

The Workings of Satan in Our Lives

What Type of Opponent Is He?

How Does the Workings of Satan in Our Lives Help Us Grow?

Many of us desire a calm and carefree life, but have you ever imagined such a thing? A life where every day passes without any problems. If we continue this fantasy a little further, a few words gradually become more vivid in our minds: stillness and boredom. Yes, life events and incidents prevent boredom and lead to our growth. To accept this point, imagine if we were not forced to endure the hardships of learning the alphabet in school, when and how would we become literate?

The more determined we are to learn and grow, the easier it is for us to endure hardships. A higher level of this situation is seen in the individuals who desire to become a professional athlete. The necessity of enduring hardship for these individuals has become so ingrained that they compete with different opponents many times before the actual competition to identify their weaknesses and achieve the necessary physical readiness.

The role of a suitable opponent in growth and progress is undeniable. The more determined we are to grow, progress, and stay away from stillness, the easier we will understand this issue. We all need an opponent who helps us identify our weaknesses and improves our strengths.

The workings of Satan in our lives is like that. Unlike other struggles, confronting Satan is unavoidable; it is inherent to fulfilling the purpose of our creation. Of course, engaging with a real opponent named Satan, who has a deep-seated

animosity towards us certainly requires awareness, training, and vigilance. However, victory in such a struggle is as important as its difficulties. With that understood, we can develop our skills and abilities against Satan's attacks and become aware of Satan's workings in our lives.

A Club Without an Opponent

Imagine that you have recently become a member of a martial arts club and are busy learning fighting techniques and martial arts. After a while, you would expect to enter the field of combat and expect your coach to gradually increase the number of your opponents and their skills until you find your way to official competitions. How would you feel if the coach did not allow you to participate in practice fights and asked you to train individually?

What would you do if you feel you can compete, but your coach does not allow you to participate in competitions or does not consider competition necessary for your development? You might change the club and coach or go somewhere else where improvement in your sport is facilitated because you believe that one of the coach's duties is to provide opportunities for improvement for their athletes. Progress happens in combat, so without facing challenges, our improvement will be imaginary.

Now imagine a coach who does not allow players to practice because he is afraid they might get hurt. Or imagine a player who quits training after the first defeat. Neither of these behaviors have any place in professional sports and seem odd. Our situation in real life is quite similar to athletes. We all strive in the gym of the world to reach human perfection and resemble the perfect human. Our coach on this

path is God, who has set up a competition field as vast as the world for us. Therefore, by understanding the workings of Satan in our lives, we realize that despite all the difficulties, God's purpose of placing a being like Satan on our path is nothing but our growth.

What Kind of Opponent Is Satan?

In this great arena of competition, we always have an opponent ready who constantly uses every means and opportunity to defeat us. Instead, God has made us aware of his presence and described all his characteristics in different situations for us. Knowing that an opponent is lying in ambush for us prevents us from being taken by surprise. Moreover, learning about all the dimensions and structures of our opponent from his creator's perspective increases our chances of victory. This opponent is Satan.

Our mentor and Lord, or Allah, emphasizes on this point that Satan is not a hypothetical or imaginary opponent but an obvious enemy with real and external personality. Indeed, we cannot see Satan with our physical eyes, but his attacks are so clear that they are completely recognizable.

God has fully explained to us the characteristics of Satan's attacks and the workings of Satan in our lives. For example, we know that the most important feature of Satan's attacks is that it only happens on the Straight Path. Fighting against Satan outside the Straight Path is meaningless, just as a wrestling opponent only fights us on the mat, or athletes do not consider the people on the streets as their training opponents. Satan also targets those who intend to move on the Straight Path. The

more serious we are on the right path, the more attacks Satan launches against us. He tries to deviate us from the Straight Path in any way possible.

The role of Satan is evident in our lives, and his attacks are specifically designed for each of us. For example, the attack on someone seeking inanimate or animal perfections differs from the attack on someone seeking intellectual perfection. Satan thoroughly examines the essence of our existence and enters through one of our weaknesses, which is through a person's haves or another's have-nots. Therefore, to be immune from his attacks, it is important to understand how we have designed our beloveds and how much value we give to each.

The Effect of the Workings of Satan

As we mentioned, Satan's attacks vary depending on each person's personality type. Satan looks at deceiving us through the capabilities and traps that we have placed for him within ourselves. The characteristics of his attacks are mentioned in the Quran as "attacking humans from the front, back, left, and right on the Straight Path."¹ However, what does each of these directions mean?

In a brief explanation, an attack from the front by Satan relates to thoughts and concerns about our future. For example, as soon as we want to perform an act of charity and cultivate the noble quality within ourselves, Satan tries to deter us by creating fear of the future and the fear of falling into poverty.

An attack from behind consists of the blows that Satan strikes us with through the sins and grievances we have from the past, or the failures that have led to our

¹. Quran, 7: 16-17

disappointment. By instilling despair in us regarding God's forgiveness, he deprives us of the blessings of His presence. Many people fall victim to this very attack from the devil, losing hope in returning to God's embrace and repenting, ultimately succumbing in this struggle.

An attack from the right involves putting our strengths and abilities on display, like when Satan succeeds in diverting us from the Straight Path either by using qualities like beauty, wealth, or knowledge or by creating a sense of arrogance between us and God.

In an attack from the left, our weaknesses, or better said, the wrong prioritization of our beloveds becomes a gateway for Satan to enter our souls, tempting us to commit sins. For instance, if we are too sensitive, Satan turns any behavior of others into a source of darkness and discomfort through this gateway.

Being aware of the characteristics of Satan's attacks helps us identify the opponent and the battlefield as soon as we face such feelings and defeat him. Prominent features of satanic attacks include feelings of sadness, hopelessness, depression, fear, and anxiety. Therefore, whenever we experience such feelings, we should look for a source outside ourselves and on the battlefield against Satan.

The Influence of Satan on Our Growth

As we mentioned, the presence of Satan is a *fitri* need for our growth. If these struggles do not exist, no growth will occur. Therefore, we will remain the prisoners of our imaginal perfections. If we accept Satan as an opponent and believe the role of his workings in our lives, we will be full of excitement and vitality. By considering

Satan's role in our lives, we know that even in the world of dreams, we are not free from his presence and attacks. Therefore, even during sleep, we will arm ourselves to fight against him.

Unfortunately, most of us are unaware of this struggle, just like someone standing in the middle of a wrestling mat with his hands tied behind his back, not wanting to participate in the competition. Whether we want it or not, the competition is going on.

There is no viewer, and everyone is competing. Satan even reacts to the smallest positive actions we take and attacks us, knocking many people down in such a way that they practically become his slaves. This means that despite being aware of the incorrectness of their life path, thoughts, behaviors, and decisions, they insist so much on the wrong path that they become the helpers of Satan in the battle against others.

As we stated, the most important feature of Satan's attacks is their clarity. If we know ourselves correctly, we will use all these attacks as an opportunity for growth, transformation, and becoming similar to our True Beloved. Yet, if we do not know ourselves properly and are not familiar with our innate characteristics, we will consider all these struggles as threats, fail to gain points and grow on the right path, and see an unfruitful end to life. When opportunities are exhausted, Satan's victory becomes apparent.

In this article, we examined the workings of Satan in life. We learned that Satan has been our obvious enemy, but his presence leads to our growth. We need a field for fighting and an opponent for training to progress in any area. In our lives, Satan plays the role of that training opponent. However, since he is not an imaginary

opponent and his animosity is real, neglecting his attacks may forever lead us astray from the Straight Path.

Do you also believe that knowing the workings of Satan in life is beneficial for us?
How have you prepared yourself to fight against the attacks of this real opponent?