

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

11449 - He is suffering from serious waswas

the question

For some months I have been having a problem with waswas in both my prayers and when performing wudu (ablution). I keep forgetting what I have washed in my wudu and keep forgetting how many raka'ah I have prayed. It has reached a point where I am making sajdah as - sahu (prostration for forgetfulness in prayer) for every single prayer because my mind always strays. The more I concentrate on my prayer, the more it occurs. Sometimes I think I must have prayed 6 or 7 raka'ahs (units of prayer) for a four raka'ah prayer because I simply cannot recall how much I have prayed and so I continue until I am certain. The more I do this, the worse the problem gets. I want to ignore the waswas, but I am not sure if this is sanctioned by the sharee'ah (Islamic law). I feel it is the only way to rid myself of this disease. I read surah al-Baqarah and many du'as (supplications) related to the whisperings of shaytan and surahs al-Falaq and al-Nas. With regards to wudhu (ablution) I have a combination of problems as I feel that I have not washed properly after using the bathroom or if my clothes get wet that there is something impure on my clothes. When making wudu, I feel like I have not washed properly. I try to ignore these whisperings but I am terrified that if I ignore it and I am wrong, that my prayers will not be answered. I have reached a point where my prayers can take up to an hour or more to perform and have become merely a ritual without any khushoo' (focus) because of these problems. I finish one prayer and start fearing how I am going to manage to get through the next one. I feel I am trapped because there is no way I can miss a prayer as I know this is exactly what shaytan wants me to do. Please help me, may Allah reward you.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

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Our advice to you, first of all, is to consult a psychologist; and try to find a Muslim doctor so that he will understand your problem. Secondly, you have to always take the easier option, and do not think about the sin or punishment. If you do not follow this advice, your problem will continue. In a prayer when you are not sure whether you have prayed three or four rak'ahs, you have to assume that it is four, and the part of the body which you are unsure whether you have washed, you have to assume that you have washed it. This applies to every situation you face: take the easier option. If you do that you will have defeated the Shaytan who has subjected you to this involuntary/compulsive waswas.

May Allah heal you and grant you good health.