

## On Backbiting

***“O’ ye who believe nor backbite each other. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother; Ye lothe it!” (Qur’an, 49: 12).***

Backbiting, in Muslim language, means to mention or allude to the actual defects (physical, moral or otherwise) of a person in his absentia (provided the victim of that backbiting prefers to hide that defect). If the alleged defect is not found in him actually but was the invention of the imagination of the backbiter, then it is false accusation and its sin is far graver than the backbiting.

Personal bitterness and enmity is caused by backbiting, false reports and baseless accusations which are the stock-in-trade of the flatterers. The analogy given in the Qur’an is very apt. It is an act similar to eating one’s dead brother’s flesh. He is like a dead body because he is not present and the tale-bearer is feasting on his flesh because he is nibbling at his prestige.

But the flesh of dead man is a source of physical harm for the partaker himself. Likewise the backbiting creates spiritual disease to the tale-bearer. It is the worst bane of human life and makes a man enemy of his brothers. It is the backbiter who sows the seed to bitterness, hatred, intrigue and enmity. It is he who causes disruption in the homes, disloyalty in the office, disintegration in the social, and religious institutions; it is he who spells the downfall of the society and tears apart the fabric of social harmony.

A backbiter becomes the worst type of hypocrite. In order to save his own prestige, he poses as a friend of very man whom he actually tries to destroy. When he is suspected of evil designs, he takes refuge behind false oaths. Thus he damages his own spirit and, more often than not, when he falls, nobody comes there to lift him up.