

The Custom of Sleeping

SHAHABEDDIN ZOLFAGHARI

Abstract: one of the most important needs of our life is the need of sleep. In general we can claim at least one third of our life is sleeping. Therefore it seems logical to observe some rules about it. In Islam there are some recommendations based on verses and traditions about sleeping that we mention some of them here.

The Almighty God says in Quran about sleeping that,

“And (we) made your sleep a rest” (the holy Quran, 78:9)

“Sobt” means rest, and stopping activity. Sleep is an approved act in our religion, especially after the evening prayer. Except for some people who are in charge, it is recommended to all people to sleep after the evening prayer, which is one hour after the sun-set prayer.

The Division of Time in a Narrative

Divide your daily time into 4 parts:

- 1- A time to make money
- 2- A time to visit your friends
- 3- A time to worship God
- 4- A time for lawful pleasure and enjoyment.

One of the lawful pleasures is sleeping. If legitimate pleasures are taken, you would precede other three occupations.

Note: our body is the carrier of our soul. Therefore, it needs to live physically. The Wise God provides pleasure to satisfy needs of the body by them. For example, if there was no thirst and the joy of drinking, the human being never would ask for water. Or if he does not feel need of sleep and pleasure, he would be tired and exhausted of the daily activities. In this way, when the physical life is performed and the body needs are met, then the divine and human aspects of life are improved as well, and the body, the carrier, would be a capable path to the high quality of the spirituality of the soul. That is why the esteemed Islam has allocated some parts of human's lifetime to the pleasures that sleep is one of them.

Excessive Sleeping

Imam Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said:

“Too much sleep destroys the spirituality and the life.”

Also he introduced the reasons of too much sleep:

“A long sleep is the result of excessive water drinking, which is in turn caused by gluttony that both spoil soul and body to worship. They cause heart cruelty, and foil thinking and courtesy.

The Sleeping Time

According to the Islamic teachings, sleeping is disapproved in two periods of time which bring poverty too.

1-The period between the azan for Morning Prayer and the sun-rise (which longs an hour or so)

2-The time between the sun-set prayer and the evening prayer.

Imam Ali (*p.b.u.h*) said:

“The sleeping between two prayers of sun-set and the evening, and also sleep before sun-rise bring poverty.”

Wakefulness in the early morning, before the sun-rise, has benefits which have been proved. Its fresh weather is also useful for the body and longevity (long life).

Imam Sajjad (*p.b.u.h*) said to Aba-Hamzeh:

“Do not sleep before the sun-rise. I do not like it for you, because it is the time that the Kind God grants the daily bread to human through us.”
(*Behar-ol-Anvar*, Vol. 76, P. 185).

In the above mentioned, there is a fine point that is when you want to ask for imam's help, resort to them in the mentioned time (i. e. at the dawn and before sun-rise). Imam of the age Mahdi (may Allah hasten his Reappearance) gives his special blessings to people in this period of time. On the whole, the grace of reading the holy Quran, worshiping God, saying the prayers with dignity, obtaining the divine knowledge of the household of the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h*), and finally all the materials and spiritual graces are bestowed in the morning, in that special period of time.

Preparation for Sleep

1-Eating sweet things:

Imam Mousa (*p.b.u.h*) used to eat sugar before going to bed. It is good to take a meal containing sugar and calcium. For adult, it has been forbidden to sleep with empty stomach. Especially in the night and morning, it is emphasized to eat some food, even a little. In some narratives we read:

“The breakfast acts as the nail of body (means it helps the body to keep firm for daily actions).”

2-Going to toilet:

Imam Ali (*p.b.u.h*) said to Imam Hassan (*p.b.u.h*):

“O’ my sun, if you want to be needless of the doctor, follow four habits:

- Do not eat food unless you feel hungry;
- Leave the food table when you still have appetite;
- Chew the food well;
- Go to toilet before sleeping;

Why did he call it “habit” ? He tended to emphasize these activities should stick to our minds and should be carried out repeatedly.