**Chastity**



**7.23.** They said (straightaway): "Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and do not have mercy on us, we will surely be among those who have lost!"(1)



**2.273.** That (which you spend) is for the poor who, having dedicated themselves to God's cause, are in distressed circumstances. They are unable to move about the earth (to render service in God's cause and earn their livelihood). Those who are unaware (of their circumstances) suppose them wealthy because of their abstinence and dignified bearing, but you will know them by their countenance – they do not beg of people importunately. And whatever good you spend, surely God has full knowledge of it.(2)



**4.59.** O you who believe! Obey God and obey the Messenger, and those from among you who are invested with authority; and if you are to dispute among yourselves about anything, refer it to God and the Messenger, if indeed you believe in God and the **Last Day**. This is the best (for you), and fairest in the end.(3)



**29.45.** Recite and convey to them what is revealed to you of the Book, and establish the Prayer in conformity with its conditions. Surely, the Prayer restrains from all that is indecent and shameful, and all that is evil. Surely God's remembrance is the greatest (of all types of worship, and not restricted to the Prayer). God knows all that you do.(4)

**HADITH**

##### The Prophet, (pbuh) said: “Guarantee six things for me and I will guarantee Paradise for you: tell the truth when you speak, keep your promises, discharge your trusts, preserve your chastity, lower your gaze, and restrain your hands.” (5)

#####  In a Hadeeth on the authority of ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Abbaas (pbuh) the Prophet, (pbuh) said:“O youth of the Quraysh! Do not commit adultery. Whoever preserves his chastity will enter Paradise.” (6)

**Chastity**, a moral characteristic that is in perfect harmony with common sense. In principle, it underlines every act for restraining the self from unlawful desires leading to committing sins or being involved in begging, for example. As such, it is one of the perfect deeds and highest qualities a person can have, for our **Prophet Muhammad pbuh** considered it one of the reasons for entering Paradise. He said, “*the first three people who will enter paradise were presented to me…one who abstains from both the unlawful and the doubtful*.” Chastity is also evidence to self-perfection and wisdom, about which a scholar said, “perfection is in three: religious chastity, patience in adversity, and good government of livelihood.

No wonder then that chastity is at the core of prophetic virtues and one of the beneficial calls for people to fulfill. Abu Sufyan (May Allah be pleased with him) reported, in course of his detailed narration about Heraclius when the latter questioned him about the teachings of the Prophet pbuh he said that: he pbuh told (us): “*perform Salat, speak the truth, observe modesty and strengthen the ties of kinship*.” So for its high merit **the Prophet Muhammad pbuh** used to supplicate to Allah in these words, “*O Allah. I beg of Thee the right guidance, safeguard against evils, chastity and freedom from want*.”

Please know that chastity is first and foremost manifested in our senses, the latter being tools to perform deeds. So as long as one’s senses are free from evil and sins, **Allah, the Most Exalted**, bestows upon him abundant provision and grants him Paradise. Our Master Muhammad pbuh said, “*whoever can guarantee (the chastity of) what is between his two jaw-bones and what is between his two legs (i.e. his tongue and his private parts), I guarantee Paradise for him*.”

In this context, chastity requires of the individual to control his senses and use them only in what **Allah** has made it lawful and permissible. So if it happens that his self and faith have weakened, he should recall that the sweetness of faith lasts while the thrill of lust shall soon perish. He should also be aware that Allah, the Almighty, stands by his servant if he turns away from sins and remains patient.

However the reasons are, a Muslim must abstain from engaging in Haram and get over the lure of his own desires until Allah makes it possible for him to marry. Allah, the Most Exalted says, “**But let them who find not [the means for] marriage abstain [from sexual relations] until Allah enriches them from His bounty**.” (Annur: 33).

Allah, may Glory be to Him, has ordered us to avoid taking others’ money unlawfully and the economically independent guardians to not take any return from orphans under his charge. Yet He, the Almighty, has allowed the poor guardian to get an acceptable portion of it. On this matter, He says, “**And whoever, [when acting as guardian], is self-sufficient should refrain [from taking a fee]; and whoever is poor – let him take according to what is acceptable.**” (Annisaa: 6).

Part of chastity is also to abstain from abusing public properties, for these should not be used for any purposes other than those allocated to. Nor should they be utilised for own personal ends. Therefore, everyone is advised to protect them because they belong to all, and so the responsibility of maintaining them should be incumbent upon each individual.

Furthermore, a Muslim should spare himself the shame of begging people or asking for money without doing a work in return. Allah, the Most Exalted, has praised those seeking self-independence saying, “**An ignorant [person] would think them self-sufficient because of their restraint, but you will know them by their [characteristic] sign. They do not ask people persistently [or at all]**.” (Al Baqara: 273). In the same regard, our Prophet Muhammad pbuh said, “*whoever has forbearance, Allah will help him. Whoever tries to be independent, Allah will enrich him*.”

By the same token, a Muslim needs to make sure every bite he put in his mouth is Halal. About this, our Prophet Muhammad pbuh said, “*If you have four things, don’t worry about anything you missed in this world: Truthfulness in speech, preserving one’s trust, good conduct and purity of food*.”

Chastity gives a Muslim resilience, protecting him from bad manners while guiding him to righteousness and prosperity. So he will speak but good. The Prophet Muhammad pbuh used to warn about lying because it is against good manners and the chastity of the tongue. He pbuh said, “*It is great treachery that you should tell your brother something and have him believe you when you are lying*.”

With this in mind, we ask Allah’s favour to grant us chastity and modesty in speech and deeds. May Allah help us also to obey Him and those He has ordained upon us to obey pursuant to His instructions: “**O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you**.” (Annisaa: 59).

May Allah bless you and me with the ability to implement the Holy Quran and the Sunna of His Messenger Muhammad pbuh. I say my words and pray to Allah, the Almighty, to grant us forgiveness. Supplicate to Allah for forgiveness for He is the Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful.

Praise be to Allah. I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah, having no associates. I also bear witness that our Master Muhammad is His servant and messenger, who was true to his promise. May the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, his companions and all those who will follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment.

As to what follows, Please obey Allah and know that the way to acquire chastity is through strong faith. Thus, if a person’s heart enjoys the appeal of faith and feels the presence of Allah, he can hardly dare to violate His orders. It can also be attained by avoiding doubtful matters, because from this window Satan would lure believers to commit sins. Allah says, “**O you who have believed, do not follow the footsteps of Satan. And whoever follows the footsteps of Satan – indeed, he enjoins immorality and wrongdoing.**” (Annur: 21).

Please know also that chastity brings great benefits for people as Allah, the Most Exalted, has made it a reason to bestow His help and assistance. Our Master Muhammad pbuh said, “*There are three who are promised the help of Allah [including]… the one who gets married seeking to keep himself chaste*.” It is thus a shield protecting the chaste person from loss as evidenced in the story of the three people who got stuck in a cave and related by our Prophet Muhammad pbuh.

It says, “*O Allah! I had a she-cousin whom I loved as much as a passionate man loves a woman. I tried to seduce her but she refused till I paid her one-hundred Dinars. So I worked hard till I collected one hundred Dinars and went to her with that But when I sat in between her legs (to have sexual intercourse with her), she said, ‘O Allah’s slave! Be afraid of Allah! Do not deflower me except legally (by marriage contract). So I left her O Allah! If you considered that I had done that only for seeking Your pleasure then please let the rock move a little to have a (wider) opening.’ So Allah shifted that rock to make the opening wider for them.*”

Be watchful therefore of Allah’s commandments and be keen to observe chastity. You are also required to teach your children to live and act according to it so you win Allah’s reward in this life and the next.

Allah has commanded you an order to which He and His angels are both committed, when He says, the meaning of which is, “**Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet: O ye that believe! Send ye blessings on him, and salute him with all respect**.” (Al Ahzab: 56).

The Prophet pbuh said, “*for everyone who invokes a blessing on me will receive ten blessings from Allah.*” May the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon our Master Muhammad pbuh, his family and all his companions.

May Allah be pleased with the Rightly Guided Caliphs and all those who will follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment.

**Chastity of Thoughts**

**Question:** Could you please elucidate the phrases “purity of ideas” or “chastity of thoughts”?

**Answer:** Thought and action are the two most important dynamics that show us the way to truly exist, help us stay as ourselves in the face of fierce storms, and help us change ourselves in the progressive sense. Although thought in its general meaning comes before actions, a certain thought with its intricate and detailed meanings develops within the very process of (putting it into) action. That is, a person can concentrate on a certain subject first, give much thought to it, and try to fathom it correctly. However, only after putting the issue into real life practice will one gain further insight into it, accept and accommodate themselves to it, and found it on a sound basis. This is because implementing what one has thought about will make one face some new situations which will, in turn, lead to deeper thoughts on the issue, and thus the general ideas at the beginning will rest upon unshakable grounds. So be it in a general context or a specific one with lots of details, the most important essential we need to pursue in all of our intentions and thoughts is “purity of ideas.” In this respect, we need to remain faithful to the purity of ideas, seeing it as part of our very character, and protect it under our wings against all odds.

**Sound Thoughts Produce Sound Conduct**

It is possible that some people may adopt negative opinion and attitudes toward us, but others’ wrong attitudes should never lead us to reflect back a similar sort of attitude. Wherever we stand with respect to our essential values, we need to stand our ground against all odds. Otherwise, once our thoughts and feelings begin to waver according to others’ attitudes and behaviors, the wavering will continue and eventually take us off the righteous course. What we need to do, however, is not even let others distract and keep us busy—let alone taking us off course—and try to keep away from every kind of influence that might serve as a provocative factor against our course and our stream of thought. We should know that the real purpose of provocations is to avert the volunteers devoted to high ideals from their path and make them change course, not with the purpose of achieving something else but for achieving this very end.

For this reason, representatives of sound thinking should never change in the face of the inconsistent and baseless claims made by others—of course with the exception of making legal claims by appealing and refuting in order to protect one’s reputation against defamation and using their lawful right to sue them for slander and other violation of rights—and always try to keep up their purity and innocence. We need to think straight at all the times so that the actions we are to build on those thoughts are right and straight. Otherwise, if we move away to one side with every storming wind, we might lose track, fall to other trails, becoming adrift in the end.

**Those Who Think Positively Take Delight in Their Lives**

**The Messenger of Allah**, peace and blessings be upon him, once stated that a believer’s silence should be reflection (*tafakkur*) and his speaking should be wisdom.”[Daylami, *Al-Musnad*, 1/421] Taking this radiant statement into consideration, we can say that thinking,  imagining, and shooting for good things will be counted as worship for a believer. Even though busying ourselves with seemingly impossible thoughts normally means wasting our energy, if a person cherishes a wish to transform the color and pattern of the world into a more beautiful and vivid one, I think even the dreams and imaginings of that person will take on a hue of worship. Thus, what befalls on believers is to become oriented to such beautiful considerations and lead their lives accordingly. In one of the epigrams at the end of *The* *Letters*, Bediüzzaman states: “Those who attend to the good side of everything contemplate the good; those who contemplate the good enjoy life.” Therefore, someone’s turning his life into a delightful melody and spending his life as if he were walking through the corridors of Paradise depends on his thinking beautifully. However, one’s thoughts also could take people to negative ways, such as hedonism and bohemianism, unless he uses it in a positive way. Also, even imaginings and conceptions that are not channeled toward goodness can make one face such negativities. For this reason, believers must continuously be preoccupied with thoughts that take root in their values, overflow with them, continuously read and think, and feed on their essential sources without leaving any voids in their life. At the same time, they must give their willpower its due to such an extent that they always remain close to the feelings and thoughts that are not granted a visa by their pure conscience. If they are prone to negative winds in spite of all their efforts, they should—as advised by the Messenger of God—try to free themselves from that atmosphere immediately. Otherwise, a person who sets sail into dreams that might corrupt the purity of his mind sometimes may go too far and not have the opportunity to return to the shore (of safety). Therefore, if one does not control the feelings of grudge, hatred, vengeance, and lust, they might break down barriers and thereby cause them to take wrong decisions and commit evil acts. One must give their willpower its due on one hand and ask protection from Allah (SWT) on the other. Those who can achieve this will lead their lives in a greenhouse of Divine protection. But still one should never forget that even the most upright people might topple over, and thus we must never give up our vigilance. When we stumble and lose our balance, we must turn to our Lord and ardently pray like our forefather Prophet Adam (AS) did:  “*Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and do not have mercy on us, we will surely be among those who have lost*,” (al-A’raf 7:23) then straighten up, and turn toward Him again.

**Desires and Fancies in Guise of Ideas**

Another point to raise in terms of **chastity** of thoughts is that there is always the possibility of desires and fancies masquerading as ideas to misguide a person. The touchstone to distinguish desires and fancies from true ideas is the religious criteria. For example, if you feel enraged when someone’s words and attitudes bother you, you first need to determine whether there is anything that goes against the Truth. If this is not the case, it means that you are getting angry in the name of your carnal self, which shows that the angered reaction stems from personal desires and fancies. The criterion to use in the face of evil as decreed in the Qur’an is to  “*repel evil with what is better (or best)*” (Fussilat 41:34). Accordingly, if someone does evil to you, the primary response towards him or her must be a smiling face intended to defuse the intensity of their strong dislike and malice. But if the evil in question is directly related to sacred values or public interest, as an individual, we do not have the right to forgive his or her act; one can only forgive and show tolerance towards violations against his or her personal rights. Allah Almighty did not assign anybody as a substitute authorized to forgive violations of His rights. No one should dare make such claims, which are clearly disrespectful of Allah’s rights.

Getting back to our main subject, desires and fancies with no sound base sometimes present themselves in the guise of ideas and try to misguide people, in cooperation with the devil and our carnal soul. One might commit certain wrongs in consequence. You can clearly see this on some debate programs where people try to outwit one another. As if they are fixed on controversy, they always try to say the opposite of what the people before them say, not caring whether it is right or wrong. Let us suppose that one of the people with whom such a person argues says, “Now I am going to show you, by Allah’s grace and permission, a way directly leading to Paradise.” If the gates of Paradise miraculously and suddenly appear wide open before him and enable him to see the wonderful blessings beyond imagination, he will still say, “No, we do not want to enter Paradise. We are trying to win here, and you are trying to stop us and push us to inactivity.” That is, such a person will try to respond with demagogy even against the most plausible words and thoughts. Such words actually stem from one’s desires and fancies and are uttered under the influence of the devil. However, people mistake all of them as stemming from their own thoughts and ideas.

Sometimes, people from among believers can also fall for this trap of the devil and carnal soul. When you ask help from such a person, he might say that he needs to stay where he is so that he can guide many others, attempting to hide his desire for spending more time with his family and enjoying worldly life under the guise of altruism. However, a sincere believer burns with a desire for reunion with Allah (SWT), overflows with a desire for meeting the noble Prophet, and wishes to sit at the table of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and share their atmosphere. In spite of these feelings, a sincere believer watches his step and says: “O Allah, I do not know whether I served my time in this world or not. Therefore, I am afraid of committing disrespect towards You.” The conscience is a very important reference point here. For this reason, one must always judge the words one utters with his or her conscience and seek its righteous counseling at every choice and decision made. If someone can achieve this, he or she will be saved from confusing fancies with guidance and carnal desires with commonsense.(7)

O Allah! I ask You for all the good that is near and that which is far, the one of which I know of and the one I do not.

O Allah! I ask You for the good of what Your Prophet and Servant asked of, and I seek refuge in You from the evils of which Your Prophet and Servant asked of.

O Allah! I ask You for Paradise and for such deeds and sayings that will bring us closer to it, and I seek refuge in You from the deeds and sayings which would take me further from it. I ask You to make all decisions good for me.

O Allah, Give us piety and purify our souls. You are Master and the Lord of souls. O Sustainer, amend our intentions, grant that our spouses and our offspring be a joy to our eyes and make success be an ally to us. O Allah, give us rain and do not make us among the despondent. O Allah, relieve us, O Allah, relieve us, O Allah, relieve us.

O Allah, we implore You at this instant not to let a sin unforgiven, a distress unrelieved, an illness unhealed or a handicapped without relief, a dead without mercy or a debt unsettled. Our Lord, give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire.

O Lord, forgive and show mercy, You are the Ever Merciful and there is no strength or power save with Allah, the High, the Great.

O Servants of Allah, remember Allah and He will remember you. Be grateful for His benevolence He will increase His blessings to you. Allah, the Most High, says: “And establish regular Prayer: for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt. And Allah knows the (deeds) that ye do.” (Al Ankaboot: 45).

**References**

**(1) 7:23/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(2) 2:273/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(3) 4:59/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(4) 29:45/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(5) [Ahmad, Ibn Hibbaan, and Al-Haakim, Al-Haakim - Saheeh]**

**(6) [Al-Haakim, Al-Haakim - Saheeh]**

**(7) Tughrabooks, The Light Inc. Q/A**