

## How The Devil fights back

The Devil always fights back, or rather uses the darkness, whenever any effort is made to bring enlightenment to mankind. However, it never attacks the Light directly, because there is no common ground for such a frontal attack. It uses human beings, with whom it has developed a common ground for the attack. Even in this, it does not attack the enlightening concepts that have been introduced. Rather, it exploits the vices of its human tools to distort, and eventually create disillusionment, or to discredit the promises held out by the new enlightenment.

Let us look at a few examples, from written history, to see how this fighting back has occurred.

We start with what many will agree is the most significant development in the evolution of man's spiritual history; namely the revelation of the single and Universal Supreme Being.

The Jews, who are usually associated with this first recognition, simply referred to this Supreme Being as YHWH (pronounced Yah Weh), which translates to "I am". This was the response that Moses was given when he asked for the name to use, when he spoke to his tribes' men about the source of the 10 commandments that he was to bring down from Mount Sinai.

As the concept of the single and Supreme Being spread beyond the Jews, most adopters could not fathom the notion of a nameless Supreme Being. So, they simply added this new Being as supreme over all existing deities. Among the Arabs, **Allah**, meaning "The One True God", is a contraction of the words *al-* (the) and *ilah* (deity or god). Today's most commonly used name, **God**, originates from Proto-Germanic "guthan", which traces back to Proto-Indo-European *ǵh-tó-m*, meaning "that which is invoked" (through prayer) or "poured" (referring to a libation).

These apparently innocuous names for the Supreme Being, introduced by man, have had an effect that many do not appreciate. They have also influenced and shaped our attitudes about the Supreme One.

Although most religions that believe in a single supreme being also refer to HIM by some of the 99 "Beautiful Names" used in the Qur'an, for example, The Most Merciful, The All-Knowing, etc., the overriding element in all religious relationships to the Supreme Being was, and is still dictated by the need to secure preferential treatment, through invocation/prayers, sometimes to the detriment of their adversaries. Thus, a continuation of the practices when tribes and societies had their pantheon of gods and goddesses, that they invoked and poured libation for help, including to defeat their enemies.

The most important aspect of the revelation of the existence of the Supreme One, namely HIS Will, about which humans were now being informed, was given secondary attention. Even where it was considered, the rules given as guides for understanding and living by this Will, were interpreted to accord with human desires.

From this, one can see that all the Devil had to do was use his human agents to distort the understanding of the new revelation of the existence of a Supreme Being. He knew that mankind would scramble to establish a relationship with this new Supreme Power, not to benefit from the edifying teaches accompanying the new revelation. But driven by our vanity, greed and other vices, he knew we would place emphasis on how to exploit the new relationship, without further prompting from him.

Through distortion of the teachings of their spiritual helpers, the vanguard of his attack laced their distortions with promises of material booties, and therewith enticed their fellow compatriots to join their endeavors of conquests. But this was not too difficult. Many already harbored the same desires as the enticers. They just had not had the opportunity to exercise them, and were now being given the opportunity to do so. Thus, for them, belief in the new Supreme Being needed to have its personal benefits.

The violent wars fought in the name of the Supreme Being, and the claims of mandates granted by HIM, at the expense of neighbors and fellow human beings and creatures, should be clear for anyone who wishes to see. "Sacred books", like the Old Testament of the bible, are full of such accounts.

Approximately one thousand years after Moses, another revelation was brought to mankind. This time, the effort was to disabuse mankind of the evil that was being carried out in the name of the "law". The focus of this teaching was the universal brotherhood of man, and the unbiased universal Love of the Supreme One for ALL human beings. This revelation gave birth to the movement associated with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

With the demise of the Roman Empire, that at the time had a strangle hold in perpetuating domination and inhuman treatment of fellow human beings, the path for the flourishing of the new movement was cleared in the Mediterranean region, and what would later become Europe. But again, using the same tactics, The Devil used ambitious men and women who saw the fledging Christian community as the only cohesive platform for launching their power grab.

Through distortion of the fundamental message of Christ, and laced with false promises, these, sometime unaware, agents of Darkness, slowly corrupted the essence of Jesus' teachings. They created the illusion of fighting to protect the teachings against heresy, to justify internal prosecutions to control and seize people's assets. They justified foreign aggressions under the banner of conversion, or defending the faith against external unbelievers. Both acts were almost always triggered by the lust for power and greed for wealth of the leaders, while the conscript masses were promised a place in heaven, if they died in the course, or abluton of wrongs yet to be committed, if they managed to survive the battles.

Once again, the Devil succeeded, without attacking or denying the Truth in Jesus' message.

It is two thousand years since Jesus' time on Earth. And many are expecting that the fulfillment of Jesus' promise of another Spiritual Teacher is very near. That is, if it has not already occurred, but unknown to many. Perhaps the more pertinent question, based on history, for the serious seeker, should be....*"How does one prevent themselves from falling again for the distortions and enticements that will certainly be attempted?"*.

The Devil and his agents are still around. And most human beings are still struggling with vices - some of which we are aware, and others of which we are unaware. These are what will be exploited in the fight back that will be conducted against the new revelation.

## **Conclusion**

Perhaps this account from the bible, of Satan's efforts to tempt even Jesus himself, holds a lesson to prepare any serious seeker for this onslaught:

In Matthew 4:1-11, we read that **Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness**

*"After fasting forty days and forty nights, Jesus was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.'"*

*Jesus answered, 'It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

*Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:*

*"'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"*

*Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"*

*Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."*

*Jesus said to him, Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"*

*Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him".*

Now, what are the pertinent lessons contained in this story for those who are waiting, or have found the new revelation?

Satan works by targeting three fundamental areas of human desires, to fight back against the effort of the light to bring enlightenment to mankind:

1. **Physical Needs.** The darkness will use our penchant for material comforts or greed, in the name of serving The Lord.
2. **The Temple Parapet.** The darkness will use our penchant for reputation, recognition, and adulation of followers in the name of serving The Lord. (An often-overlooked danger here, is the overestimation, or abuse of psychic “powers”, by those so endowed, and admirers, who hang onto their every word, without examination).
3. **Worldly Power.** The darkness will use our vanity and desire for control and power in the name of serving The Lord. This is done through rituals and catechisms that take focus away from people exerting effort to actually grasp and deepen themselves in the true essence of the teaching (i.e., the Word itself).

Hopefully, the foregoing will serve as a constant reminder. Because even when we have embarked on enlightenment, we must never forget that vices, desires or weaknesses within us, no matter how small, afford The Devil a path to reach us, to conscript us, knowingly, or otherwise, into his fighting back.

That The Devil would even dare to tempt Jesus, who he acknowledged as the Son of GOD, shows how vulnerable any mere human is. But The Devil also knows that no one, not even the smallest human being can be spiritually compelled to go against the Will of The Almighty.

In his response to each temptation, Jesus referred to the paramount importance of the Word, and The Will of God as above all needs, and the obedience to this Will as supreme. ....

*‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’*

*‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’* (for example, by seeking affirmation through miracles)

*Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.*

### **Closing words**

The seeker, and the believer should realize that a weak stance against temptations, distortions or enticements, play a vital role in creating and spreading disillusionment, as well as helping to discredit the promises held out by the new enlightenment.

This awareness should blossom into the living conviction demonstrated by the list of martyrs, who forfeited their physical life rather than succumb to the enticements or threats of the agents of darkness.

Another noteworthy point, from the history of the persecution of the early Christians, is that martyrdom actually gave impetus to the spread of Christianity. Thus, achieving the opposite result from what its human prosecutors expected. By contrast, hypocrisy and the distortion of the true essence have done greater damage to discredit the course of enlightenment, which ultimately leads to disillusionment and abandonment of the course. That is the Devil's goal, and his most assured fighting back strategy.

Thus, all he does is tempt believers, both leaders and followers, in the hope that they will fall, and slowly display their hypocrisy. With this, they foster disillusionment in observers as well as in themselves. And the end result will be abandonment of the ideals that they may have once aspired after. The cruelty that his victims inflict on their fellow men is simply a reflection of the perpetrators' nature.

May we recognize and withstand the enticements or threats when they come our way.

Amen.