh people learnt of that, they rejoiced and ridiculed the Prophet, emphasizing the illusion that he was in trouble with his God. This caused him frustration and distress. But for the spirit of God working within him, such a situation could have led to other unpalatable consequences. He remained' steadfast until God again revealed to him Qur'an 93: 1-11, in which ht- was reassured of God's constant support and ultimate victory in a lucid prophecy. (Rida, P. 68; Haykal, Pp. 79-81; and Ibn Hisham, I, P. 161;

## **2- An Attempt to Bribe Hurr**

Another interesting case of temptation to which an ordinary person would have fallen easily was the attempt by 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah to bribe him. The Quraysh persecuted the Prophet for calling them to serve only one God - Allah - and for criticizing their deities which, to them, served as intermediaries between them and God. (Qur'an 39:3). When, in spite of their fiendish persecution, they saw the followers of the Prophet increasing with time, 'Utbah offered to go and speak to the Prophet. He pleaded with him to stop dividing the Makkan people unnecessarily. He then entreated Muhammad to tell him if he would accept money and become the richest man in Makkah. Another offer was that of kingship, if that was his ambition. In addition the Quraysh were to get him the best medical care available "to cure" him of the visions he was seeing and which culminated in his vitriolic attacks on their deities and some aspects of life.

The notion was that the Holy Prophet might accept some of the offers, if not all. " When 'Utbah finished his entreaty, he awaited -the reply of the Prophet who merely recited to him a portion of the Qur'an which emphasises God's omnipotence, as well as His will to guide His creature to the eternal light of faith and good deeds. {Qur'an 32:1-30}. 'Utbah then returned to his fellow Quraysh people and asked them to leave Muhammad alone. Though he did not like the Prophet's reply, he admired his absolute faith and confidence in his mission.

His feeling was that if Muhammad won at the end, the glory would also be shared by the Makkans, his kingsmen, (Haykal, Pp. 96-97 and Rodinson, 1971; Pp. 105-6).

### **3- Ostracism of Banu Hashim**

As part of the multi-dimensional plot to stop the Prophet from carrying out his divine mission, the Makkans ostracised Banu Hashim for protecting him as one of their members. It was part of the tradition of the Arabs to protect members of their families against others even if they disagreed with such members in certain behaviour patterns.

Abu Talib was the head of the Banu Hashim. He was the Prophet's uncle and guardian right from when the Prophet was a boy until he was fifty in 619 C.E. Abu Talib, though a Makkan traditionalist, protected his nephew vigorously. In fact the Quraysh had earlier requested him to hand over the Prophet to them and were ready to give him another person (Ibn Hisham I 191A, P. 171, Al-Abrashi, 1971, Pp. 117-8; and Rida, Pp. 87-88). When he refused to disown Muhammad and his activities which the Quraysh hated, the whole of Banu Hashim clan was ostracised for three years. No social or commercial interaction was to be carried out by other Makkans with Banu Hashim. Yet they did not surrender their Kinsfolk, Muhammad. (Haykal, pp. 115-116).

The clan suffered serious hardships throughout the period. When things were getting too far, the Makkans rescinded the order-of ostracism, though covert and over forms of persecution of Muslims in Makkah continue. (Rida, pp. 90-91 Haykal, Pp.115-116; Al-Abrashi, pp.210-13; 'Abdu'l Wahhab, n.d., pp 68-73

#### **4- The Prophet Stoned at at-Ta if**

with the death of Abu Talib and the Prophet's wife, Khadijah the Great in 61?, things became worse for the Muslims. First, the next head of Banu Bashim was Abu Lahab, a fiery opponent of Islamic Hump-theism and a man of great disrepute. He refused to give the Prophet the traditional Arabian protection for members of their clans.

The Prophet was thus exposed. It meant that anybody could kill him and go scot-free. (Oseni, 1984, Pp. 81-82 and Watt, 1974, Pp. 79-82).

As a precaution against such danger and in furtherance of his mission, Muhammad went to at-Taif a town near Makkah which wealthy Makkans used as their summer-resort. That was in 620 C.E. He tried to preach to people but he was booed and stoned. (Abdul, 1973. P. 30; Oseni, 1993, P. 271 Nicholson, 1969\* Pp. 154-55 Rida, Pp. 112-14; Haykal, Pp. 136-7). He prayed to God for peace, security, and tranquility, and then left the place. The prayer is still very popular among Muslims all over the world till this day. (Rida, P.113: Ibn Hisham, I. Pp. 260-61; Abdu'l Jawwad, n.d., Pp. 141-2) Oseni 1983, P.2J; and Lewis, 1968, P.40X Such indignity degradation and frustration were trials for the Prophet. Yet he did not give up the mission. (Al-Khadari-Bik, n.d., Pp. 66-8).

### **5- Caution on Women's Temptation**

On, migration to Madinah in 622, the Makkan Muslims were well received by their Madinan hosts. In fact each emigrant (Muhajir) fraternised with a Madinan host and the bond of faith was very strong. Some of the hosts even wanted to give wives- to the emigrants in a way that was not decent from the Islamic point of view.

Again, that was a temptation more so that Madinan women were known to be very beautiful. Such a move prompted the Prophet to say:

Actions are judged on the basis of intentions and every person shall have only that which he intended. Anyone whose migration" is for God and His Apostle, then his migration is for God and His Apostle. But anyone who migrates for a worldly goal or in order to have women for marriage, then his migration is for what he intended. (Bukhari, I.P. 2).

As is well known at least from ten's point of view, women are the greatest temptation in the world. The above timely warning was to check men from committing excesses, even though the Madinan hosts (al-Ansar) did not mind. C.F. Qur'an 3:H, Ah-Nawawi, 1960, Pp.131-4 and Al-Muhamaadi, n.d.,Pp. 5-6).

### **6- Injury at the Battle of Uhud**

At the battle of Uhud in which Muslims were defeated In 625 after they had an upper hand in the previous year at Badr, many Of them were killed. The prophet himself was Haykal, injured. Pp. 253-70; Hitti, 1970, P.117; Oseni 1983 P34 and Ibn Hisham As-Suhayli, II, Pp. 126-25). The situation was sorrowful. Some of his followers subsequently asked him to curb the Makkan idolaters who attacked him and his followers ferociously even in Madinah. He refused to do so, stating that he was not sent by God as a curser but as a mercy unto mankind. {Qur'an 2:107). Rather he prayed to God to forgive the people for they did not know what they were doing. (Rida, P.200; Haykal.Pp. 265-7-;).

A man with an ordinary mind would not resist the temptation to: curse those who drove him away from his home town and still pursued him to Madinah after an abortive attempt of his life.

### **7- Ibn Umm Maktun's Episode.**

On one occasion at Makkah, the Prophet was preaching to al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah, one of the leaders of Makkah. He was so anxious to convert al-Walid that he did not notice a blind man who was itching to know much about Islam from him. The man was called 'Abdullah ibn Umm Maktun.

For paying so much attention to al-Walid in disregard of Ibn Maktun who really wanted to know the concept and practice of Islam, God revealed a chapter to "the Prophet to advise him against such an action. In the sight of God, the blind man was higher than the recalcitrant al-Walid.

If Muhammad were not totally guided by God's spirit he would have edited such a portion out of the Qur'an. But he did not do so. He resisted a temptation, as usual, which many cannot resist. It is on record that since the incident, the Prophet always welcomed the blind man warily to his circles and honoured him all the time. On thirteen occasions the Prophet made him the temporary Imam of Madinah to lead prayers only while he and other able-bodied Muslims were out for expeditions to various places (Haykal, Pp.121-2; and Rida, P.181).

Such was the Prophet Muhammad and his capacity to resist temptations. By his example, serious Muslims and other informed peoples of the world do know that, with the presence of God's sanctified spirit within one, Satan and his evil forces are insignificant.

## CONQUEST OF TEMPTATION

It. the foregoing, we have explained the position of Satan vis-a-vis humanity in accordance with Islamic cosmology. We have also noted that in whatever condition man finds himself, he is subject to trials. Within the ambit of such trials, Satan attempts to cause him to fall and be doomed. Herein comes the role and relevance of God's guidance.

God did not create man and leave him to wander aimlessly. Rather, right from the time of Adam, He had been sending His chosen ones to the world to guide people aright in addition to the intuitive angel-inspired perception of right and wrong which every sane and considerate people have. From the Islamic perspective, attainment of salvation which is synonymous with winning the pleasure of God, can only be attained from two inextricably interwoven sources, namely, faith and good deeds.

Faith here connotes absolute belief and trust in God's indivisibility, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, justice and overwhelming mercy, coupled with worshipping God sincerely and ceaselessly. On the other hand, good deeds include all actions which could make one's family and his environment at large peaceful, happy, harmonious, pro-press oriented and God-conscious, The Qur'an is replete with hundreds of references to this fact. Faith and worship which are not actualized in good deeds are like a rainless cloud. Similarly, good deeds which are not based on absolute faith in, and worship of, God, are like house without a concrete foundation. The two must, therefore, go hand in hand.

For the realization of the two basic aspects of Islam-which can earn man salvation, there are certain acts which must be practised while there are others which must be avoided. Failure to act positively and failure to avoid negative traits would cause the individual and the society around him some discomfort and pains.

Herein lies the inevitability of bracing up to work according to God's guidance and face any of the trials of life with a confident and understanding mind. By so doing Satan is kept at bay. One should resolve to shun Satan at all times. Such can only be done successfully if one understands the right way on the one hand, and the tricks of Satan and his forces on the other. Below are four hints on how to realise this.

1. Satan should be properly understood as man's deadly foe. (Qur'an 2:36; 36:60; 7:22 and 27; 20:123). If one knows his enemy, then, his problem is half-solved. There is a re-assurance from God that Satan and his forces have no authority over those who resolve to follow God's right guidance assiduously. In fact, Satan's tricks are weak. (Qur'an 4:76). If that is the case, man has been provided with a lasting anti-devil armour. It is only left to him to put it on.

2. One should remember that Satan is going to disown his followers on the Day of Resurrection. (Qur'an 14:22). According to the verse, he will tell them that he invited them and they responded submissively, and that he did not force them to disobey God. He would then conclude by asking them to go to their respective abodes in Hell-fire as fools who allowed themselves to be tempted. The lesson from this is that a Muslim should resolve not to be fooled by the Tempter.



3. It should be borne In mind that trials are in all professions, conditions, environments, places and ages. If one is rich, Satan would tempt him to act wrongly and if he is poor, Satan would deceive him and lure hi» to sin verbally and practically. If he is righteous, the devil would lure him to behave arrogantly to others whom he would then brand as impious, thus judging others where he has no authority to do so. (Qur'an 53:32). If a person is sickly, the devil would lure him to seek remedy from filthy and impious sources; if he is strong, the devil will tempt him to oppress the weak rather than help them. In realisation of the above, one should always be on his guard (Watt, 1963 Pp.136-9) and be ever repentant. (Oseni, 1981 (b), Pp. 92-94 and Shittu, 1409 A.H., Pp. 1-109).

4. Another important amour against Satan is constant prayers. In the Qur'an and the Hadlth, there are numerous prayers which are specifically against the infectious evils of the devil and devilish people and spirits. AB an example, chapters 113 and 114 of the Qur'an, which collectively have eleven verses, have been found to be very efficacious.

While working hard to shun the devil, Muslims are encouraged to supplicate to God at all times in order to achieve their goal, i.e. the pleasure of God. There is a common aphorism which states that an idle mind is the worship of the devil. The saying is very correct, for Satan fills avoid idle mind with all sorts of debasing passions. Hence one should always keep himself busy with the glorification and praise of God. That itself when done sincerely, would keep the devil far away. (Al-Ghazali, n.d. Pp. 259l and Al-GhaZali, 1939, Pp. 25-47).

Finally with the above understanding of the extensive concept of temptation in Islam and the ways to extricate oneself from it, resolute people would be able to shame the devil and all his forces. Examples have been given from the lives of God's chosen people to buttress the fact that man is not helpless in the face of the devil as is often wrongly perceived. Absolute faith in God, strong determination, constant prayers, humility, and God consciousness in thoughts and deeds are the effective remedy for all temptations.

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