

Prohibited Behavior

There are some acts in Islam which have been forbidden by Allah in the Qur'an and by His Messenger (S) in the *Sunnah* (practice of the Prophet), and which have been made clear by the sayings and actions of the Imams ('a).

If we study the forbidden things in Islam deeply and in detail, we will find that proscribing them is a step taken by Islam to protect humanity from perverse conduct and keep it away from dangers and evils. The following are some of the prohibited behaviors.

Spying

Spying that is, snooping in order to gain information and embarrass people is forbidden in Islamic laws. Almighty Allah has said in His Book:

“O You who believe, refrain from most of suspicions because some suspicions are sins, and do not spy...” (Qur'an; 49: 12)

Ishaq bin 'Ammar, a companion of Imam Al-Sadiq ('a), said, I heard Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) saying, “*The Messenger of Allah (S) said, “O you who have accepted Islam with your tongue [i.e., with your verbal declarations of faith] and faith is yet to enter your hearts! Do not disparage the Muslims nor disclose their frailties, because whosoever discloses their shortcomings, Allah shall disclose his; and he whose weaknesses are disclosed by Allah, will indeed be disgraced, even if he is inside his house.”*”¹

Backbiting (Namimah)

Backbiting means, “Speaking ill of a believer in their absence with the purpose of disparaging or not, and no matter whether the alleged shortcoming was related to his body, lineage, behavior, deeds, statements, religion, or life, and other defects which are [usually] concealed from the people. Similarly, it does not matter whether the description was done by words or by gesture.”

Almighty Allah has described backbiting such that mind and body feel abhorrence towards it. He said,

“And some of you should not backbite the others: would anyone of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? No, you abhor it.” (Qur’an; 49: 12)

The Prophet (S) said, *“Be careful of backbiting because backbiting is worse than adultery, in that a person who commits adultery can repent and ask forgiveness from Allah, and Allah can forgive him whereas Allah will not forgive the backbiter until the person who was at the receiving end forgives him.”*²

Islam has forbid “An–namimah” for the sake of holding the society together. It means sowing dissension by statements like “So and so was saying this and that about you” with the intention of damaging the relationship between the believers or increasing bitterness between them.

The Messenger of Allah (S) has said, *“The worst people among you are those who spread slanderous rumors; those who divide friends.”*³

Imam Al–Baqir (‘a) said, *“Paradise is forbidden upon the backbiters (intriguants) and those who spread slanderous rumors.”*⁴

Imam Al–Sadiq (‘a) said, *“The spiller of blood [i.e., murderer], the alcoholic, and the one who spreads slanderous rumors will not enter Paradise.”*⁵

Fatwa of Islamic jurists:

A. It is not appropriate for a believer to listen to backbiting against his believing brother. Indeed it is obligatory upon one who hears backbiting to support the person who is being disparaged; and that if he does not repel the backbiting [against his believing brother], Allah will abandon him in this world as well as in the hereafter, and he shall be held accountable just like the one who did the backbiting.

Suspicion

It is not permissible for a believer to entertain suspicious thoughts about his fellow Muslim and non–Muslim without any clear proof and evidence, because no one other than Allah knows the innermost thoughts of a person. Therefore, as long as it is possible to place the action of a believer in a proper context, we should do so until it is proven otherwise. Qur’an says,

“O you who believe! Refrain from most of the suspicions because some suspicions are a sin.”
(49: 12)

Imam ‘Ali (‘a) said, *“Place the affair of your brother in the best possible [context] until you get a proof which convinces you [of the contrary]. And do not have suspicious thoughts about a word that comes out of your brother [in faith] while you have a positive context for it.”*⁶

Extravagance And Waste

Extravagance and waste are two bad qualities condemned by Almighty Allah. He says,

“Eat and drink but do not waste because He does not like the squanderers.” (Qur’an; 7:31) “Verily the wastrels are brethren of the Satan, and verily the Satan was ungrateful to his Lord.” (Qur’an; 19:27)

Imam 'Ali ('a) wrote a letter to Ziyad: *“Give up lavishness and be moderate. Every day remember the coming day. Hold back from the funds what you need and send forward the balance for the day of your need. Do you expect that Allah may give you the reward of the humble while you yourself are arrogant in His view? And do you covet that He may give you the reward of those doing charity while you enjoy comforts and deny them to the weak and the widows? Certainly, man is rewarded according to what he has done, and he shall meet what he has sent forth.”*⁷

1. . Al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 354.

يَا مَعْشَرَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ بِلِسَانِهِ وَلَمْ يَخْلُصِ الْإِيمَانَ إِلَى قَلْبِهِ لَا تَذْمُوا الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا عَوْرَاتِهِمْ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ تَتَّبَعَ عَوْرَاتِهِمْ تَتَّبَعَ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ وَمَنْ تَتَّبَعَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى «عَوْرَتَهُ يَفْضَحْهُ وَ لَوْ فِي بَيْتِهِ».

2. . Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 222.

«إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْغَيْبَةَ فَإِنَّ الْغَيْبَةَ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الزَّانَا إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ قَدْ يَزْنِي وَيَتُوبُ فَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنْ صَاحِبَ الْغَيْبَةِ لَا يُغْفَرُ لَهُ حَتَّى يَغْفِرَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ».

3. . Al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 225.

«شِرَارُكُمْ الْمَشَاءُونَ بِالنَّمِيمَةِ الْمُفْرَقُونَ بَيْنَ الْأَحِبَّةِ».

4. . Tanbih Al-Khawater (Warram), vol. 2, p. 209.

«الْجَنَّةُ مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَى الْفَنَائِينَ الْمَشَاءِينَ بِالنَّمِيمَةِ».

5. . Al-Kafi, vol. 7, p. 273.

«لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ سَافِكُ الدَّمِّ وَلَا شَارِبُ الْخَمْرِ وَلَا مَشَاءُ بَنِيمٍ».

6. . Al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 362.

«ضَعُ أَمْرَ أَخِيكَ عَلَى أَحْسَنِهِ حَتَّى يَأْتِيكَ مَا يَغْلِبُكَ مِنْهُ وَلَا تَطَنَّ بِكَلِمَةٍ خَرَجَتْ مِنْ أَخِيكَ سُوءًا وَأَنْتَ تَجِدُ لَهَا فِي الْخَيْرِ مَحْمَلًا».

7. . Nahj Al-Belagha, letter 21, p. 376.

فَدَعَ الْإِسْرَافَ مُفْتَصِدًا وَ اذْكَرُ فِي الْيَوْمِ غَدًا وَ اْمْسِكْ مِنَ الْمَالِ بِقَدْرِ ضَرُورَتِكَ وَ قَدِّمِ الْفَضْلَ لِيَوْمِ حَاجَتِكَ أَوْ تَرْجُو أَنْ يُعْطِيكَ اللَّهُ أَجْرَ الْمُتَوَاضِعِينَ وَ أَنْتَ عِنْدَهُ مِنَ الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ وَ تَطْمَعُ وَ أَنْتَ مَتَمَّرِعٌ فِي النَّعِيمِ [أَنْ تَمْنَعَهُ] تَمْنَعُهُ الضَّعِيفَ وَ الْأَرْمَلَةَ - [وَ] أَنْ يُوجِبَ لَكَ ثَوَابَ الْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَ إِنَّمَا الْمَرْءُ مَجْزِيٌّ بِمَا «أَسْلَفَ وَ قَادِمٌ عَلَى مَا قَدَّمَ».

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