

## **Where Do the Unbidden Thoughts Come from, and What Role Do They Play in Our Lives?**

### **Unbidden Thoughts: Windows to Our Soul and Their Role in Our Spiritual and Intellectual Journey**

You've probably heard phrases like "In my heart I knew..." or "Something deep inside of me tells me..." or even "A little voice inside my head says to do this..." At first glance, these phrases seem everyday language and expressions rooted in fleeting emotions. But have you ever thought about deeper meaning lies behind these words? Where exactly do these thoughts come from? Do they have a specific origin, or are they simply products of imagination? What drives us to do specific actions or refrain from doing them without a clear reason?

At a superficial level, these feelings and thoughts may appear as transient inner states, but in the realm of knowledge and ethics, they are signs of a deeper phenomenon known as unbidden thoughts. This concept holds a special place in religious, mystical, and psychological texts, and its role in shaping decisions, behaviors, and even human being's destiny is undeniable.

The truth is that the human being is a complex being with layers of perception, emotion, and pieces of willpower. When we talk about "unbidden thoughts" we refer to ideas that pop up into our mind and influence it and our behavior, before even we use logical reasoning to evaluate them.

Thus, this article aims to explore the nature of unbidden thoughts, their origins, and their types. It also clarifies the impacts of unbidden thoughts on personal and

spiritual life. It will also examine using these thoughts in inner growth. In fact, recognizing unbidden thoughts helps the human being to achieve massive success in acquiring self-knowledge and knowing God.

### **What Is the Origin of Unbidden Thoughts?**

To better understand the nature of unbidden thoughts, we can draw a comparison. Imagine the function of a camera; it captures image and stores it in a memory card. The image should be reflected on a specific surface to be observed. In other words, first, it captures or receives an image, then records it and finally reflect it. The process of generating unbidden thoughts bears similarity to this process. Sensory perceptions are received through human faculties. Then, they are processed by mind. After passing through stages of mental analysis, they dwell in the heart and leave profound impact on the human soul. It is worth noting that the heart, in this context, is not just a physical organ but the center of inner judgments, profound feelings, and fundamental inclinations.

From a cognitive perspective, unbidden thoughts not only enter in the heart, but also, they are refined and regulated by it. Unlike the mind, which is a transient passage for thoughts, the heart is a perpetual home for them. This is why the heart is described in religious and mystical texts as the command center of human existence and the determinant of personal growth and transcendence. When the heart is filled with something, it will reflect reactions corresponding to that thing.

So far, it was clear how unbidden thoughts are formed and what path they take to penetrate the human heart. However, these thoughts fall into categories. So, to direct the heart properly, it is essential to know these categories.

## **Types of Unbidden Thoughts**

Unbidden thoughts, as their name suggests, are ideas, desires, or motivations that pop into our mind. Here a fundamental question arises: Where do these thoughts come from? What factors do cause a positive or a negative thought pop into our mind?

The Origins of Unbidden Thoughts Can Be Divided into Four Main Categories:

### **Angelic Inspiration:**

These thoughts are inspired by angels tasked with guiding humans to do good actions and be righteous. Angelic inspiration, like the unbidden thoughts inspired by Lord, invite us to obedience, piety, remembrance of God, and kindness. Sometimes, the voice of conscience or our inner alarm may manifest these thoughts—a voice that, without coming from outside, calls us to avoid sin and fight for purity.

### **Satanic Whispering:**

In contrast, evil thoughts are temptations that attack human existence. These thoughts have deceptive appearance while their inner nature is destructive. These misleading thoughts lead us toward negligence, selfishness, doubt, cynicism, and undesirable behaviors. The Quran describes Satan as one who “Who whispers into the hearts of people [1].” Satanic thoughts can enter our mind so subtly and gradually that we may not even realize that Satan has influenced our thought.

### **Inner Stirrings:**

Sometimes, the source of thoughts is neither angels nor Satan but our own ego; the soul, which has desires, memories, lived experiences, and repressed wishes,

can give rise to thoughts that are neither satanic nor divine but rather products of our inner desires, upbringing, environment, and personal experiences. These thoughts can lead a person toward insolence, self-centeredness, or even anxiety unless one overcomes them through protection and purification.

Understanding the origin of unbidden thoughts is the first step toward self-knowledge. When we realize that our thoughts may stem from various sources, we can accept or reject them with greater insight.

### **What Is the Impact of Unbidden Thoughts and How Can We Recognize Them?**

How can we distinguish between the different types of unbidden thoughts? Once we understand that unbidden thoughts can arise from various sources, such as angelic inspiration, satanic whispers, or our own ego, the question arises: how can we differentiate between these thoughts? What criteria within humans help us to identify the source of these thoughts?

The answer is that, recognizing unbidden thoughts requires focus, inner insight, and being familiar with the characteristics of each type of thought. Here are some key criteria for distinguishing these thoughts:

#### **Emotional and Spiritual Impact of Unbidden Thoughts:**

Divine thoughts and angelic inspirations are often accompanied by feelings of peace, assurance, and enlightenment. They are like a gentle breeze that enter one's heart, guiding him toward goodness, remembrance of God, love, and spirituality. In contrast, satanic whispering is usually associated with anxiety, confusion, haste,

arrogance, or fleeting pleasures. Inner stirrings may be mixed with selfishness, insolence, or transient emotions.

### **Outcome and Message of the Unbidden Thought:**

Each thought or desire should be examined in terms of where it leads us. Does it guide us toward goodness, patience, forgiveness, worship, and inner growth or does it, conversely, lead us toward sin, enmity, lust, jealousy, indolence, or negligence? An unbidden thought that guides us toward self-improvement, rectifying the past, and drawing closer to God undoubtedly has a good origin.

### **Persistence or Lack of Persistence of the Unbidden thoughts:**

Divine thoughts are usually persistent and profound, and if ignored, they come back as internal reminders. However, whispering thoughts are often variable, superficial, and mixed with excitement. Temptations ride on waves of emotions and dissipate with a little reflection or a brief moment of remembrance of God.

### **When and in What conditions Do the Unbidden Thoughts Enter the Mind?**

Sometimes, external conditions also influence the recognition of the source of thoughts. A thought that enters the mind in times of solitude with God or after worship is likely to have a divine origin. In contrast, ego or Satan may be the sources of a thought that pops up in our mind in times of anger, lust, hunger, or conflicts between people.

### **Identifying the Types of Unbidden Thoughts Using Reason and Faith:**

Ultimately, the best criterion for recognizing types of unbidden thoughts is to evaluate them through the reason and religious principles. If a thought aligns with ethical principles, reason, and rules of Islam, it can be considered valid; however, if

it contradicts these standards, even if it seems appealing or logical, one should remain cautious.

Recognizing types of unbidden thoughts requires practice and mindfulness in daily life. The more one engages in self-knowledge, self-purification, and protection, the more he will be able to recognize types of these thoughts. Recognizing these thoughts and distinguishing between inner light and darkness paves the way for making conscious choices and right decisions, and building a closer relationship with God. In conclusion, have you ever consciously reacted to the unbidden thoughts entered your mind? What factors have influenced your choices and inner inclinations? Share your experiences with us!

## References

- [1]. The Quran, 114:5