

# DEALING WITH DOUBT

## Wasawis: The Whisperings of Shaitaan

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Wasawis is the plural of Waswasah. Wasawis can be loosely translated into “doubts” and these are generally, the whisperings of Shaitaan.

Wasawis are of various categories and affect a person in different aspects. Some are more common than others but the cause of all are the same and the remedy is more or less, also the same. It should be noted that not every person is affected by Wasawis and some people are more affected than others. Since these are whisperings of Shaitaan, a person should not be perturbed and he should learn to ignore them. In the Hadith, Rasulullah

(Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has consoled us and informed us that Allah will not hold a person accountable for the Wasawis that he is troubled with as long as he does not act on it or verbally express it. **(Sahih al-Bukahri, Hadith #: 2528, Narrated by Abu Hurayrah)**

Shaitaan inflicts a person with Wasawis to dissuade him from progressing in life and gaining closeness to Allah. He uses this in various aspects of a person's life. To list all the spheres of life is virtually impossible so we will suffice by listing those that are most common:

**a) Wasawis (doubts) pertaining to one's Imaan-** Sometimes Shaitaan plagues a Muslim with various doubts about his Imaan. He begins to think that he is not a true Muslim or he begins to doubt Allah and His Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), or has negative thoughts about Islam and he feels extremely guilty about it. That “am I really a Muslim? How can I be having such doubts about Islam? “And so on...

Whilst this may apparently seem to be a serious offence, this is actually a sign of Imaan. It is recorded in Sahih Muslim that a group of Sahabah (Radiallahu Anhum) once came to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)

and complained to him that they were having these very same doubts and that they feel ashamed to even mention these doubts to anyone.

Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) enquired from them, “Really? Are you really experiencing such thoughts?” They replied in the affirmative. On this, Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, “[This is a clear sign of Imaan](#)”. (Sahih Muslim, Hadith #: 357).

عن أبي هريرة، قال: جاء ناس من أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، فسألوه: إنا نجد في أنفسنا ما ،  
يتعاضم أحدها أن يتكلم به، قال: وقد وجدتموه؟ قالوا: نعم، قال: ذاك صريح الإيمان

[شرح محمد فؤاد عبد الباقي]

ش (إنا نجد في أنفسنا ما يتعاضم) أي يجد أحدها التكلم به عظيما لاستحالاته في حقه سبحانه وتعالى  
[[ذاك صريح الإيمان) معناه سبب الوسوسة محض الإيمان أو الوسوسة علامة محض الإيمان

When Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said “[This is a clear sign of Imaan](#)”, he meant that having these doubts is a result of a person being a true Muslim. Only a person who has Imaan in his heart will experience such doubts.

To understand this better, consider the following example. A thief will not attempt to rob a home or place that is devoid of valuables. A thief will only attempt to rob those homes or places that contain valuables and precious items.

Similarly, the heart of a Mu'min is the home of the most valuable and precious thing in this world and the Aakhirah. Shaitaan will only put doubts in those hearts that have this valuable gift of Imaan and he will try his utmost to unsettle and rob this person of Imaan. Therefore, instead of becoming perturbed and despondent over these doubts, a person should be thankful to Allah for blessing him with Imaan.

### **What to do when plagued by these doubts:**

- **Ignore these doubts –** The Ulama have mentioned that the remedy for these thoughts is to ignore them. Whenever a person is plagued with these thoughts, he should ignore them and engage in the Zikr and Shukr of Allah. They are just baseless doubts from Shaitaan that don't deserve any attention at all.

- **Reflect over the difference between a Kafir and Mu'min** – He should reflect over the difference of a Kafir and a Mu'min. When such thoughts occur in the mind of a Mu'min, he is troubled and perplexed showing that he does not accept such thoughts and this is a clear sign of Imaan. On the contrary, a Kafir is not troubled in the least and actually enjoys, cherishes and propagates such thoughts and beliefs. The fact that a Mu'min is perturbed is ample proof of his Imaan and his pleasure with Islam as his religion.
- **Recite the three Quls and abstain from sins** – Make it a habit of reciting the three Quls daily after Fajr and Maghrib thrice each and abstain from all types of Haraam, all types of literature and things that may induce these doubts and most importantly stay away from all sins for engaging in sins weakens a person's Imaan and gives Shaitaan the upper hand over him.
- **Recite the prescribed Duas** – Recite ( اَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيْمِ ) “A'oozu Billahi Minash Shaitaanir Rajeem” and ( اٰمَنْتُ بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ) “Aamantu Billahi Wa Rusulih”. Sayyiduna Abu Hurayrah (Radiyahallahu Anhu) narrates that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) advised that when a person is plagued with doubts, he should ask Allah for protection (recite the Ta'awwuz) and ignore the doubts. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith #: 3276). Sayyidatuna Aa'ishah (Radiyahallahu Anha) narrates that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) advised that when a person is plagued with

doubts about Allah, he should recite: (آمَنْتُ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ) “Aamantu Billahi Wa Rusulih”, for this will dispel the doubts. (Musnad Ahmed, Hadith #: 26203)

In short, a person who is troubled with such doubts has nothing to worry about. The doubts are a sign of Imaan which is actually, a good sign and practising on the abovementioned advice will help strengthen one’s Imaan.

b) **Wasawis pertaining to Validity of Wudhu –** Sometimes a person is plagued by doubts in the validity of his Wudhu or whether he has washed a certain limb properly or whether he has washed a certain limb at all and that’s when a person is seen washing a limb in Wudhu repeatedly, over and over again. This is the whispering of Shaitaan in order to make person waste his time and water.

### **The Remedy:**

- **Ignore the doubt –** A person who is plagued by such doubts should immediately ignore the doubts

- **Recite the prescribed Duas** – Recite the Ta’awwuz and Aamantu Billahi Wa Rusuli.
- **Recite La Ilaha Illallah** – Imam Nawawi (Rahimahullah) recommended that a person who is troubled by Waswasah in Wudhu should recite *La Ilaha Illallah* for Shaitaan flees from a person who is engaged in the Zikr of Allah
- **Know that doubt cannot override certainty** – He should impress it in his mind that he is not allowed to wash his limbs more than three times. Furthermore, he should know that as long as he is not 100 % sure that he did not wash a certain limb properly or he did not wash a certain limb at all, his Wudhu is valid and there is no need for him to wash that limb again. Only if he can take a Qasam (an oath) that he did not wash the limb properly or he did not wash the limb at all, then he should wash that limb. This has been emphasized by the Fuqahaa (jurists) based on the principle:

اليقين لا يزول بالشك

***“Doubt cannot override certainty”***

Thus, when the person is certain that he has made Wudhu, he should not allow doubts to bother him for until he cannot be absolutely certain that he did not fulfil the requirements of Wudhu, his Wudhu will remain valid.

c) **Wasawis pertaining to cleanliness/Impurity**. – Sometimes a person is plagued by doubts whether he is impure or not or that something impure is on his clothing. As long as he did not see or physically feel the impurity come on to him, he should ignore these doubts and he should know that these are the whisperings of Shaitaan. If a person does not ignore these doubts, they will only become worse until it reaches a stage where a person feels that he is constantly impure which ultimately results in him then neglecting his Salaah and Ibadah because he feels impure. This is the aim and objective of Shaitaan and he will employ whatever means he has to dissuade a Muslim from the remembrance of Allah.

**The Remedy:**

- **Ignore the doubt** – A person should tell himself that he has not seen or physically felt the impurity so he cannot entertain the doubt. A few companions asked Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that they are not sure if they had passed wind in Salaah. He informed them that their Wudhu and Salaah are valid as long as they did not physically feel or hear any sound.
- **Recite the prescribed Duas** – recite the Ta'awwuz and Aamantu Billahi Wa Rusulih.

d) **Wasawis pertaining to Istinja (cleansing after relieving oneself)** –

Sometimes a person feels that he has not cleansed himself thoroughly after relieving himself. This is where a person spends a long time in the toilet washing his private area repeatedly thinking that he has not yet cleansed himself thoroughly. This is also a doubt injected by Shaitaan and results in a person wasting water and spending more time in the habitat of Shaitaan (i.e.; the toilet).

**The remedy:**

- **Ignore the doubt** – After he has washed thrice and there are no traces of impurity left, there is no need to have any doubt. So he should ignore the doubts.
- **Recite the prescribed Duas** – he should recite the Ta'awwuz and Aamantu Billahi Wa Rusulih in his mind.
- **Know that washing seven times is the most that is allowed:** – The Fuqahaa' have ruled that it is not permissible to wash more than seven times in Istinja'a. The Sunnah is to wash thrice and this is sufficient. However, if a person is suffering with doubts, it is permitted for him to wash up to seven times. Washing seven times is more than enough to remove impurities and there is no room for doubt after washing for the seventh time. If a person washes more than seven times, he will be sinful for wasting water.
- **Sprinkle water over the private area after Wudhu** – If a person suffers from doubts of incontinence, he should sprinkle water around his private area after making Wudhu and should assume that the moisture is because of the clean water, not urine. This was the advice Nabi

(Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) gave to the Sahabah in order to dispel their doubts.

e) **Wasawis pertaining to Talaag** – Some men suffer from the doubt that they have divorced their wives. Due to their constant fear of divorcing their wives, they sometimes end up doubting whether they have uttered the words of divorce to their wives or not. This becomes very unsettling for the husband and he is in constant fear of divorcing his wife. This is also from the whisperings of Shaitaan and a ploy of his to break up a marriage.

### **The remedy:**

- **Ignore the doubt** – A person who suffers from such doubts should ignore them. Until he cannot take a Qasam (oath) that he has divorced his wife in a sane state of mind, the ruling will be that he has not divorced his wife. Furthermore, the Fuqahaa have explicitly mentioned that the Talaag of a person suffering from these doubts is **not effective**. (Raddul Muhtaar).

- **Recite the prescribed Duas** – he should recite the Ta'awwuz and Aamantu Billahi Wa Rusulih until the doubts subside.

### **Important advice:**

Imam Ibn Hajar al-Haitami (Rahimahullah) has mentioned that the most effective way of combatting Wasawis is to ignore them. What is meant by ignoring them is that a person should brush the doubts aside and not pay attention to them, as though they never occurred. He should not fight the thoughts as they will only become stronger. It is like a barking dog. The more you fight with it, the more it will bark. But if it is ignored, it will eventually keep quiet. Similarly, the most effective way of dispelling doubts is to ignore them. Eventually, the Wasawis will stop. If a person does not ignore the doubts, they will only grow stronger and eventually, it will make a person's life a misery. In certain cases, it has even lead to Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and sometimes insanity. So it is extremely important that the person affected by Wasawis be strong willed and he should ignore the doubts and recite the prescribed Duas.

Some people affected with Wasawis resort to asking various Alims about their problems. This is the biggest mistake a person can make and it will only lead to more confusion. A person affected with Wasawis should ask only one Alim. He should select a Alim in whom he has the most confidence and ask him only. Asking multiple Alims will result in him receiving different advice which will confuse him even more. He should adhere to one learned Alim and place his full confidence in him and act on his advice, even if it goes against his liking. The learned Alim will diagnose that he is affected with Waswasah and give him the appropriate advice. In a short while, the questioner will be cured from Wasawis Insha Allah.

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