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63. Why does the Qur'an liken backbiting to eating the flesh of our dead brother?

There are a number of reasons for this description in the Ayah

أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا

"Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his brother dead?"[1]

The Ayah is telling us a number of things:

1. Firstly, the dead cannot defend itself. Likewise, a person who is being backbitten is not present to be able to defend themselves.

2. Backbiting destroys the reputation and honour of an individual and that is non-compensable. Like the meat of the dead, once torn, cannot be healed.

If money is lost, it can be compensated for. But the complete reparation of honour and reputation completely is almost impossible, and it makes no difference if this was backbiting in jest or in seriousness, as in both cases, the honour of the individual has been tarnished.

3. Meat grows over time and slowly while eating it occurs in a single instance. Likewise, the reputation of one takes a long time to be developed, it can be destroyed through a single instance of backbiting.

4. A person may have worked hard and for years to build their reputation and backbiting can come in with a single swipe to destroy the entire lifetime's work of that individual.

1. Hujjarat 49:12

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