20983 - The punishment for zina (fornication, adultery) and how to keep oneself from going back to it

the question

The problem is that I am a young man of thirty years of age. I got to know a girl who is nineteen years old who used all kinds of means to get to know me and get close to me. Without much talk or discussion, she went with me to my flat and I had intercourse with her dozens of times. There was a moment when I felt that I was about to die and I wanted to repent. I went to my father and asked him to get me married, and in fact I got married to a righteous girl from a respectable family. My main aim in marriage was to seek a woman who was religiously-committed, and this is what happened, for she is religious and is the daughter of a respected shaykh.

But my problem has become worse. Despite the fact that I have been successfully married – in everyone else's eyes – for over a year and a half, I suddenly realized that I still feel love for the first girl with whom I had intercourse, and I am not able to leave her. Since I got married, I have not touched her or gone near her, but not a day goes by without me getting in touch with her by phone, and I do not want to hide from you the fact that I masturbate with my hand while I am speaking to her on the phone. I feel as if I am trapped by this girl and now she is not after me as much as I am after her. When we meet I feel scared to touch her, because I fear going back to zina.

My problem is simply psychological, which is how to discipline [?] myself and convince myself to keep away from this girl for once and for all, even though my wife is more beautiful than her and is better and she does everything she can to keep me chaste. Hence I despair of myself and I do not know how to sort myself out, despite the fact that everyone around me describes me as being good-hearted, loving good for people, shedding tears for the calamities and needs that befall people; they say that I try harder to do good for people than they do themselves, happily and willingly, and without them knowing about that, following the words of the Messenger of Allaah, "A man who gives in charity and conceals it so that his left hand does not know what his right hand is

giving.”

Please help me to that I can be content with myself and be a righteous person.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

We ask Allah to relieve your distress and that of everyone who is distressed. From your question we may note the following:

1 – The fact that you have cut off the route to the Shaytaan, and are preventing him from continuing to tempt you, by getting married is something commendable, which points – in sha Allah – to the goodness in your heart.

2 – In order for you to be sincere towards your Lord in your repentance, and so that Allah may change your bad deeds (sayi’aat) into good deeds (hasanaat), you have to stop thinking about the first woman. Do not follow in the footsteps of the Shaytaan, and do not get carried away thinking about her, let alone speaking to her on the telephone, let alone meeting her, let alone doing anything that is more serious than that.

3 – Since it was thinking of death that led you to leave the first woman and get married, you should never stop thinking of it. This is the best advice a person may be given, whether he is falling short in obeying Allah, or he is doing something that earns the wrath of Allah. This is what gives the one who is falling short the motive to strive, because when death comes, good deeds are no longer recorded. It also gives the one who is doing evil actions the motive to stop and give them up, because a person’s deeds are judged according to his last deeds. It is sufficient for you to think of one thing: what if Allah were to take your soul when you were masturbating while talking to this woman? What if Allah were to take your soul when you were having unlawful intercourse with her?

My brother, think about it. Do you want to come out of your grave on the day when mankind is resurrected, holding onto your private part? Do you not see the great difference between this and

between being resurrected prostrating or reciting the Talbiyah (as on Hajj or ‘Umrah) or remembering Allah?

4 – The way in which you describe yourself makes us feel that there is much that is good in you, so beware of losing the reward for this goodness by having a bad end. Beware of depriving yourself of the reward for these virtues by committing such a major sin that will bring the wrath of your Lord upon you.

5 – You have no excuse for this relationship, for you are married to a woman who – as you say – is more beautiful and is better than the first one, so why not thank Allah for giving you a halaal means of satisfying your desires? Why are you not content with that which Allah has decreed for you of permissible things?

Your sin in doing these haraam deeds is worse than if you were not married. You are not single, rather Allah has blessed you with the means of satisfying your desires in a permissible way. So whenever the Shaytaan makes you think of her (the first woman), go to your wife and seek refuge with Allah from the Shaytaan.

6 – We give you the best advice, which is to make du’aa’. Get up in the latter part of the night and beseech your Lord, submitting yourself to Him and humbling yourself before His Majesty, asking Him to rid you of the problem. Turn to your Lord and call upon Him, for He is the best One to be asked – may He be glorified – and He does not turn away His slaves if they are sincere.

7 – Do you know that by thinking of this girl, getting in touch with her and meeting her, the Shaytaan may cause you to fall into that which you did before? I hope that you will not be over-confident and think that you will be able to resist, for the one who is ruled by his desires is weak, and whoever walks for a few steps with the Shaytaan will walk with him to the end. But you should know that you are incurring the wrath of the Compeller (al-Jabbaar) and that you are committing one of the gravest acts of disobedience against Allah after shirk.

Imaam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) said: I do not know of any sin after murder that is worse than zina, and he quoted as evidence the hadeeth of ‘Abd-Allah ibn Mas’ood who said: “O

Messenger of Allah, which sin is the worst?" He said, "Setting up a rival to Allah when He is the One Who created you." ['Abd-Allah] said: "Then what?" He said, "Killing your child for fear that he may eat with you." ['Abd-Allah] said, "Then what?" He said, "Committing adultery with your neighbour's wife." And confirmation of that was revealed in the Qur'aan:

"And those who invoke not any other ilaah (god) along with Allah, nor kill such person as Allah has forbidden, except for just cause, nor commit illegal sexual intercourse and whoever does this shall receive the punishment"
[al-Furqaan 25:68]

You must also understand the effects that zina has on the soul (or on one's psyche). Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Zina encompasses all the characteristics of evil: lack of religious commitment, loss of piety, loss of chivalry, lack of protective jealousy (gheerah). You will not find any adulterer who is pious, or keeps his promises, or speaks truthfully, or is a good friend, or has complete protective jealousy towards his family. Treachery, lying, betrayal, lack of modesty, lack of awareness that Allah is always watching, lack of chivalry, loss of protective jealousy from the heart – these are the effects and implications of zina.

One of the effects of zina is that it earns the wrath of Allah because His sacred limits are transgressed. If a man were to do such a thing to any king, he would meet the direst consequences. Another effect of zina is the darkening of the face, and the grimness and misert of face that are apparent to other people. Another effect of zina is darkness of the heart and the extinguishing of its light, which is what causes the extinguishing of light in the face and the darkening thereof. Another effect of zina is the poverty that it leads to. Another effect of zina is the loss of respect towards the one who does it, and the lowering of his status in the eyes of his Lord and in the eyes of His slaves. Another effect of zina is that is causes him to lose the best of attributes, namely chastity, goodness and righteousness, and it earns him their opposites, namely

immorality, evildoing, adultery and betrayal. Another effect of zina is that it causes him to lose the title of believer, as it was narrated in al-Saheehayn that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “No adulterer is a believer at the moment when he is committing adultery.” Another of the effects of zina is that it exposes one to the possibility of being one of the inhabitants of the oven (tannoor) in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saw the adulterers and adulteresses. Another of the effects of zina is that it takes away the goodness which Allah described as the attribute of those who are chaste, and replaces it with the evil which Allah described as the attribute of the adulterers, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Bad statements are for bad people (or bad women for bad men) and bad people for bad statements (or bad men for bad women). Good statements are for good people (or good women for good men) and good people for good statements (or good men for good women)”

[al-Noor 24:26]

Allah has forbidden Paradise to every evil person, and He has made Paradise the abode of the good, and no one will enter it but those who are good. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Those whose lives the angels take while they are in a pious state (i.e. pure from all evil, and worshipping none but Allah Alone) saying (to them): Salaamun ‘Alaykum (peace be on you) enter you Paradise, because of that (the good) which you used to do (in the world)”

[al-Nahl 16:32]

“and its keepers will say: Salaamun ‘Alaykum (peace be upon you)! You have done well, so enter here to abide therein”

[al-Zumar 39:73]

So they will deserve the greeting of the angels and admission to Paradise because of their goodness. But the adulterers are among the most evil of creation, and Allah has made Hell the abode of evil and its people. When the Day of Resurrection comes, the evil will be distinct from the

good, and the evil will be piled up together, then it and its people will be thrown into Hell. No one who is good will enter Hell and no one who is evil will enter Paradise. Another of the effects of zina is the sense of alienation which Allah instills in the heart of the adulterer, and this is like the alienation that shows on his face. For the one who is chaste has sweetness in his face and contentment in his heart, and whoever sits with him feels at ease with him. But the adulterer has signs of alienation in his face and whoever sits with him will feel uneasy. Another of the effects of zina is lack of respect, as his family, friends and others lose respect for him, and he becomes the most despicable thing in their sight; this is in contrast to the chaste person, who is blessed with dignity and sweetness. Another of the effects of zina is that people will regard him as a traitor and no one will trust him with regard to his wife or child. Another of the effects of zina is the foul odour that will emanate from him and be detected by everyone who has a sound heart; it will emanate from his mouth and body, and were it not for the fact that there are all the people have a similar odour, that smell would spread far and wide.

Another of the effects of zina is that he will feel uneasy and distressed, for adulterers are doing the opposite of what they are seeking. Whoever seeks the enjoyment and good things of life by means of that which Allah has forbidden, Allah will punish him by letting him get the opposite of that which he is trying to achieve. For that which is with Allah can only be attained by obeying Him, and Allah never makes disobedience towards Him the means of attaining anything good. If the immoral person only knew what delight, happiness, ease and good living there is in chastity, he would realize that the delights that he has missed out on are many times greater than those which he may have enjoyed, let alone the consequences in the Hereafter, when the chaste person will attain the reward of Allah and will be honoured by Him. Another of the effects of zina is that he has exposed himself to missing out on the delights of al-hoor al-‘iyn in the beautiful abodes of the Garden of Eden (Jannaat ‘Adan). We have stated above that Allah will punish those who wear silk in this world by depriving them of it on the Day of Resurrection, and He will punish those who drink wine in this world by depriving them of it on the Day of Resurrection. Similarly, those who enjoy forbidden images in this world will also be deprived of such in the Hereafter. Indeed, everything that a person gets in this world, if he indulges in it by permissible means, his share of it on the Day of Resurrection will be reduced to the extent that he indulged in it. And if he got it from haraam

sources, he will lose out on it altogether on the Day of Resurrection. Another of the effects of zina is that zina leads to cutting the ties of kinship, disobedience towards parents, haraam earnings, mistreating others, neglect of one's wife and children, and it may even lead a person to shed blood unlawfully. He may seek help to commit zina by means of sihr (witchcraft) and shirk, and he may or not know that this sin inevitably includes other sins committed beforehand or alongside it, and that it leads to other kinds of sins that come after it. It is surrounded by a host of other sins that come before and after. It is the thing that is most likely to bring about evil in this world and the Hereafter, and the most likely to prevent good in this world and in the Hereafter. If a person falls into its traps and snares, it will be hard for sincere people to save him and for doctors to treat him; its prisoner cannot easily be ransomed, and its victim cannot be rescued. It also leads to the loss of blessings. If a person falls into this trap, let him bid farewell to the blessings of Allah, for blessings may easily depart from a person and vanish. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“That is so because Allah will never change a grace which He has bestowed on a people until they change what is in their ownselves. And verily, Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower”

[al-Anfaal 8:53]

“But when Allah wills a people’s punishment, there can be no turning back of it, and they will find besides Him no protector”

[al-Ra’d 13:10]

These are some of the harmful effects of this action.

Rawdat al-Muhibbeen, p. 360-363

We advise you to read a book by Ibn al-Qayyim which is very useful with regard to this topic. It is al-Jawaab al-Kaafi li man sa’ala ‘ala al-Dawaa’ al-Shaafi.

Finally, we ask Allah to keep you safe and sound with regard to your religious commitment and your worldly affairs, and to help you put your affairs in order before you meet your Lord. And Allah is the Guide to the Straight Path.