Synopsis of the Friday Sermon delivered by Ameer Mustapha Elturk on Jan 06, 2012

Satan - The Devil (Know your Enemy) Part 6

Adam and Hawwa had the permission of their Lord to avail themselves of all that was at their disposal in the garden except for a tree that they were not allowed to approach. “We said, ‘O Adam, dwell in the garden, you and your wife, and eat freely from it as you wish, but do not go near this tree, or you both become wrongdoers’” (al-Baqarah, 2:35). Satan being the archenemy of Adam did not spare a moment in the pursuit of his avowed goal of leading humans away from the straight path. He went straight ahead to plot against Adam and his wife. He enticed them into eating from the forbidden tree. “He lured them with lies. Their nakedness became exposed to them when they tasted of the tree: they began to put together leaves from the garden to cover themselves. And their Lord called unto them, ‘Did I not forbid you that tree? And say to you (both) that Satan was your sworn enemy? (al-A'raf, 7:22). Adam and Hawwa realized what wrong they had done and were full of ignominy and remorse. They sought Allah’s mercy. Allah (SWT) accepted their repentance and forgave them. They were now to assume their role of becoming Allah’s vicegerents (khulafa’) on earth fulfilling the purpose of their creation by submitting to Him through worship and obedience.

In the first instance, we learn that upon the instigation of Satan, when Adam and Hawwa ate from the forbidden tree, the first thing that happened to them was that their nakedness became exposed to them and they began to cover themselves with leaves from the garden. Allah (SWT) reminds all children of Adam about the purpose of clothing that He has blessed them with. “O Children of Adam! We have sent down clothing to you to conceal your private parts, and as an adornment, but the garment of taqwa (righteousness) — that is best! That is one of Allah’s signs, so that you will pay heed” (al-A’raf, 7:26). Here Allah (SWT) explains that the foremost function of clothing is modesty (haya) followed by adornment through which one may look neat, decent and civilized. For human beings to get naked before others is a sign of shame, disgrace and humiliation.

A great lesson to be taken from these ayat is that the first attack of Satan against human beings is to entice them into exposing their shame and to make them shameless. He employs devious ways to do this. In contemporary times, one of his ways is to use trendy and seductive girls to pull men out of their homes into nightclubs, casinos, and other dens of vices. In the name of fashion, culture, open-mindedness, and modernization, he uses his agents to turn women into a sexual commodity by having their exposed bodies displayed in movie theaters, televisions, other electronic media, print media, and billboards, not to speak of the internet, millions of websites in which swarm with pornography, in the garb of adult entertainment. There is hardly any ad or commercial that goes without depicting the brazen images of women, even when there is no relation of the product being advertised to the pictures being displayed. It is not unusual to see completely naked men taking shower together after their gym workout. Men and women frequent nude beaches and are quite comfortable in being stark naked in front of each other. Such blatant shameless practices though prevalent in the West are also catching up in other parts of the world, with Satan and his agents leaving no stone unturned in trying to drag a multitude of humanity into the blazing hell fire along with them. Today’s so called democracy and man-made laws allow such unchecked immoral expression of thought and action that only contribute towards making Satan supreme.
Taking cognizance of Satan’s temptations and man’s folly to fall prey to them, Islam takes the issue of modesty very seriously and has prescribed a complete dress code for the believers so that they are saved and protected against his machinations.

‘Awrah is a term that denotes the intimate parts of the body, for both men and women, which must be covered with clothing. The most common English translation of the Arabic term ‘awrah is “nakedness.” Unwarranted exposing of one’s ‘awrah in front of others is sinful and unlawful in Islam. The ‘awrah of a man refers to the part of the body between the navel and the knees. The ‘awrah of a woman with respect to a man who is not her mahram (relationship of such degree that marriage is prohibited) is her entire body excepting only her face and hands. The ‘awrah of a woman with respect to a man who is her mahram does not include her hair, ears, neck, upper part of the chest, arms and legs. Other parts from the knees to the beginning of the upper part of the chest are ‘awrah and should not be exposed before anyone, man or woman except her husband. Looking at the ‘awrah of another person whether of the same or the opposite sex and whether with or without desire is unlawful and must be avoided. According to a hadith, “A man should not look at the ‘awrah of another man, or a woman of a woman, nor should a man go under one cloth with another man, nor a woman with another woman.” “O Children of Adam! do not let Satan seduce you the way he caused your parents be expelled from the Garden, stripping them of their covering to expose their private parts. He and his tribe see you from where you do not see them. We have made the devils friends to those who do not believe” (al-A’raf, 7:27).

In her choice of clothes, a Muslim woman must not wear clothes which are specifically for men. Ibn Abbas reported that the Prophet (SAW) cursed women who try to resemble men and men who try to resemble women. Moreover, in her choice of clothes, she should not imitate non-Muslims. This applies to those clothes which are specifically designed for them as required by their religion, tradition, or culture. It does not apply to those clothes which are common among people and don’t carry any religious or cultural specifications. The Prophet (SAW) said: “Whoever imitates a people is one of them.” A Muslim woman must also not intend to draw men’s attention to her concealed adornment by the use of perfume or by jingling or toying with her ornaments or other such things. Allah (SWT) says, “And let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may be known” (al-Nur, 24: 31). Further, she should not wear perfume in public or even when she comes to pray in mosques. According to a hadith, “Any woman who puts perfume and passes by people to smell her odour is sinful (like one who committed adultery)”.

The dress of a Muslim woman must be loose and not tight-fitting or in any way transparent or see-through so as to define the parts of her body. Tight jeans and other types of trousers worn with sweaters, sweatshirts or T-shirts and clothing made of see-through material fall under this category. In one hadith in sahih Muslim, the Prophet (SAW) said: “There are two types of people who will enter the Hell-fire, whom I have not (as yet) seen: People having whips similar to ox-tails with which they will beat people, and (secondly) women who will be dressed yet appear to be naked. They will seduce men and be inclined towards them. Their heads will be like the swaying humps of bacterial camels. They will neither enter paradise, nor smell its fragrance, even though its fragrance can be smelled from such and such distance.” Allah (SWT) has commanded Muslim women to cover themselves with a loose over-garment whenever they go out. Addressing the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), Allah (SWT) says, “O Prophet! Tell your wives, your daughters, and the believing women to draw their outer garments round themselves. This makes it more likely that they will be recognized and not be harmed. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (al-Ahzab, 33:59).

Covering one’s body is a natural human trait. Those who have been influenced by the theory of evolution assert that man as a species moved around naked and that it was only after passing through different stages of evolution that he invented dress. Such false argument gives them leverage to freely promote nakedness in the society under the guise of liberalism and freethinking. They are doing exactly what Satan had done with Adam and Hawwa—he made both of them get naked. The Qur’an likens Satan’s followers and friends to be worse than cattle in their heedlessness. “Such people are like cattle. No, they are even further astray!”(al-A’raf, 7:179). Allah
(SWT) admonishes man over and over again that Satan is man’s sworn enemy. “Satan is your enemy—so treat him as an enemy...” (Fatir, 35:6).

Just as there is a dress for one’s physical body, so also there is a dress for one’s spiritual self. The expression libas al-taqwa (garment of piety) in the above mentioned ayah as explained by Ibn Abbas (RA) means and includes right conduct, good deeds, and mindfulness of Allah (SWT). This aspect has been alluded to in the ayah wherein Allah (SWT) addresses believers undertaking the journey of Hajj (pilgrimage). “Provide well for yourselves: the best provision is (taqwa) to be mindful of God” (al-Baqarah, 2:197). This spiritual dress delivers one from immediate hardships and ultimate losses, and is therefore the best dress to wear. Not being adorned with this dress leads one to turn known good (ma’ruf) into known evil (munkar) and to turn that which is detestable and wicked into so called good. By doing so, man, the noblest of God’s creation (ashraf al-makhluqat) stoops down to become the lowest of the low (asfal al-safileen).

As mentioned before in ayah 27 of Surat al-A’raf, Satan and his tribe see us from where we do not see them, and we also know through the Qur’an that Satan is from the Jinn. As Muslims, we have to be very careful about our ‟awrah. We are informed through a hadith that we should invoke Allah’s name and seek His refuge from Satan under circumstances when we may be uncovered. Anas (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAW) said, “The barrier between the eyes of the Jinn and the nakedness of the children of Adam is [created] when a Muslim removes a garment and says, ‘In the name of Allah’. ” Through another hadith, we learn that when we put on a new garment, we should supplicate, “O Allah, for You is all praise, You have clothed me with it (i.e. the garment), I ask You for the good of it and the good for which it was made, and I seek refuge with You from the evil of it and the evil for which it was made.” We as Muslims should be the champions and standard bearers of morality and ethical standards and lead others to the right path.

This is only possible when we enter into Islam totally and whole-heartedly. “O you who believe, enter Islam totally. Do not follow in the footsteps of Satan. He is an outright enemy to you” (al-Baqarah, 2:208). We are also reminded not to die in a state other than that of Islam. “O you who believe! Be conscious of God with the consciousness (taqwa) due to Him and die not except as Muslims (ones who have surrendered to God)” (Aal ‘Imran, 3:102). In fact, the Imams invariably recite this ayah during the delivery of their Friday sermons, just to remind themselves and others of this divine injunction. To be protected against Satan and his intrigues, we have to live by the Qur’anic injunctions, and hold on to the hadith, which states: "Islam has been built on five [pillars]: testifying that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, establishing prayers, fasting in Ramadan, paying zakat, and performing pilgrimage."

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