Week Seven: Blameworthy Traits III

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Inappropriate Anger and Its Cure

During anger, the intellect does not remain sound and the angry person is unable to think of consequences. For this reason, unbefitting words escape from the mouth and oppression and excesses are committed by the hands. When a person succumbs to the rage of anger he hits wildly without thinking, killing the other person, and thus destroys homes and families for generations to come! A hadith states, “Anger is from Shayṭān, and Shayṭān has been created from fire. The cure for fire is water. Thus, when anger comes, make ṭūḍūʾ.”

The cure for anger is that one should get away from the person who has angered him. If the person who has angered you does not go away on his own accord, then you should see to it that you get away. Then think that even though this person has wronged you, taken your right and disobeyed you, day and night we continue disobeying Allah Most Exalted so much more and are negligent in fulfilling His rights, yet despite that, Allah Most Exalted does not snatch away His bounties and favors from us! Just as we desire that Allah Most Exalted should forgive our sins, similarly we should desire to forgive the sins of Allah’s servants. We should forgive Allah’s servants and bestow favors on them as much as we wish to be forgiven on the Day of Judgment. By thinking of this one’s heart will begin to lighten, Allah willing.

Recite a few times aʿūdhu billāhi minash Shayṭānir Rajīm (I seek refuge in Allah from the Rejected Shayṭān); make ṭūḍūʾ and drink cold water; if you are standing, then sit down; if you are sitting, then lie down; and think of Allah’s anger. When your anger lessens and your mind becomes sound, then select an appropriate punishment. For example, if you become angry for the sake disciplining your child, then when your anger subsides and after careful consideration, punish only as much as is allowed in the Shariah. By repetition, one’s anger will be reformed.

Controlling one’s anger feels like a burden on the nafs, but its result is always favorable. Even an enemy will become a friend. On the other hand, by the conceitedness of one’s anger, even a friend will become a foe. Due to his evil character, a person will gradually lose all helpers. One such person was extremely evil-natured and would vex his neighbors. When his wife passed away, he was forced to hire workers to clean his impurities. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, “A strong person is not he who defeats others in wrestling; a strong person is he who controls himself at the time of anger.” Allah Most Exalted has praised those who swallow their anger, those who forgive the wrong-doings of people, and those who treat people with excellence.

Regarding the loss of wealth, one should think that everything occurs by the command of Allah Most Exalted, and that through patience one will receive reward. By reciting the phrase innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rājiʿūn (Verily we are from Allah and to Him is our return), one is promised a better bounty in return. Think that by exacting revenge your reward will be lost and you will attain no benefit at all. In anger, if one takes revenge and thereby oppresses the other party, he will have to separately bear Allah’s punishment and seizure.

Exemplary Incidents of Controlling Anger

The First Incident
A pious and righteous Shaykh, Abū Yazīd al-Bīstāmī (Allah have mercy on Him), was walking along when an enemy of his threw a basket of ashes on top of his head. Abū Yazīd said, “Al-ḥamdulillāh (All praise is due to Allah)” His disciples asked, “Was this an occasion to say al-ḥamdulillāh?” He replied, “For the one who was worthy of being burnt by fire due to his disobedience, why should he not be grateful that only ashes fell on him?”

The Second Incident

Two men were fighting in front of Mawlānā Rūmī (Allah have mercy on Him). One said, “If you say curse me once, I will curse at you ten times.” Mawlānā Rūmī said, “Curse at me one thousand times, I will not reply with even one vulgar word.” Both of them fell down, kissed his feet, and reconciled.

The Third Incident

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā (Allah have mercy on Him) rebuked a servant, who then sought forgiveness. The Shaykh said, “You always trouble me like this, for how long must I bear this attitude of yours?” His uncle, Mawlānā Ilyās Sāhib (Allah have mercy on Him), was sitting close by. He whispered into his ear, “As much as you want Allah Most Exalted to forgive you, forgive His servant’s faults here.”

A Beautiful and Effective Reflection to Cure Anger

When anger completely overcomes you, immediately think, “If I control my anger at this time and forgive, then Allah Most Exalted, on the Day of Judgment, will hold back His punishment from me.” This glad tiding is found in the narration of Anas b. Mālik (may Allah be pleased with him)
Evil Glances, Treachery of the Heart and Worship of Beauty

Among all the evil character traits, this sickness is very dangerous. In the beginning its harms are not perceived; a man feels at the inception that he is only making his heart pleased with these beauties. He is not taking anything from them, nor is he giving them anything. This thought is a mere deception because through evil glances and filthy thoughts not only is the heart affected, but one’s sperm becomes thin, his health begins to deteriorate, and the enjoyment of worship is snatched away. He will not experience joy in dhikr and worship.

Some incidents lead to disastrous results. May Allah Most Exalted save us! Due to one person’s evil glances, the love of a beautiful woman penetrated his heart to such an extent that even when he was told to repent, he said, “I repent from all sins; however, I will not repent for the extreme love I have for my beloved!” When he was told to recite the kalimah, he replied, “The pleasure of my beloved is more beloved and valuable to me than the love of Allah!” (May Allah Most Exalted protect us!) In this way, he left the world in state of disbelief.

Shayṭān makes a concerted effort to involve spiritual wayfarers in these two sicknesses: the trap of women and the love of handsome boys.

Note

At times, Shayṭān mesmerizes a person’s gaze to the extent that even an ordinary looking person appears extremely handsome to him. In every gaze, there are thousands of arrows from the quivers of Shayṭān, hidden. Mawlānā Rūmī (Allah have mercy on Him) has referred to this condition as tambihiyyah. This is a very dangerous condition. Hakīm al-Ummah Thānwi (Allah have mercy on Him) has mentioned of this state, “O Allah! Protect Ashraf ʿAlī from this condition!” He further writes, “When Allah Most Exalted, through His mercy, saves one from this condition, then this condition is called tambih.”

It is astonishing that some foolish people do not regard these things as sins. In one hand are some prayer beads while he is staring at women and young boys with an evil intent, even though in the Shariah both of these actions are haram (unlawful) and are dangerous sins. The one who persists and continuously perpetrates these actions is a transgressor and an open sinner. Such a person will not even whiff the fragrance of Allah closeness.

Love affairs and evil glances destroy physical as well as spiritual health. They cause one to become disgraced in this life and the Hereafter. If this sickness is found during one’s student days, it weakens his heart, mind, and memory, and eliminates knowledge from the heart. It deprives the seeker of religious knowledge from the blessings of knowledge and piety, and leaves him eternally bereft of perfection and progress in knowledge and action.

One should therefore treat this sickness with great concern, care, and determination. Never regard this poison as honey and never regard this cause of destruction as a cause of happiness and joy. When Allah Most Exalted has commanded us to protect our gazes, how can there be any benefit or
goodness in this action? Who can be more well-wishing for His servants than Allah Most Exalted? In short, evil glances and love affairs are extremely dangerous sicknesses which destroy one’s religious and worldly life. There is not sufficient space in this booklet for lengthy details concerning this. If you want to study their harms more in detail, refer to this weak servant’s book *Remedies to Spiritual Maladies.*
Evil Glances and Illicit Love Affairs

This sickness is found on different levels according to every person’s nature. Some suffer from it to a great extent, while others to an even more severe extent. Some become involved in this illness as soon as they attain maturity.
Reformation for Children

Parents should be concerned about saving their children from this illness. If a person destroys his youth, he will inevitably be deprived of attaining academic excellence. Keep a careful watch over your children from a young age. Keep them far away movie theatres, television, and evil company.

Within addition to this, instill within them the fear of Allah and the punishment of the Hellfire. Take them to the gatherings of pious and righteous Shaykhs from time to time. As much as possible, do not keep your children away from your care. While they are young, do not leave them and journey out of the country without dire need. When the father is absent, children very quickly become uninhibited. They cannot be controlled by the mother and become careless as a result. Continue making fervent *duʿāʾ* to Allah Most Exalted for the piety of your children. Read this *duʿāʾ* after every obligatory prayer:

*Rabbanā ḥablanā min aẓwājinā wa dhurriyātinā qurrata aʿyun waj-ʿalnā lil muttaqīna imāmā*  
(“O our Lord! Make our spouses and our offspring a coolness for our eyes, and make us the leaders of the righteous people.”)

Keep your children engaged in different permissible activities. By having a busy life, one is generally protected from Shayṭānic traps.
Reformation for Adults

Make a habit of doing some dhikr daily. If there is any pious and righteous Shaykh in your locality, consult with him. Otherwise, recite salutations upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) three hundred times, Lā ilāha illā Allāh one hundred times, and invoke “Allāh, Allāh” one hundred times. One should recite a portion of Quran daily and be punctual in offering the ishrāq, awwābīn, and tahajjud prayers. If one is unable to awaken in the last portion of the night he should perform two or four raka’āt of nafl (supererogatory prayer) after performing the Sunnah of the ‘Ishā’ prayer, before the witr, with the intention of tahajjud. By having punctuality in dhikr, recitation, and optional prayers, light will be created in the heart. The light of Truth (Allah Most Exalted) cools the fire of desires. Mawlānā Rūmī (Allah have mercy on Him) said, “The fire of the sensual desires of the nafs can only be cooled by the light of Allah Most Exalted.”

Note

One important point is that some people practice on the demands of sin, desiring thereby to weaken it. They feel that by committing the sin the desire and demand of sin will lessen. This is a clear deception. With every sin, the desire to commit sins only increases. There is only a short and temporary decrease. Thereafter, the flame rises even more than before. The thought of lessening sin by sin is like one who washes feces with urine, thinking that the impurity of the feces will be lessened. Such people always remain perplexed and will never become pure from sin. Therefore, muster courage and do not practice on the demands of sin. If at times one is overpowered and he misuses his eyes then he should perform at least four rak‘āt of nafl, give some charity, and repent sincerely and remorsefully.

When the desire to sin arises, you must muster courage. Make du‘ā intensely. Perform two raka‘āt of Salāt al-Hājah and seek Allah’s protection. Engage yourself in some permissible and good work, visit a friend, amuse yourself, and involve yourself in buying goods or other necessities for your wife and children. In this way, the inclination and sharpness of the thoughts of the nafs will be weakened. It will soon become overpowered and non-existent. This prescription is very beneficial. Shaykh Khawāja Sāhib (Allah have mercy on Him) composed it in poetic form. These are all the advices of Ḥakīm al-Ummah Thānwī (Allah have mercy on Him):

When the desire (to sin) is strong, then stop it
If not, it will pass over your head
For a short while, remove thoughts of it
This river which has risen will descend

Do not be afraid to strive in this manner. Be prepared to control this sorrow your whole life. This is what being an ‘ashiqī (ardent lover) is all about: that you place the neck of every desire of your nafs under the sword of Allah command! You should happily bear whatever difficulty there is in not allowing yourself to sin and in protecting your eyes. This is a martyr fighting in al-Jihād al-Akbar (the greatest Jihad). Even though he is alive, internally he is constantly becoming a martyr.
I am being slaughtered by the sword of your commandment
My martyrdom is not indebted to a dagger

To become a martyr once under the sword of a disbeliever is easy. In this great jihād, one is forced to wave the sword of the Divine commands over one’s evil desires for his whole life.

Perfection of love is not to die, but to live dying (breaking your desires)
O the moth is not as yet aware of this secret.

One should remain under the supervision of a friend of Allah Most Exalted for a complete cure. Spiritually sick people must remain for a while in the company of a completed guide who follows the Sunnah, has piety, and has been given permission to receive bay’ā (the pledge of fealty) by another completed Shaykh, until one attains a special connection with Allah Most Exalted in the heart referred to as nisbah bāṭiniyyah By attaining a connection with Allah Most Exalted, it becomes very easy for a spiritual wayfarer to protect his nafs.

Ḥaḵīm al-Ummah Thānwi (Allah have mercy on him) has given a prescription in two lines for saving oneself from all sins: [1] Before sinning, prevent your nafs with all your might. [2] If you err due to the evil of your nafs, repent with a sincere heart.

Continue beseeching for protection in the Divine court by making duʿā earnestly and humbly. Keep the place of your prostration wet with tears. If you cannot cry, then imitate the form of a crying person. Duʿā is a great bounty and a means of attaining Allah’s mercy and grace. Only by the grace of Allah Most Exalted can a servant be both protected from sins as well as capable of fulfilling the Divine commands.

Mawlānā Rūmī (Allah have mercy on Him) has said, “O Allah! Even if thousands of traps of sins are in front of us, if Your grace is with us to assist us, then we have no sorrow!” He has also said, “By not having the kindness and grace of Allah Most Exalted, the one hunting the deer becomes entrapped in the jaws of the boar.”

Therefore, never be proud of your piety and abstinence. Be afraid at all times. Continue making duʿā and crying to Allah Most Exalted for protection. Never look at your own strength. Regard your success to be based on humility. If Allah Most Exalted removes His grace, kindness, and assistance, then a pious person as firm as an elephant or a lion will also slip and be destroyed. On the other hand, if Allah Most Exalted shows us His grace and kindness as our protector and consoler, then even a spiritual wayfarer as weak as a mosquito will be honored and bestowed with the highest stages of Divine closeness. One will see the animal of the nafs and the schemes and plots of Shayṭān running away from the lion-like courage of this person, just as deer, cheetahs, and many large horned animals like stags run wildly from a lion.

Shayṭān also makes a person feel despondent due to this sickness. When a spiritual wayfarer, after spending a period of time in ḍhikr and contemplation, and after spending time in the company of the friends of Allah Most Exalted, perceives within himself the evil demands of his nafs, he then begins to think, “I cannot remain on this path.” However this is not a path of eunuchs; it is the path of men.
Piety is defined as refraining from acting upon the dictates of sin. If these desires were not present, then how will piety come into existence? Therefore, do not become perplexed even if you have to strive and make effort your whole life. This struggle will gradually become easier, but if by not abstaining from evil glances desires becomes strong and lead to agitation, that is your fault. The path in itself is not difficult—you have made it difficult. In any case, in all conditions do not lose courage. Shaykh Khawāja Ṣāhib (Allah have mercy on Him) has beautifully stated:

*If you cannot defeat the wrestler of the nafs*
*Then do not leave your hands and feet loose*
*You have to fight it your whole life*
*Sometimes it succeeds and sometimes you succeed*

Sometimes, Shayṭān makes people lose hope and says: “What reward and Divine closeness will a person like you attain, who has broken his repentance over and over? Such unworthy people like you will remain deprived of His high court. This is the path of pious people.” The answer to this is that undoubtedly the breaking of our repentance is a very great sin, however, we do not have any other refuge; we do not have any other deity. Wherever we go, there is no other place for us besides Allah Most Exalted. If He is only a Rabb (Creator, Sustainer, and Lord) for the pious, then is there another Rabb for us sinners to whom we can turn? We are also His. We will repent and cry before Him, making Him pleased.

Ḥakīm al-Ummah Thānwi (Allah have mercy on him) said, “If the one who repents is not raised up with the perfect ones, he will definitely be raised with the penitent, Allah willing.” The following words appear in the noble hadith, “O Allah, nothing can hold back Your favors.” Why should one then become despondent? Continue beseeching Allah Most Exalted for His mercy. Whatever you receive, you will receive by Allah grace. This advice is only to save you from despondency and not to make you audacious enough to commit sin. One should fear disobeying Allah Most Exalted just as one fears a snake and a scorpion. Continuously make sincere ḍuʿā for your own reformation and ask your friends and elders to make ḍuʿā also. Moreover, ask your spiritual guide and Shaykh. Continuously make requests to him for ḍuʿā.

*It is sufficient for just one lamentation of ours to reach there (to Allah)*
*Even though we engage in many lamentations and appeals*

This means that the day one request, one ḍuʿā, is accepted, our work will be done. Otherwise, our every ḍuʿā and cry reaches there. Here, reaching means acceptance.

The most effective and successful cure is to establish a connection with a qualified spiritual guide.

Inform him of all the conditions relating to you reformation. Whatever he proposes, act upon it with your heart and soul.