

دليل المريدين

إلى كتاب منهاج العابدين للإمام حجة الإسلام الغزالي

للعبد الفقير إلى ربه الغني الحميد

رمزي بن محمود عجم

A Mureed's Guide

to Al-Ghazali's Minhaj Al-Abideen

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CHAPTER THREE

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1. **Why is it necessary to combat *Shaytan*?**

There are two good reasons why one must combat Satan:

- a. God commands us to take Satan as an enemy [Quran 35:6].
- b. Satan is naturally disposed to enmity towards you.

2. **How threatening is this impediment for the seeker?**

Satan is enraged by one's resolve to tread the path of worship.

Hence, it is his mission to demonstrate a specific hostility towards seekers on this path, and to continue his attacks until he attains his goal.

Imam al-Ghazali says:

“As for those who neither enrage him nor oppose him, but actually befriend him and agree with him, like the unbelievers and the addicts of desire, he still mistreats them and tries to ruin them in some cases. What does this say about his attitude to those who deliberately enrage him, and who dedicate themselves to opposing him? It means that he nurses a general hostility towards the rest of humankind, and towards you, O devotee of worship and knowledge, a special enmity.”

3. **Who are Satan's helpers?**

The worst of Satan's helpers is the lower self (*nafs*) and passionate desire (*hawa*).

4. **What are the ways to defeat Satan?**

There are two main ways to defeat Satan, namely, by:

- a. Repelling him through seeking refuge with God Most High, and not preoccupying oneself with fighting him.
- b. Repelling Satan through exerting oneself in spiritual works and by opposing him.

5. Which way is most effective?

According to Imam al-Ghazali, combining both ways is most effective:

“That is to say, you should first seek refuge with God (Exalted is He) from Satan’s evil, as He has commanded us, for He is the Protector against his evil. Then, if we see that he is prevailing against us, we shall recognize it as a trial from God (Exalted is He), designed to test our dedicated striving and the strength of our commitment to His cause (Glory be to Him and Exalted is He), and to examine our patience. In similar fashion, He has set the unbelievers on us, despite His ability to prevent their mischief and their wickedness, so that we may have the opportunity to wage the sacred struggle [jihad], to practise patience, to pass the test, and to bear witness.

6. What does combat (*muharaba*) entail?

The specialists in this field have outlined three things that are required in defeating Satan:

- a. Gaining knowledge and familiarity with his tricks and plots which reduces the likelihood of his attacks.
- b. Belittling his call by giving it no attention, leaving him like a barking dog who eventually goes silent when ignored.
- c. Invoking God’s name with your tongue and heart so that one is fortified from his attacks.

7. How does Satan engage in combat?

Satan’s main munitions are two:

- a. *Wasawis* (whispered temptations).

The *wasawis* are shot towards victims like arrows that appear in one’s heart as *khawatir* (psychic-impulses).

- b. *Hiyal* (traps).

The *hiyal* are tricky devices that are planted like snares to entrap his victims.

8. What are *khawatir* (psychic-impulses)?

The *khawatir* are effects that arise in the human heart and influence it towards a particular action or away from it. God Most High in reality is the only producer of effects, including the *khawatir*, but it is critical to understand *how* these effects usually arise so as to determine their “origins”. According to Imam al-Ghazali their origins are four:

1. If the psychic-impulse in one’s heart appears directly without any association with the lower-self, devil, or angel, it is termed as a *khatir* from God without secondary cause (*sabab*). This type of *khatir* can influence one towards either good or bad.
2. If the psychic-impulse appears in agreement with the instinctive inclination of the lower-self, then it is termed *Hawa al-Nafs* (Whim). This type of *khatir* influences one towards impulsive behaviours and harm.
3. If the psychic-impulse appears in one’s heart subsequent to the invitation of the angel *al-Mulhim*, then it is termed *Ilham* (Inspiration). This type of *khatir* can only influence one towards good action.
4. If the psychic-impulse appears in one’s heart subsequent to the invitation of Satan, then it is termed *Waswasa* (Whisper). This type of *khatir* influences one towards evil or to something apparently good for the purpose of leading one to evil. (*Hawa al-Nafs* can also influence one in this way, according to some of the *Salaf*).

9. How do I differentiate a *good khatir* from a bad one?

Criteria:	Good	Bad	Next Criteria
1. The Sacred Law	<i>If in agreement</i>	<i>If in opposition</i>	<i>If undetermined</i>
2. The Righteous	<i>If consistent with their way</i>	<i>If inconsistent with their way</i>	<i>If undetermined</i>
3. The Lower-Self	<i>If in opposition</i>	<i>If in agreement</i>	

10. How do I distinguish whether an *evil khatir* is from Satan, the Lower-Self or from God?

Peculiarity of <i>Evil Khatir</i> :	Origin:
a. Fixed, Strong & Predictable	<i>God (directly) or the Lower-Self</i>
b. Inconsistent & Unexpected	<i>Satan</i>
c. Appears after a sinning	<i>God (directly) as a chastisement</i>
d. Is not weakened by <i>Dhikr</i>	<i>The Lower-Self</i>

11. How do I distinguish whether a *good khatir* is from God or the Angel?

Peculiarity of <i>Good Khatir</i> :	Origin:
a. Strong & Fixed	<i>God (directly)</i>
b. Recurring or Sudden	<i>The Angel</i>
c. Appears after exerting oneself in obedience	<i>God (directly)</i>
d. Appears while one is contemplating spiritual and theological matters	<i>God (directly)</i>
e. Appears while one is engaged in outward spiritual works	<i>The Angel</i>

12. How do I recognize the “*good khatir*” that is from Satan?

The apparently *good khatir* that appears in one’s heart will have the following peculiarities if it is from Satan:

	The Presence of:	&	The Absence of:
A.	<i>enthusiasm (nashat)</i>		<i>reverence of God (khashya);</i>
B.	<i>haste (`ajala)</i>		<i>deliberation (ta`ani)</i>
C.	<i>sense of security (amn)</i>		<i>fear (khawf)</i>
D.	<i>short sightedness (`ama al-aqiba)</i>		<i>spiritual foresight (basira)</i>

13. How do I recognize Satan's traps (*hiyal*)?

Satan has seven approaches with the children of Adam in plotting against their obedience to God, they are:

Satan's Trap:	Defence:
1. Clear Opposition	- Realizing that eternal salvation depends on worship.
2. Procrastination	- Realizing the imminence of death.
3. Haste	- Realizing that "a little work brought into completion is better than a lot of work marred by imperfection."
4. Broadcasting One's Works	- Realizing that God's knowledge of one is sufficient.
5. Ostentation	- Realizing that God has honored one with obedience, <i>tawfiq</i> and acceptance.
6. Hidden Ostentation (by striving in the spiritual path so that God makes one noticeable in the eyes of men).	- Realizing that one is nothing but a servant of God - Indifference to being accepted by others - Understanding that it is prerogative of God alone to disclose or conceal His people.
7. Cynicism (by imagining that actions have no bearing on one who is destined for Hell or Paradise)	- Commitment to one's purpose of servanthood to God - Affirming that God does what He wills without objection - Realizing that good works will, by His mercy, benefit irrespective of one's destined abode - Preferring to enter Hell with good works over entering it without any.