

al-Taḥāwī. *ʿAqida*. See al-Ghumaymī, *Sharḥ al-ʿAqida al-Taḥāwīyya*.

See also: ABROGATION; BEAUTIFUL NAMES OF ALLAH; BELIEF; DIVINE DECREE; JIHAD; JUDGMENT; KINGDOM; MUHAMMAD; OBEDIENCE; POWER; PRAYER; PROOF; PROPHETS AND MESSENGERS.

GIBRIL FOUAD HADDAD

AVARICE AND GREED

BUKHL; SHUHḤ; HIRṢ

This article comprises the following sections: i. Definitions and Usage; ii. Avarice and Greed in Human Nature; iii. The Blameworthiness of Avarice; iv. Commendable and Contemptible Desire; v. Bibliography.

Bukhl (stinginess), *shuhḥ* (avarice), *hirs* (cupidity/strong desire), and *ṭamaʿ* (greed/obsessive hope) are closely related terms, referred to in the Qurʾān as human traits which one must struggle to control. The former two, mentioned respectively twelve and five times, are negative attributes that tarnish the human character. *Hirs* and *ṭamaʿ* are used respectively five and twelve times, and are regarded as human desires that can be channelled in a positive or negative manner.

Definitions and Usage

Bukhl and *bakhal*, from the root letters *b-kh-l*, mean stinginess. One who is stingy is called *bākhil* or *bakhīl* (pl. *bukhalāʾ*), and *bakhhāl* if it becomes a habitual characteristic (Azharī; Ibn Fāris, , *sub b-kh-l*). Al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī (d. 502/1108) defines *bukhl* as the unjust withholding of possessions (*Mufradāt*) (see POSSESSIONS AND PROPERTY). The linguist and jurist al-Fayyūmī (d. ca.770/1368) defines the term in a general sense as refusing a beggar possessions which one does not need and, in a legal sense, as withholding that which it is obligatory to give (*Miṣbāḥ*).

Shuhḥ is defined by many linguists as stinginess (*bukhl*) combined with desire (*hirs*, see below). Verbal forms from the root (as in the phrase *tashāḥḥa l-rajulān ʿalā amr*, “the two men were stingy towards one another over a matter”) suggest contending for a matter lest it become unattainable (Jawharī, *Ṣiḥāḥ*; Ibn Fāris; Rāghib, *sub sh-h-h*). Ibn Manẓūr (630-711/1232-1311) explains *shuhḥ* as covetous attachment to one’s possessions, and stinginess with them. One who has this is called *shahīḥ* (pl. *shihāḥ*, *ashihḥa*, and *ashihḥāʾ*) (*Iṣān*).

In differentiating between *bukhl* and *shuhḥ*, Ibn

Qayyim (691-751/1292-1350) and al-Fayrūzābādī (729-817/1329-1414) describe *shuhḥ* as occurring before *bukhl*: the former is the strong desire to possess something (especially that which belongs to another), while the latter is to refrain from spending one’s assets (see SPENDING). This is supported by the Tradition in which the Prophet, peace be upon him, says: “Beware of avarice (*shuhḥ*), for avarice destroyed those who were before you; it incited them to abandon [social] relations and so they did, and [it] incited them to be stingy (*bukhl*) and so they were” (Aḥmad, Musnad ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, 11:26 §6487). *Shuhḥ*, therefore, is an inner state that leads one to practice *bukhl* (Ibn Qayyim, *al-Wābil al-ṣayyib*, p. 75; Fayrūzābādī, *Baṣāʾir*, *sub b-kh-l* and *sh-h-h*; al-Kafawī, *al-Kulliyāt*, *sub b-kh-l*).

Al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273), however, opines that *shuhḥ* is a combination of stinginess and cupidity. He concludes that *shuhḥ* has more drastic consequences than *bukhl* (*sub Q 3:180*), quoting a variant of the same hadith: “Beware of committing oppression (*ẓulm*), for oppression [shall become] different kinds of darkness (*ẓulumāt*) on the Day of Resurrection. And beware of avarice (*shuhḥ*), for avarice destroyed those who were before you: it incited them to shed blood and make lawful what was unlawful for them” (Muslim, *Birr wal-ṣila wal-adab, taḥrīm al-ẓulm*). Similarly, al-Thaʿālibī’s (350-429/961-1038) listing of these vices ranks *bukhl* as the first and lowest level of stinginess and *shuhḥ*, said to include cupidity, as the fourth level (*Fiḥ al-Iuḡha*, p. 161). Ibn Rajab (736-795/1335-1393) states that *bukhl* and *shuhḥ* may be used interchangeably but are not fundamentally synonymous: the former denotes withholding one’s possessions, while the latter indicates an extreme desire (*hirs*) for something that drives one to seek it even by unlawful means and to neglect one’s obligations (hence the Prophet’s statement in the mentioned hadith) (*Majmūʿ rasāʾil Ibn Rajab 1:69-70*).

Other authorities hold that the word *bukhl* is used for isolated acts of stinginess, while *shuhḥ* refers to a habitual stinginess in all matters that makes it an intrinsic characteristic of a given person. It is also said that *bukhl* is associated with withholding wealth (*q.v.*), while *shuhḥ* pertains to withholding both wealth and kindness (al-Khaṭṭābī, *Maʿālim al-sunan 2:83-84*).

Hirs is defined as excessive desire, and a person exhibiting this quality is called *harīs*. The term has a different sense depending on the object of desire: if this object is inanimate, as with property or wealth, it is a negative trait; if it is living, as with a person, it is a positive trait indicating one’s concern for another’s