

THE ROLE OF THE SATAN^{♠♠} IN WELLBEING





QUR'AN 7:27

“Children of Adam, do not let Satan seduce you, as he did your parents, causing them to leave the Garden, stripping them of their garments to expose their nakedness to them: he and his forces can see you from where you cannot see them.”

The Fall

The human story begins with vengeance, deception, betrayal and cultivates in a fall.

I will relate this story from a well-being perspective...

From the story of our father Adam and mother Eve, we learn how to deal with our weaknesses and the trauma they give rise to, and more importantly, God's expectations of us during our challenges and suffering.

Ours is a traumatic beginning, starting with Iblees's refusal to bow down to Adam and the subsequent perception that mankind is inferior and unworthy. Perhaps this is why we are constantly battling feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy. Somewhere in our subconscious, we are aware of how Iblees looked upon us and his resolve in refusing to bow down to our father Adam, an act carried out in front of all those residing in heaven. These feelings of self-doubt have seeped into our souls, making us question our worth and yearn for acceptance and validation from those around us.

Moreover, imagine the humiliation Adam and Eve must have felt once they realized they had been deceived by the very being God had warned them about. Falling for a lie generates so much negativity and insecurity; you question your intelligence, adequacy, and every decision you've made, and you start to feel unworthy of life. You do not know how to act, who to trust, or what to do. Just as Iblees envisioned, you become what Iblees wants you to be—filled with self-doubt and feelings of being worthless and inadequate, and consequently not who God intended you to be.

The mindful Muslim fights these feelings of inadequacy not by seeking approval from those around them, but by gaining approval from God, the One who honoured Man and commanded the Angels to bow down to our father Adam. The mindful Muslim is aware that feelings of adequacy come from being mindful of God and recognising that all success, power, and status transpire as part of God's decree.

Moreover, the story also teaches us about human nature and our refusal to accept things as they are, and the negative consequences this has on wellness. Iblees was told to 'bow down to Adam,' meaning our father Adam was present and must have witnessed Iblees's refusal and heard his explanation of superiority. Yet, Adam trusted Iblees at the tree when he whispered to eat from it, despite God warning him that Iblees was a sworn enemy. At the tree, the human's desperate need for success and immortality becomes apparent; it is so powerful that we are willing to violate the laws of God. The cunningness of Iblees also becomes apparent, and his tactics clear: sinning is made to seem a 'necessity' for 'good to happen.'

Adam was enticed by the illusion of a better life promised by Iblees. Here, we see the human tendency to ignore major 'red flags' in refusing to accept the reality of life's bitterness. Rejecting things 'as they are' is rejecting God's decree, and this makes us desperate and vulnerable to deception by those with evil intentions. The mindful Muslim is aware of the vulnerability and weakness that pursuit of worldly success can place them in and remains vigilant not to break God's laws in pursuit of it, ensuring they do not waste life chasing an illusion and losing dignity, oneself, and God in the process.

Furthermore, the story makes clear that Adam made an enemy not by wronging anyone, but because of the favourable status God granted him.

This teaches us that vengeance and hate can arise out of jealousy or simply being in God's favour, warning us that jealousy and bitterness stem from arrogance and a rejection of God's decree, leading to banishment from the Gardens and negative well-being. The mindful Muslim knows that blessings are divided and distributed by God as He pleases, and that God has a treasury that is vast and can never be depleted, even if He were to fulfil the desires of every single human on earth.

Just as God's treasury cannot be depleted, neither can His willingness to forgive. As long as the children of Adam follow the example of their parents in acknowledging their mistakes and asking for forgiveness, they will find a merciful God willing to start over time and again. It is the act of showing humility towards God when sinning that determines if man is demonic or angelic in quality, and if man will return to the gardens or not. The mindful Muslim never loses hope in God's mercy and is determined to return home to paradise, maintaining a state of hopefulness and gratitude towards God whilst here on earth.

Moreover, in the delay of Iblees's punishment until the Day of Judgement, we learn that God is not always swift in retribution; sometimes justice comes after what feels like a lifetime, and the test lies in being patient in its absence. The mindful Muslim knows that justice suspended is not the same as justice withheld and remains measured and patient in their response.





“The story of Adam and Eve is a timeless reflection of our ongoing struggle with temptation. Just as they faced Iblees in Eden, we encounter various temptations in our lives that lead to negative consequences when we succumb. This highlights the importance of staying mindful of God, regularly reflecting, praying, and committing to spiritual growth to resist these temptations and avoid suffering.”

Dr Sara Kadir

Satan's Role in Wellbeing- *its in the name*

Definition of terms

Iblees

Iblis is the proper name given to Satan in Islamic tradition. The name is derived from the Arabic root "b-l-s," which means "to despair" or "to be despondent," reflecting Iblis's state of despair after being expelled from God's grace.

Shaytan (Satan)

In Islamic theology, Shaytan (also spelled Shaitan or Satan) is an entity often associated with evil and temptation. Derived from the Arabic root "sh-t-n," which means "to be distant" or "to go astray," Shaytan represents forces that lead humans away from the path of righteousness and submission to Allah.

Iblees's act of defiance against God, followed by his determination to persist in defiance, reflects a choice rooted in hopelessness and despair. He gave up hope in God's mercy towards him, assuming that his demotion, symbolized by bowing to Adam, was permanent, and believing that God's mercy had ceased for him. This despair fueled bitterness and hatred towards humanity, leading him to vow to guide everyone towards hopelessness and despair, the path to hell that he chose for himself. Those who follow this path are referred to as 'distant' (shaytan) because their chosen direction separates them from God, hope, and His mercy.

The Mindful Muslim understands that denying God's will can result in feelings of hopelessness and despair. Recognising that trusting in God's decree, even when it seems humiliating, is crucial to avoid straying into sin and despair, which only deepen feelings of resentment and suffering. During times of vulnerability, the Mindful Muslim resists temptation and follows the example of Father Adam by turning to God humbly, seeking forgiveness, all of which leads to feelings of peace and contentment.



"Indeed, Satan has
touched me with
hardship and
torment."

QUR'AN 38:41

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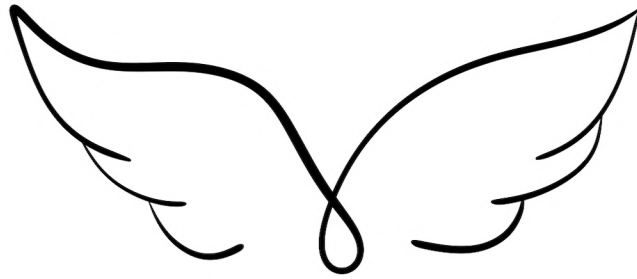
wellbeing lessons from the fall.

1

The Illusion of a Better Life: The devil deceives by offering the illusion of a better life, just as he did with our father Adam. He promised that eating from the forbidden tree would grant Adam a beautiful, eternal life. Today, the devil uses the same tactics, whispering that disobeying God—through a small lie or a minor act of cheating—will lead to a better outcome. Satan suggests that even if you live in a literal paradise, like Adam was, your life is lacking and can only improve by following him. A mindful Muslim recognises Satan's deceitful ways, knowing that he is aware of our deepest desires and weaknesses, and aims to exploit them. The mindful Muslim strives to be content with their current life, grateful for their blessings, and aware of the constant presence of God. This doesn't mean abandoning the desire for a better life, but rather ensuring that such desires are guided by faith and constrained by God's limits, leading to well-being in both this world and the next.

2

Discontentment Leads to Disobedience: When Iblis refused to bow to Adam, he justified his defiance by claiming he was superior to Adam. This refusal to accept God's decree of Adam's higher rank led to Iblees's disobedience and vengeance towards Adam and his descendants. How often have you resisted God's will in a similar manner? How frequently has your perception of being treated 'unfairly' by God caused you to turn away from Him, even slightly? How much bitterness do you harbour for those who have what you believe you deserve? A mindful Muslim recognises that discontentment, bitterness, and vengefulness are traits of Iblees. These traits transformed him from a faithful servant of God into His enemy and ours. The mindful Muslim reprimands her heart when she detects these negative inclinations, guarding herself against being banished from the gardens of heaven.



3

Sinning Leads to negative wellbeing: We are all sinners, and the sins we commit affect our well-being both literally and emotionally. Our father Adam and mother Eve were cast out of the gardens and sent to the earthly realm. Their sins resulted in this significant downgrade in their living conditions and brought about negative emotions such as shame (covering their private parts) and guilt for disobeying God.

4

Redemption Is Never Far: The path to wellness is paved by forgiveness. Forgiveness requires guilt and the humbling of the ego, indicated by the presence of humility, which is essential for seeking forgiveness. Asking for forgiveness acknowledges that all obedience belongs to God and that disobeying Him is an affront to His Majesty. By doing so, you follow the example of your father Adam and reject the way of Iblees, whose determination to transgress only grew when punished. Seeking forgiveness renews faith and connection to God, bringing enhanced feelings of peace and relief.

5

Trauma Is Inherited: Human beings have remained essentially the same since the beginning of time, sharing the same fears, aspirations, and dreams. Like Adam, we all desire to live forever in a state of prosperity. This desire makes us vulnerable to the devil's deceit. Unless we become mindful and conscious of our actions and the presence of the devil, we will repeatedly commit the same wrongs and suffer similarly to our father Adam and mother Eve. This inherited suffering will continue through generations, persisting until the end of time.



QUR'AN 2:268

“Satan threatens you with poverty and orders you to immorality, while Allah promises you forgiveness from Him and bounty. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Salaam! I'm Sara and I have a PhD in "Mindfulness and psychological wellbeing from a Qur'anic perspective'. Much of my research relied upon the works of Imam Al-Ghazali in his book "The Revival".

I launched 'INsane' after noticing people were genuinely interested in my research. The INsane logo has a double meaning, it can also be read as the Arabic word for human 'insan'. You can find more about the project and me on my podcast, the link for which is on the website.

I am passionate about informing Muslims on wellbeing from an Islamic perspective. I see this as a duty and a privilege.

This guide will be the first of many (insha'Allah). You can download it free from the INsane website.

I pray that the knowledge i share brings you clarity and courage. Because finding peace takes courage.



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