

Chapter 63: Backbiting or Carrying Words

Backbiting is a very bad habit, and unfortunately it is very much prevalent in the society. If someone speaks something against someone, the backbiter carries the word to the other person saying that so-and-so was saying such-and-such a thing about you. Carrying words are signs of meanness and evil.

This creates chasms between good friends. Many crimes, skirmishes, enmities, murders and feuds are the result of misunderstandings between people due to backbiting. The peace of many households gets shattered due to this nasty practice. Husbands and wives are separated, friends become enemies, parents turn against their children mainly because of the backbiting by some nasty, thoughtless persons.

When a backbiter gets exposed, he will be thrown out from everywhere and people hate to see his face. The people curse the backbiter and wish him destruction. The worst of backbiting is the act of sleuthing for the evil tyrants. If someone does eves-dropping for a tyrant and a pious person unnecessarily comes into trouble because of this, and suffers bodily damage or death due to torture, then the backbiter will be equally answerable as that evil person who engaged him to do the nefarious job. They will both be punished on the Day of Judgment. Although, in this case, the back-biter was not directly involved with the physical act of torturing the innocent person.

The Prophet of Islam says:

“The worst person is one who does backbiting against his Muslim brother to the King and do sleuthing against him. This sleuthing is bad for him, for the friend against whom he had reported and also for the King.”¹

Islam has pronounced the act of sleuthing and backbiting *haram* and there are many traditions of the Prophet and others in this regard.

Imam Muhammad al Baqir says:

“The backbiter will be denied entry to the Heaven.”²

‘Ali, The Commander of the Faithful, says:

“The foul and evil amongst you are those who do backbiting and create differences between friends and expose the defects of good people”³

There can be many reasons for backbiting. Sometimes enmity becomes the cause of the act. The backbiter may be inimical to one of the parties and be jealous of their good relations. He keeps giving false and malicious reports about one to the other till they fall into his trap. Sometimes the backbiter, as a force of habit, transmits a false and damaging information about one person to the other creating serious differences between them. In this instance the backbiter doesn't have any ulterior motive except to satisfy his urge to carry a tail. The Religion of Islam has forbidden even to give ear to backbiting.

The Prophet says:

“Neither should you do backbiting, nor listen to a back biter.”⁴

‘Ali, The Commander of the Faithful, says:

“Refute the talk of the backbiter and the one who is unduly inquisitive.”⁵

It is evident that if no one takes cognizance of the talk of the backbiter, then he will stop doing it. Whoever carries words to you about others, you must be sure that he is not your friend. If he was really your friend he would have defended you while others talked against your interest.

If someone tells something in confidence, a good Muslim never speaks about it to others. He will keep control over his tongue and never try to sleuth around. Many persons pick up the offending habit of backbiting from their childhood. It is a reflection of what they see and hear happening around them.

Therefore the parents shoulder a big responsibility that they protect their children from getting the nefarious habit of backbiting. First, the parents themselves should refrain from talking ill of others. The mother should not report of some acts of her neighbour and other relations .to the father.

The father too should not speak to the mother against his friends and acquaintances. Because, if the parents have the habit of speaking ill of others behind their backs, the children too will indulge in such talk.

Sometimes a child speaks to his father against her mother and the elder sister. In such instances the duty of the father is to correct the child and tell him that it is not good to backbite. He should tell him that if want to say something about your mother or sister, tell directly to them. What you are doing is backbiting, which is very bad. If the children try to backbite, totally ignore them at the moment and try to talk on some other interesting subject.

The Prophet of Islam has said:

“Don't give your ears to the backbiter !”⁶

- [1.](#) Bihar al-anwar, v 75, p. 266
- [2.](#) Usul al-Kafi, v 2, p. 369
- [3.](#) Usul al-Kafi, v 2, p. 375
- [4.](#) Majma al zawaid, v 8, p. 91
- [5.](#) Gharar al hukm, p. 145
- [6.](#) Gharar al hukm, p. 125

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