

## Backbiting and Slandering

Major sins are indeed the cause for all misery, evil and torment in this world and the hereafter. The worst of all sins are those that are greatest in harm and danger. Among the destructive major sins are backbiting and slandering. These two sins were forbidden by Allah in the Holy Qur'an and also in the hadith of His Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings upon him. These two sins in particular plant enmity, evils and discord among people and lead to destruction. They make their perpetrator regret when regret will be of no avail. They cause hostilities between people of the same household and between neighbours and relatives. They can decrease in good deeds and increase in evil deeds and lead to dishonour.

يَأْيُهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْنَاهُ وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿الحجرات: 12﴾.

Backbiting and slandering are shame and disgrace. Allah forbids these acts in His Book when He says, **“O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion; indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting). And fear Allah, verily, Allah is the One who accepts repentance, Most Merciful”** (*Al-Hujuraat: 12*).

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ ﴿الهمزة: 1﴾

**“Woe to every (kind of) scandal-monger and-backbiter”** (104:1)

These verses strongly forbid backbiting, in the first verse, for Allah compares the backbiter to one who eats the flesh of his dead brother. If he would hate eating the flesh of his brother, he should also hate to eat his flesh while he is alive by backbiting and slandering him.

ومعنى الغيبة ذكرك المسلم بما يكره في حال غيبته، عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله ﷺ قال: (أتدرون ما الغيبة؟) قالوا: الله ورسوله أعلم، قال: (ذكرك أخاك بما يكره) قيل: أفرأيت إن كان في أخي ما أقول؟ قال: (إن كان في أخيك ما تقول فقد اغتبتك، وإن لم يكن فيه ما تقول فقد بهتته) رواه مسلم

*Abu Hurairah* narrated that the Prophet, peace and blessings upon him, said, *“Do you know what backbiting is?”* They said: *“Allah and His Messenger know best.”* He then said: *“It is to say something about your brother that he would dislike.”* Someone asked him: *“But what if what I say is true?”*

The Messenger of Allah said: *“If what you say about him is true, you are backbiting him, but if it is not true then you have slandered him.”* (Muslim).

وعن أنس رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: (لما عرج بي مررت بقوم لهم أظفار من نحاس، يخمشون وجوههم وصدورهم، فقلت: من هؤلاء يا جبريل؟ قال: هؤلاء الذين يأكلون لحوم الناس، ويقعون في أعراضهم)

Anas narrated that the Prophet *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* said: *“When I was raised to heaven, I passed by a people who had copper nails with which they scratched their faces and chests.”* I said: *“O Jibreel, who are these?”* He said: *“These are those who used to eat other people’s flesh and attack their honour.”* (Aboo Dawood)

عن سهل بن سعد رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: (من يضمن لي ما بين لحييه وما بين رجليه أضمن له الجنة) رواه البخاري ومسلم،

*Sahl ibn Sa’d* narrated that the Prophet *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* said: *“Whoever protects his tongue from unlawful utterances and his private parts (from extramarital intimacy), I shall guarantee him entry into Paradise.”*

عن أبي موسى رضي الله عنه قال: قلت: يا رسول الله، أي المسلمين أفضل؟ قال: (من سلم المسلمون من لسانه ويده) رواه مسلم

*Abu Moosa Al-Ash’aree* said, *“I asked the Messenger of Allah: Who is the best Muslim? The Messenger of Allah replied, “He is the one from whose hands and words the Muslims are safe.”*

عن معاذ بن جبل رضي الله عنه قال: قلت: يا رسول الله، أخبرني بعمل يدخلني الجنة ويباعدني عن النار، قال: ((لقد سألت عن عظيم، وإنه ليسيرٌ على من يسره الله تعالى عليه: تعبدُ الله لا تشرك به شيئاً، وتقيم الصلاة، وتؤتي الزكاة، وتصوم رمضان، وتحج البيت))، ثم قال: ((ألا أدلك على أبواب الخير؟ الصوم جنةٌ، والصدقة تطفئ الخطيئة كما يطفئ الماء النار، وصلاة الرجل في جوف الليل، ثم تلا: ﴿تَنجَافَىٰ جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ﴾ [السجدة: 16].

ثم قال: ((ألا أخبرك برأس الأمر وعموده وذروة سنامه؟)) قلت: بلى يا رسول الله، قال: ((رأس الأمر: الإسلام، وعموده: الصلاة، وذروة سنامه: الجهاد)).

ثم قال: ((ألا أخبرك بملاك ذلك كله؟)) فقلت: بلى يا رسول الله، فأخذ بلسانه وقال: ((كف عليك هذا))، قلت: يا نبي الله، وإنا لمؤاخذون بما نتكلم به؟! فقال: ((تكلتك أمك يا معاذ، وهل يكب الناس في النار على وجوههم - أو قال: على مناخرهم - إلا حصائد ألسنتهم))؛ رواه الترمذي، وقال: حديث حسن صحيح.

*Mu'aath ibn Jabal said: "I asked: O Messenger of Allah, tell me of a deed that will make me enter Paradise and keep me away from the Fire. The Prophet sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam said: 'You have asked of a great matter but it is easy for whosoever Allah makes it easy. You should worship Allah without associating anything with Him, perform Salaah, pay Zakaah (charity), fast during the month of Ramadaan and perform pilgrimage if you are able to.' He then added: 'Should I show you the gateways to goodness? Fasting is a shield (from evils), charity extinguishes sins as water extinguishes fire and praying in the middle of the night.' He then recited this verse: "Their sides forsake their beds to invoke their Lord in fear and hope and they spend (charity in Allah's cause) out of what We have bestowed them. No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do." (As-Sajdah: 16-17) The Messenger of Allah then said: "Should I tell you the head of the matter, its pillar and its peak?" I said: Yes, O Messenger of Allah. He then said: "The head of the matter is Islam, its pillar is Salaah (prayer) and its peak is Striving in the way of Allah." He then asked: "Should I tell you of the foundation of all that?" I said: "Yes O Messenger of Allah. He then took hold of his tongue and said, 'Hold back this.' I said: O Messenger of Allah, are we going to be held responsible for what we utter? He said: "..., does anything cast people into the Fire on their faces except what their tongues have uttered?" (At-Tirmidhee)*

Therefore, do not treat the issue of backbiting with indifference because it is a great sin.

Allah Almighty said:

وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّئًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ [النور: 15].

**“You considered it a little thing, while with Allah it was very great.”**

Backbiting is so widespread that it has become the topic of people's meetings and an avenue for expressing their anger, misgivings and jealousy. Those who indulge in backbiting are unaware of the fact that they are only harming themselves. On a Day that no father will give his son any of his good deeds nor a friend to his friend. All will be saying, 'Myself, myself.'



The Prophet *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* said, “*Whoever protects the honour of his brother, Allah will protect him from Hellfire on the Day of Resurrection.*” (At-Tirmidhee)

To be faithful to Allah, not only must we refrain from backbiting and refrain from spreading rumours, but we must also tell those who do it to stop doing it.

Allah Almighty said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿الاحزاب: 70﴾

“O you who believe, keep your duty to Allah and fear Him and speak (always) the truth.” (33:70)

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