

Obscenity, Revilement and Defamation

Obscenity is the expression that is offensively and grossly indecent, such as the shameless and improper words used by the ignorant and avoided by the noble. Such expressions may be used metonymically by the respectful people. In the same manners, authors and polite people used to avoid using obscene expressions out of their civility and decorum; therefore, they use metonymy instead.

Revilement is to insult and curse others, such as calling bad names.

Defamation is to impute dishonor to others by definite expressions.

These three qualities, however, are the most hideous products of the tongue:

The Prophet (S) said: “For every obscene, indecent, and shameless individual who does not care for his speech or for what is said to him, Allah has banned him from being in Paradise. If you search for the family of such individuals, you will find them bastards or semi-sons of devils. There are devils among people. Listen to Allah’s saying (as an address to the Shaitan): And share with them in wealth and children^{1, 2}.”

“The vilest servants of Allah are those whose association is hated because of their obscenity³.”

“To revile at the believers is defection, to fight them is atheism, to backbite them is act of disobedience to Allah, and their wealth is as sacred as their blood (soul)⁴.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “He who defames a believer shall suffer violent death and will not be in good manner at all⁵.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Hell is the abode of him whose wording is avoided by people⁶.”

“Shia! Be good examples as you represent us (by doing good deeds). Do not represent us in ill behaviors. Say good wording to people and have control over your tongues (i.e. wording). Stop uttering curious and obscene language⁷.”

Imam al-Kadhim (a) said about two men who were showering insults on each other: “The originator of such revilement is the unjust party. He burdens his as well as the other’s sin, unless the other party transgresses⁸.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) had a friend who was so close to him that he did not depart him at any situation. One day, they were walking in a mart and followed by a slave from Sind⁹. The Imam’s friend turned his face three times to find his slave, but he could not. In the fourth, he could see the slave; so, he shouted at him: “son of a, where were you?”

As soon as Imam as-Sadiq (a) heard that expression from his friend, he slapped his forehead with the hand and said with astonishment: “Subhaanallah¹⁰!

How strange is that! How do you defame his mother?

In the previous, I thought you were pious. Now, I have known that you are impious.”

The man said: “May God make me your sacrifice. His mother is only a polytheist woman of Sind.”

The Imam said: “You should have known that every nation has a legal form of marriage.” He (a) then asked the man to leave him. After that situation, Imam as-Sadiq (a) did not accompany that man at all¹¹.

Disadvantages of Obscenity

Vituperations are mostly resulted from enmity, envy, rage, and immorality, in addition to illiteracy and impoliteness. They divest man of the polite human traits to impute lowliness and savagery to him. They also originate enmity, instigate alienation, and expose to God’s wrath.

Amirul-Mu’minin (a) said: “The tongue is a beast. It will raven if it is set free.”

¹. The Holy Quran, Sura of Al-Israa (17) Verse (64): The whole meaning (that is mentioned in three Verses) is as follows: ((God said to the Shaitan, "Go away. All those who follow you will have hell as ample recompense for their deeds. Draw anyone of them you can into sin by your voice and by your cavalry and infantry, share their property and children with them and make promises to them. Your promises are all lies. You have no authority over My servants. Your Lord is a Sufficient Protector." 17:63-5))

². Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 160 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

³. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 160 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁴. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 160 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁵. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 160 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁶. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 160 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁷. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 15/2/192 (as quoted from al- Amali).

⁸. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 160 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

⁹. Sind is a province of South East Pakistan, traversed by the lower reaches of the Indus.

¹⁰. Subhanallah (Glory to God) is an expression of astonishment.

¹¹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 161 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

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