



(Al-Abbas Holy-Shrine)

(Dept. Cultural & Intellectual Affairs)

AL-Kafeel Center for Culture & International Media

(Backbiting & Its Enormous Effects)

Written By:

AL-Kafeel Center for Culture & International Media



(Al-Abbas Holy-Shrine)
(Dept. Cultural & Intellectual Affairs)
Division of studies & Publications
Holy Karbala City
P.O.B. (233)
Tel.N.(322600) Internal Tel.(163-175)
www.alkafeel.net
info@alkafeel.net

(SHYNESS & INSOLENCES)

Between
(Intellect & Legislature)
A Combination Of
Sweet & Bitter
Outcomes
Of Human Behavior

Written By:

AL-Kafeel Center for Culture & International Media

Publisher:

(Dept. Cultural & Intellectual Affairs)

Translated & Reviewed By:

Hussein Al-Bazzaz

Design & Art Direction:

Hussam Al-Saadi

Al-Kafeel house for Printing & Publication

First Edition

1000 Copies

Oct.2015

(An Inevitable Word)

“O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion, indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you would 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 forgives and accepts repentance, Most Merciful.” (Al-Hajurat / Verse. 12)

How can backbiters allow themselves to eat the flesh of the people while they are alive?! Does that please them?! Can't they in their feasts spare having this detestable recipe?!

Can that be the salt without which the food will lose its relish? Aren't they aware of the sublime hadith of our Allah's noble Messenger (P.B.U.H.P.) who says: “A true Muslim is that who spares people his hand and tongue” or haven't they comprehended what he meant when he said: “Of the best things a true Muslim can do is not to poke his nose in what he has nothing to do with.

“Do they not know that the purity of one's self lies

in his being busy with worshipping his Creator and then engaging in what is good and delicate without cherishing factors of malice, envy or curiosity which may one day be the cause of killing them?! Has the extent of their degrading thought reached its remotest point to make them expose the worst of manners, blemish the good reputation of others and cast false accusations on them like volcanoes when erupting flames of fire with seething vexation and scorching fury?! Or that they have grown like surging waterfalls when the seacoasts overflow to drown and devour what it comes across without distinction.

Have those characters lost the ability of distinguishing between transparency in dealing with people and truthfulness of feelings, innocence of intentions and sincerity of application to have them, then taken to committing unforgivable sins; or have they been given the task of assessing people's transactions and poking their noses into other people's affairs till their demises?! Haven't they, accidentally, passed by those elevated sayings to

benefit from their didactic elements such as: “How good it is for that whose defects distract him from pursuing the people’s defects or shortcomings! Or “One whose house is made of glass, should not throw stones over unto people.” “He whose head is made of wax, must not walk under the sun.”

Aren’t they aware of the fact that good manners is a bliss bestowed by Allah, the Almighty, upon man but the envious are unguided to it. Haven’t they come to know that this world is worthless and it is much too small to be wasted in cutting to pieces the flesh of human beings and what this man has said and that woman conveyed?! Two do not differ in that man’s heart may stop in a twinkling of an eye- at any moment and at any time, by God, tell me, dear reader, why do we fill it with grudge, malice and fury and get squeezed with vexation instead of purity...

(Backbiting)

Backbiting means revealing defective points of someone during his absence especially, before companions who have no knowledge of them with the aim of degrading his character or minimizing his position in their sight or anything that may displease the backbitten figure if he is presented in such a state of being whether in his physical appearance, origin, private secrets, manners, words, deeds, religion, way of living, and the like. Whether the defect or the shortcoming is mentioned in word or in deed, the title of backbiting in both cases remains the same although the degree of the enormity of the sin may differ according to the purpose or the intention of the backbiter behind it.

In Allah's noble Book (Glory be to Him), backbiting received immense disapproval and bore the most detesting image at which the human's soul and body simultaneously shrink and get aback with disgust as mentioned in the verse above and as what the Prophet of Allah, (P.B.U.H.H.) has said: "Beware of

backbiting as it is more evil than adultery.” A man may commit adultery and repents to Allah, the Almighty who, in turn, forgives him but Allah never forgives that who commits backbiting unless the backbitten one forgives him first.

A sincere believer had better not listen to the backbiter who is backbiting his brother believer. On the contrary, it is incumbent upon every believer, according to many narratives conveyed to us by the Prophet and his pure Imams (P. B.U.T.) to stand up for the backbitten character and retaliate against the backbiter and if he didn't do so, Allah, the Almighty, will upset him in this world and in the Hereafter. The backbiter and the indifferent listener to backbiting are looked upon as equal in the balance of justice. What we have touched upon of the subject up to now is but a brief summary about backbiting.

But we will, noble readers, go into the details of this significant research through the following diverse titles.

What do you know about the following:?



(Backbiting- Slander- Gossip)

Backbiting means telling something true or untrue about someone in his absence. The aim behind that, is to reveal a defect or a shortcoming in one's person especially among friends. The defect may be physical, moral, or even about personal life, marital life, property, clothes, furniture, wife, children and the like.

Based on this, it is noteworthy to say that mere mentioning of one's distinguished features for the sake of recognition and in good faith will not be included in the category of backbiting but only that which is intended to distort one's reputation or cynically mock at him. Therefore, this case only is looked upon as backbiting and it is then of the forbidden deeds just like that who, in a state of dispraise, will be spoken of as being blind, one-eyed, dwarfish and so on.

It will be quite evident from what we demonstrated above that revealing other people's hidden defects whether in good or bad faith has been regarded as backbiting. So, mentioning the others' apparent

blemishes and defects with the intention of dispraise or of being detrimental to the targeted person is in itself backbiting whether we place it into the concept of backbiting or not.

All these states are regarded as backbiting if the defects of the targeted person are real and true but if they are originally fake, groundless and fabricated, they will then be enlisted in the category of slander whose relevant consequences are several stages greater in recompense than that of backbiting.

As for gossip, which means conveying speech heard or said or invented by someone to another with the aim of arousing sedition between them, is really another color in the spectrum of backbiting. Basing upon this background, we can say that backbiting, slander, gossip and tale-telling are all, in fact, matters which can totally ruin the real Moslem's character as Islam's true preservation of man's entity is not less significant than the preservation of his blood, honor, property and land.

So, in order to maintain and fortify man against these

moral and material maladies, he found it incumbent upon him to avail no effort in encompassing himself with a siege to protect his person and keep safe his private and personal rights by forbidding himself from committing theft, killing, infidelity and adultery. Islam has also emphasized on the illegality of backbiting, slander and gossip and thus, with these forbidden deeds Islam granted the Moslem the right of leading a free and noble life devoid of any disrespect which may scratch his body or blemish his spirit.

It does also grant in pushing the Moslem forward towards practicing his part in life perfectly well without transgressing anybody or being himself transgressed by others and even if some deviation occurred by some who supposedly misused this rule, there would be some legal and penal consequences awaiting him in this world before the Hereafter for the sake of returning right to its original people without unlawfully devouring the lot of any individual of the human society.

At this very point, we notice that Islam may raise

the status and dignity of the individual to ranks which probably all man-made global laws envy him or aspire to attain such a caliber, and since man has practically reached such highly elevated positions and exalted stations on account of possessing intellect, will and dignity, Allah, the Almighty, raised him above all the creation and His Will ordained to keep this dignity safe from any kind of disrespect or violation.

For this, Allah, the Almighty decreed the unlawfulness of transgressing and blemishing man's dignity to the extent that it should not be touched, injured or scratched even with a gesture, a word, an act or a movement. Actually, the limits of dignity which is the most precious thing in the whole existence is well preserved and maintained in the divine decrees. The matter relates to man himself if he wants to abandon his dignity which is in fact, an extra-ordinary conduct and doesn't befits man as a human creature as the manifest Islamic legislature wanted it to be.

Warning against Backbiting, Slander & Gossip

The discerner of the holy Quran's revelations and the honorable narrations may easily notice that backbiting, and gossip are of the major sins. Allah, the Almighty, warned His slaves of doing them lest they should be dropped into Hell fire. Allah, Glory be to Him said: "Verily who like that (the crime of) illegal sexual intercourse should be propagated among those who believe, they will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter. And Allah knows and you know not. (An-Nur. Verse: 19)

In another verse, He, (Glory be to Him) 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 brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting) And fear Allah, Verily, Allah is the One Who forgives and accepts repentance, Most Merciful. (Surah Al-Hujurat: Verse:12)

In this noble revelation two probabilities lie: indeed, one of them demonstrates how the backbiter receives his torment in the Hereafter in which backbiting is

embodied to the beholder in the form of someone eating the flesh of a dead backbitten person.

The witness to this probability depended on a hadith narrated by Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.P.) that while he was looking into the Hell-fire on the Night of Ascension, he noticed that a folk of them were eating vestiges. At this, he asked Gabriel: "O Gabriel! Who are these"? In reply, Gabriel said: "These are the folks who eat the flesh of the people."

The other probability is that backbiting puts one in the position of eating the flesh of a dead back-bitten person in judgment; therefore, since eating the flesh of a dead body is of the tremendous sins; so is backbiting. Allah, the Almighty, in another verse says: "Woe to every slanderer and backbiter." (Surah: Al-Hamzah: Verse. 1) and this is really a threat ordained by Allah, the Almighty to every slanderer whose aim is to separate lovers but: "Wail" is one of the lower levels of Hell or the name of a valley in it and is used to express the severity of chastisement in the Hereafter.

Allah, the Almighty, in another situation says in the

Quran: “And those who break the Covenant of Allah, after its ratification, and sever that which Allah has commanded to be joined (i.e. they sever the bond of kinship and are not good to their relatives), and work mischief in the land, on them is the curse (they will be far away from Allah’s Mercy) and for them is the (evil) unhappy home (i.e. Hell).” (Ae-Ra’ad: Verse:25).

In brief, the backbiter and the gossip break what Allah has commanded them to join and spread corruption on the earth. So, instead of creating atmospheres of familiarity and love among the Moslems and reinforcing their unity, he sows the seeds of severity, hatred and transgression between them. Allah, the Almighty, says: “Sedition is worse than killing.” (SurahAl-Baqarah: V. 191) which apparently means that the gossip and the backbiter can both burst the fire of sedition, As for the documented narratives, they are too many all of which have been extracted from Allah’s Messenger’s hadiths. (PB.U.H.P.

As for narrations on this topic, there are so many- and of them, we depict for you the following: Once the

Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.P.) addressed a gathering of Moslems saying: “O those who believe only by tongue and believe not by heart, backbite not the Moslems and follow not their defects because, indeed, if any of you strives to follow the defect of his brother Moslem, Allah, in turn, will follow his defect and he Whom Allah, follows his defect, He will scandalize him in the depth of his house.” This is the Divine Decree of Allah’s, the Almighty in the whole universe.

Verily, Allah, the Almighty is the Supreme Secret-keeper Who loves His slaves to keep one another’s secrets and maintain the merit of pardoning each other; therefore man had better reform himself first and forbid himself from pursuing the defects and faults of others. It is quite natural to confirm the fact that there is no human being on earth who has no slips, gaps and defects in his character when dealing with his practical daily life affairs in society as those defects, in themselves, are sufficient for man to engage himself with for the sake of reforming and rectifying them and totally covering the fatal and suspicious accumulations of them.

But if go on indulging ourselves in digging out and pursuing the exposure of their practices, that procedure, in consequence, will lead to overturning the table over the heads of those who used to sit at that table; and all will be vulnerable in that because mockery, skirmish, defame and scandal will replace familiarity, loveliness, praise and respect which may stand as an abominable omen of the collapse of the whole society into the abyss of despair and loss.

The holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.P) said,” Whoever starts backbiting his brother by exposing his defect means he is putting his first step on the path that will lead him to Hell.” If we put this sublime hadith into consideration, we can conclude that backbiting, slander and gossip are of the tremendous sins which Allah, the Almighty has warned man of committing them and for this reason we ought not to minimize the effect of these sins. Woe to the human who unluckily does belittle the impact of a sin which can in reality drag him away to Hell.

When you ask an insolent backbiter: “Why do you backbite and strive to defame others?” He, in reply, will,

indifferently, say to you: "What have I done? Did I kill him or scratch his honor or rob him of his belongings?" But he doesn't know that by piercing his claws, so to say, into his brother's flesh, in his absence, is no less harmful or perhaps more harmful than the other sins such as: killing, adultery and theft because in the former one there is an open transgression on man's honor whereas all the other sins, though they are ugly, but they are not regarded as a degradation of someone's character or honor since it doesn't not affect what he ought to enjoy as to the right of living, honor maintenance and property possession.

So, dignity stands ahead in priority among the things which ought to be maintained within the existence of man in this life despite the significance of the other human rights which indeed can safeguard the sovereignty of the individual's dignity through which humanism can be realized in its widest sense in the kingdom of the speaking animalism.

Within this context, one of the fools blindly waged an assault against his Eminence, the late Ash-Shaikh

Murtadha Al-Ansari (May Allah sanctify his secret) intending, in bad faith, to degrade him by saying:” How easy it is for man to become a renowned scholar but how difficult it is for him to become a human”! But the Shaikh, in order to correct the statement of the foolish speaker had said to him: “In order to become a renowned scholar is, indeed, a difficult task but to become a human is much more difficult!.

Bear in mind -you- who go on snatching and piercing your claws deep into the flesh of others through backbiting, slandering and gossiping that all the get-togethers of the idle which, will, in the end, be transformed into mourning sessions are but the fuel of the Hell-fire, carried on the backs of the backbiters and those who listen to them and follow their example and swelter in a blazing fire on a day which no excuse nor apology or regret can be of use there; and be aware- as well-that the dignity of others is not less significant than your own dignity and the sanctity of others is not less in significance than your sanctity and their personality is not less significant than that of yours.

So, in order to maintain your dignity, you ought first and foremost to maintain the dignity of others because one's prestige and repute are the precious things that man ever possesses and strives to maintain in this life. Try not to distort or blemish or scratch the honor of others lest you should lose yours since, as you know, that man is mortal and one's existence in this life does not last for long after all.

If recompense for your transgression against the people's honor and their degradation in the eyes of others has not befallen you in this world on account of gaining a post, wealth, prestige and kinship, Allah, the Almighty, will not miss you nor neglect or ignore you but scandalize you before witnesses on a day when no wealth nor children will avail save that who stands between the Hands of Allah, the Almighty with a pure heart.

Therefore, remember that day and what accompanies it of shame, disgrace, humiliation and despair before you embark upon any task or speech which contains transgression, defect, sarcasm and

ridicule to your fellow human creature whose material and moral rights are preserved in the Hereafter just like those of yours. No difference is there between one man and another except in piety and righteous acts which both eagerly address you and others to follow them.”Backbite not one another.”

How wonderful and excellent laws these are! And how brilliant and bright these legislations look! Some may in objection dare to say:”How can they be so excellent while they imply some rudeness, severity, threat and warning to those who do not abide by forbiddance and refrain from them”?! The answer to such enquiry we say: “Their aesthetic value lies in the power of repression it contains therewith and it is this which grants its performance and adherence to it and the jurisprudent who decreed these laws is thoroughly aware of the fact that “He who spares the rod will surely spoil the child”

There are no other alternatives for people to maintain familiarity, love, friendship,fraternity and friendliness between the believers as well as the maintenance

of dignity, glory, pride and honor except these strict legislations which can vigorously hinder all those who give free rein to themselves to committing sins and crimes or even think of committing them.

In addition to all sorts of recompense mentioned so far, such sins have their relevant worldly consequences on those who commit them in that ‘He who knocks at the people’s doors, his door will be knocked at, too.’ As a result, the reputation of the insolent who distorts the people’s reputation and honor will go to the winds and he will remain as long as he is alive scorned and despised among his fellows-bare of any dignity, any personality and honor amidst them.

It is true that they may listen to him and make his trivial talks as fruits before them in their absurd get-togethers but in fact, they do not respect his person and bear no consideration for him in themselves at all because they beforehand know more than any others that the distorter of people’s reputation and honor usually snatches with his claws their flesh in their absence, too!

And people as such may lose confidence in even their most intimate friends; completely opposite of the faithful believer who always maintains the dignity of others, and whenever he remembers any of them, he avails no effort in speaking well of him; and once he hears one of them is backbitten before him, he will promptly stand against the backbiter and stop him from pursuing his talk or prefer exiting politely from the meeting if no advice, protest or reprimand will do just then or be of use.

The philosophy of the illegality of Backbiting, Slander, Gossip

Man is the most precious creature in the whole universe and for his sake, Allah, (Glory be to Him), has created all the creatures and His Almighty, also created man for worshipping Him and becoming subservient to His Commandments because in them lies man's glory and pride. Human dignity cannot be maintained nor can his honor be safeguarded but by sternly enforcing Allah's Decrees and with some rudeness on everyone who stubbornly strives to transgress others through backbiting, slandering and gossiping which can scratch that entire forbiddance, disrespect that dignity which is dear and near to Allah, (Glory be to him), His Messenger (P.B.U.H.P) and the believers.

Based upon this, such sanctity does imply within its conceptuality some significant didactic axioms together with several noble motives which can enhance in one way or another and with top level confidence, the living-hood of the individuals in reciprocal peaceful co-existence leading, of course, the whole human

society to a state of stability based on love, respect and maintenance of rights.

We can allude didactically, to some of these proverbial conditions in the following points:

1. Since man is, by instinct, a sociable creature; therefore, the human society within which he lives holds a sanctity not less significant than that of the individual 's sanctity and each one's purity co-operatively depends on the other and the ugliness of one will undoubtedly affect the other and according to this principle, Islam has strongly coped with every action that emits or sows poisons in society or strives to push it down into the valley of death and collapse. And for this Islam has earnestly necessitated the concealment of people's defects and the reason behind that is to avoid the spread of sins and crimes in the human society on a generalized and comprehensive scale.

2. The human's most significant capital in his life is his honor and anything that may threaten his honor will be as though it were threatening his life by a forthcoming danger. One of the axioms that lies behind the legal

law of forbidding the phenomenon of backbiting is not to let this high consideration of the individuals and the above-mentioned capital be exposed to the danger of dispersion, severance and pollution and not to let their sanctity be blemished or their honor polluted. This highly significant aspect in the life of the Moslems is met with the utmost care of Islam.

3. Both back-biting and gossiping bring about a bad impression, weaken social relationships and make them rickety, damages the individual's capital and enormously shake the rules of social co-operation. We are aware of the fact that Islam has availed no effort in the way of unity, cordiality and solidarity among the individuals of society and anything that can truly serve in strengthening this unity has won the utmost approval and appreciation of Islam and anything that may result in loosening the social ties of the people is not really welcomed by Islam. One of the chief factors of the weaknesses in this respect is the spread of backbiting, gossiping and slandering.

4. After all this, backbiting and both of his companions sow the seeds of rancor and hostility in the

hearts and perhaps they may at times lead to sedition and blood-shed.

5. One of the most significant foundations in social relationships is the reciprocal trust or confidence among brothers but backbiting, slander, gossiping and polluting the dignity of others may erase the edifice of confidence from the base and render it like carded wool.

So, compulsory forbiddance of backbiting and the severity in punishing those who violate or disregard the rights of their fellows is but an act of maintaining confidence and trust and not of vengeance and retaliation.

6. One of the motives of backbiting is the state of degrading and minimizing the status of others especially the weak who are usually helpless, simple and ineloquent, driven by either grudge or envy or only for creating a joyful atmosphere but at the expense of the other's dignity. Such a degradation, for instance, may sometimes involve a righteous guardian of Allah, the Almighty. For this reason, Islam warned us of ridiculing others so that the ridiculer may not incur Allah's fury

against him Who will revenge Himself upon him in this world before the Hereafter.

7. Islam is, in fact, the religion of justice, and equality and this implies that man's entity or identity is granted and preserved irrespective of his origin, color, tribe or community. These considerations do not have any influence on the matter of recompense whether positively or negatively. Forbiddance of backbiting involves both the ruler and the ruled altogether and preference between them lies only in values not in the selectivity of recompense and reprimand.

8. It may be true to say that one of the many significant motives of the illegality of backbiting is the preservation of man's dignity, guardianship and caliphate on earth to be the supreme creature to whom Allah, the Almighty, has subjected within his reach the whole existing creatures to climb up the ladder of perfection without any hardships as a prelude to finally meet Allah, Glory be to Him, with a pure and sound heart without any cover or veil which prevents him from meeting his Beloved.

(Backbiting)

Causes, Effects, Cures & Points of Exceptions

Like the other vicious qualities, backbiting, gradually transforms into a psychological disease to the extent that the backbiter feels highly rejoiced and at ease when he degrades a great personality with the aim of arousing the people's laughter and ridicule. The motives behind this fatal malady of which we always ought to be cautious and far away from its grievous deteriorations are:

Anger, rancor, jealousy, mockery, ridicule, play and fun, conceit, sarcasm, desire for bragging, favorability; charging others with guilt; or not letting friends get bored with him by keeping to be in good terms with them when they likewise backbite others or mentioning the name of someone else with the aim of becoming sympathetic with him and praying God for him but he spares no effort in scandalizing him for some work done by him or on account of his anger at suspecting his victim of foolishly doing some crazy act while he had better go to him in person and try to advise him to abandon doing that.

Amongst the consequences which backbiting usually leave behind is the spread of malice, rancor, hatred, grudge, exasperation, transgression and hostility between the individuals of the society and loss of confidence among one another as well as the spread of disputes and finding fault with one another and so many other corruptions of the same category.

The appropriate remedy to this malady lies in that man must know that when he backbites his fellow, he will look as if he were eating his flesh while dead as we have already explained that to you and he should know too that as he hates people to speak badly of him, he should in turn, not speak what they hate to hear of; and his tongue must be the tongue of advice, guidance and reform.

He should also bear in mind that one third of the torment of the grave comes as a result of backbiting; and if he happens to be among a gathering of people or in a meeting wherein people are exposed to backbiting, it will be good for him to try to change the course of the conversation or remind them of the Almighty's

Chastisement in the Hereafter or depart the place.

Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.P.) has once said: "The penance of backbiting a person is to pray Allah for him to forgive his sins." The Messenger (P.B.U.H.P.), on another situation has said: "Whoever prevents a backbiter from backbiting his Moslem brother, being heard of by him in a meeting, Allah, the Almighty, will close for him one thousand doors of evil in this world and in the Hereafter and if he doesn't react against him, and is inclined to what that backbiter said, he would then bear and share the same guilt of the backbiter."

Hence, it is incumbent upon both the backbiter and the gossip to earnestly strive to treat and rid themselves of the internal motives of backbiting and gossiping which both lie in the depths of their spirits urging them both to commit this or that guilt which is well manifested in: egoism, hostility, miserliness, jealousy, self-pride, rancor and hatred; and that they must show themselves by way of building their personalities and in the meantime contemplate strictly on the bad effects such immoral qualities usually leave behind and what

abominable results they may inherently or apparently bring about and purify their hearts by way of self-sport to control his tongue and not to pollute it with backbiting and their likes.

What is worthy to mention with regard to the law of backbiting is that it contains exceptions amongst which is that sometimes, in the sphere of consultation, especially, for example, in matters of mate-selection, whether in marriage or trade and the like, there happens to be an urgent need of man-to man help or advice as to what to do or whom to ask for inquiry in so and so case before taking a decision.

This kind of trust in consultation which is, in essence, an inevitable Islamic law necessitating the advisor to state openly the defects of the other person, if any, lest the Moslem should fall into trouble. So, such kind of backbiting with such intention cannot be illegal and also in similar situations which involve significant purposes as in giving advice or consultation in business transactions or returning right to its real owner or pursuing grievances. The purpose of that is to warn the

people not to follow their example.

Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) says: "Three are those who can legally be backbitten: "One who publicizes his debauchery, one who rules unjustly and one whose deed does not accord with his word."Of course, the notorious debaucher stands outside the coverage of backbiting and if his name is mentioned in his absence, the backbiter will not then be considered as being sinful for his back-biting but by putting in mind that this judgment is exclusively applicable in the case of the notorious debaucher who cares not for being scandalized in public.

The debaucher, the oppressor and the hypocrite are all, on account of their vicious deeds, are out of the orbit of honor and dignity. Strictness in highly elevated Islamic judgments obviously shows itself in that the debaucher's honor will drop especially in regard of the guilt which he openly speaks of in public which alludes to the topic of: "And no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another." (Al-An'am. Verse:164)

It is quite possible that he has, in store, some

praiseworthy privileges; so, he, supposedly, deserves to have his dignity legally preserved among the people as long as he preserves those praiseworthy merits, but the oppressor and the hypocrite, on account of the enormity of their misdeeds have kept no honor for themselves at all to be preserved and such state of being may constitute a predictable danger on both: the people and the State.

The best way of coping with oppression and hypocrisy is by scandalizing the doers in public by showing their defects in order to be a lesson for everyone who stubbornly attempts to be infected with them. This procedure in itself may represent as the best way of repressing them from wantonly indulging in these humiliating vices as an approach towards cleaning whole society from all kinds of loathsome defects and blemishes.

Listening to Backbiting & Implied Backbiting

Backbiting is not only an illegal act but also the state of listening to it. Presence in some get-togethers where backbiting is common and familiar is illegal, too; and according to certain relevant hadiths, the listener is deemed responsible for retaliating the backbiter- that is, to defend his back-bitten brother who is wanted to be victimized.

Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.P.) once declared saying: "The backbite listener is a second backbiter." On another occasion, he (P.B.U.H.P.) has stated: "One, whose brother Moslem was wanted to be victimized by a backbiter in his presence and was able to defend him and he did defend him, Allah, the Almighty, would protect that one in both this world and in the Hereafter."

The Second Martyr namely, his Eminence, the late, Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq As- Sadr defines the implied backbiting in the following manner: "One of the most harmful kinds of backbiting is the backbiting of the hypocrite Men of Knowledge

and Understanding because they show themselves as decent and faraway from backbiting but they are not aware of their ignorance that they have joined the debaucheries of both hypocrisy and backbiting together.

For instance, while delivering his sermons, he touches upon a person and says: "Praise be to God Who has not afflicted us with love of presidency or love of worldly desires or be like so and so of people and thus alluding, in one way or another, to degrading someone of high renown or by saying:"May God forbid me from little shyness or rid me of bad luck and things like that.

So, by doing so, he commits the debauchery of backbiting under the excuse of his verbal invoking of Allah, the Almighty and assuming the sobriety of the righteous while his actual purpose behind that may be to mention the defect of the targeted personality in a language which implies backbiting, hypocrisy and a call for release from vices by saying for instance:

"He was not properly performing his worshipping

obligations as he was a little nonchalant about them; and due to that, he was afflicted with what all of us mostly get afflicted with and that usually results from patience shortage and thus, he dispraises himself whereas his aim, in reality, is to dispraise the targeted figure and strive to encompass himself with a halo of sanctity reminiscent of the righteous who usually show themselves as being short of doing what can really please the Exalted Creator.

Based on all that, he becomes knowingly or unknowingly, a backbiter, a hypocrite and self-purified and thus he gathers three debaucheries together-all at one go assuming in his ignorance that he is of the righteous who refrain from backbiting!

Such is the role, Satan, the Accursed, usually plays in deviating the People of Ignorance from the right path when they start dealing with knowledge acquisition and work in this direction by following them wherever they go and act and then, by means of his intricate network, he spoils their work and mocks at them. Out of the ample instances of this kind of

backbiting, we adduce to you the following instance to shed more light on this topic.

The case in brief is that a speaker starts backbiting a famous character in a get-together for instance by exposing his defect before the attendants but some of those who are present may have paid no attention to what the backbiter has said. So, in order to turn the attention of the absent-minded towards himself, he says:” Glory be to God! Look! How strange it is?!.... in order to let them give him attentive ears to realize what he says. So, the backbiter hypocritically starts his speech by mentioning Allah’s Name and praising Him as an approach to using His Name as a means for fulfilling his sly end and false claim as though by so doing, he were bestowing favor upon Allah, the Almighty, owing to his sheer ignorance and vanity.

The following case may also fall into the category of backbiting when someone for instance, instead of mentioning the name of the backbitten one, alludes to his victim by saying:”Our friend or our companion has committed so and so- May Allah, the Almighty,

forgive him and forgive us!”-thinking that through invoking Allah for him, feeling pity for him or of being his friend or companion will make him escape from being involved in backbiting because Allah, the Almighty, has full account of the backbiter’s malignant heart and corrupt conscience and his ignorance doesn’t let him know that he has exposed himself to a much more state of hatred in Allah’s sight than that which the ignorant usually expose themselves to when they publicize backbiting.

Among the cases of implied backbiting is the state of listening to backbiting through showing surprise or amazement at what he is hearing because when showing wonder or surprise, the listener does his best to encourage the backbiter to go deeper into backbiting as though he were intending to extract the backbiting from him in this exclamatory way, by saying, for instance:” I wonder how can that happen?! “I knew nothing of it up to now”! or “I can’t believe he can do that?! “Unbelievable!! “How”?

The listener, in behaving so, intends to verify the

backbiter to get more information out of him about the case from him showing entire submission to him in verifying him, listening to him and even keeping silent on hearing it.

The real Grand Spiritual Authority stands far away from both implied and open backbiting because his true faith in Allah, the Almighty forbids him from committing sins and misdeeds or dishonoring the truthful believers, so you can see him thoroughly engaged in worshipping Allah, the Almighty and devoting most of his time to serving the State and the servants of Allah, the Almighty seeking the happiness and the welfare of the people; therefore his time is highly precious and he always strives to spend it where Allah, the Almighty, wills it to be, not according to what Satan and the Evil-seeking self desire.

On account of that, he has no leisure time at all to spend on such trivial matters to which the Satanic man of knowledge usually resort and strive through it to appear in the attire of a faithful believer who loves the people and feels sympathetic with them but

through his comments, questions, directions and exclamations he tries to deceive the naïve and the laymen by saying that he belongs to the people of faith, piety and goodwill whereas he, in reality, is of the men of hypocrisy, deception and lying pretending that it greatly harms him to see and hear of the corruption, deviation and perversion of the people with whom he has got or developed intimate brotherly relations. What really comes out of him, though looking elegant in outward appearance, is the deadly poison of backbiting, grudge, vexation, lying, arrogance and hypocrisy!

But if he had been a faithful believer, indeed, he would have silenced the backbiter and drawn away the rug from under the feet of the listeners and meanwhile recorded a daring brilliant standpoint condemning through it the acts of those who feel rejoiced at wallowing in the morass of backbiting –that is, in their perpetual indulgence in polluting the reputation of truthful believers and in piercing their claws into their bodies and-gone headlong to the backbitten

figure to singly shower him with his notifications and advice. This daring action is the best in results to the conveyor, the backbiter and the backbitten altogether in this world and in the Hereafter.

“The backbite listener is a second backbiter.” This excerpt of the holy hadith emphasizes that the backbite listener is, in turn, the backbiter’s shareholder in both elements of the sin: ‘practice illegality’ and ‘guilt commitment’ of which they both evenly divide between themselves, as they mutually take part in disregarding the sanctity of the Moslem’s honor and reputation through their mutual misbehavior.

The backbiter, on the one hand, owns a tongue with which he can devour the flesh of others and pollute their dignities, posts and positions amongst the people and the backbite listener on the other hand, cordially welcomes the consequences of the backbiter’s guilt with a delightful spirit yet in the worst state of approval as though he were by doing so, outdoing the backbiter in the match of guilt acquisition without being aware that both of them are

lifting the burden of misdeeds off the shoulder of the backbitten person who is groaning under the heavy weight of his own shortcomings on account of this disgusting and shameful act.

The backbiter apparently seems to be one but in reality they are two (the backbiter and the listener) in that they both bear the same burden of guilt-together with the same consequences which backbiting leaves behind to be equally shared by both without any lessening of its effect on behalf of the listener especially under the excuse of not taking the initiative of doing that but, because they mutually accepted the backbite and eagerly meant it and approved of it, not by agreement but by the ability to deny especially by the listener.

The occurrence of the guilt by the speaker and the state of its acceptance by the listener will make the matter quite natural, of course, to regard the backbite listener as a backbiter, too in connection with this common guilt and its serious consequences.

The holy legislature also confirms the fact that

human dignity under the shade of Islam is still secure, awesome and respectful because it persistently demands all mankind to root out evil while in cradle lest anyone should dare to transgress the others and blemish their honor.

Within this context, Divine Care has been a close ally of everyone who stood side by side with his brother believer in defense of him while, on the other side of the scene, Divine Defiance stood as an opponent against anyone who did strive to disappoint his brother believer by abandoning the obligation of defending him in time of urgent necessity or by getting rejoiced at mentioning his shortcomings and defects.

So many a time, legal texts have emphasized that right is more worthy of being followed than falsehood and that each one of them has got its own consequences in hitting the doer positively or negatively according to what his hands have acquired in this careworn world.

(Backbiting and its marks on society)

Nothing is more important in life than man's living in society quite secure as regards himself, his wealth and his honor because man is, in fact, 'person' and 'personality'. If man's bodily safety and financial security represent the makings of his person and his substantial existence; so- his moral safety and his honor's maintenance can be the makings of his moral and social personality; therefore, Islam, although it emphasizes upon the sanctity of the human kind with regard to his health and wealth, it lays more emphasis upon the sanctity of his reputation, prestige and solemnity.

If man lives in a society which is ever encountering bodily aggression, he will certainly not taste the bliss of security and stability there and if he is exposed to an offensive over his financial gains such as having his house plundered, his land robbed and his property stolen, he wouldn't then feel secure or safe.

The same thing can be said in the case of seeing the human being's dignity and reputation entirely ruined which means that he again is exposed to victimization

and notoriety. Upon this too, man cannot taste the relish of security in that society; and societies as such cannot one day become a wonderland to those who live in it nor stir their desire to love them or even affiliate to them.

Western societies, on the whole, have made laws for the maintenance of the people's rights in both of its dimensions: moral and material although the prevalent philosophy there is materialistic in origin. As man cannot transgress the property of the other because, he, by doing so, drops himself in the lap of the law, he also cannot transgress the reputation of the other because that will drop him again in the lap of the law.

So, when a case is raised in the court against an individual and that same individual turned out to be innocent and that- right was with him, he will, in turn, raise a complaint against the other party demanding compensation for the return of his lost honor to which he is wrongfully exposed.

The teachings of Islam largely concentrates on this point. They attach great concern to the people's property, various belongings, honor and reputation

altogether. The Almighty's noble verse says: "Backbite not one another." This is really an open forbiddance to against transgressing the other's personality when dispraising him and distorting his reputation among the people and it is this which people usually call 'backbiting.

One of the necessities of religion as Moslems all over the world unanimously acknowledge, is to regard backbiting as a forbidden act and of the grossest misdeeds whose abandonment is earnestly emphasized and strongly warned of being committed as that would be a cause of entering Hell and receiving therein, on account of it, the severest of punishments.

The holy verse: "Backbite not one another" urges us not to practice this nasty transgression against one another since it can deform the remarkable features of the other in the Moslem society or we can say, the whole human society in its broadest sense.

Then, the same noble verse adduces an example to clearly show the disgusting ugliness of backbiting in likening the act of the backbiter to someone eating the flesh of his dead brother. Have you ever seen someone

sitting before the corpse of his dead brother and eating some of the flesh! Can you visualize the scene for yourself and sense the inherent ugliness of the image?! Is it tolerable to see such a sight?!

This is the state of that who speaks badly of the other in his absence. The image is quite clear because the act of eating the flesh of the dead is but transgression against someone who could not defend himself and mentioned the other or the others degradingly in their absence who, of course, were not present in the meantime to defend themselves. The scene cited to you just now is exactly like that.

The Arabic word 'gheebah' (backbite) has come from the word 'ghiab' which means: (absence)-It speaks of other people's defects and misgivings in their absence and here indeed, the victimized, that is, the backbitten character or characters cannot defend themselves that is, as though, the backbiter seizes the chance of the backbitten 's absence

to speak degradingly about his defects before his friends, relatives or people while being unable to defend

himself; just like one who seizes the chance of eating parts of the flesh while dead which cannot show any kind of resistance.

You can feel secure before the wild animal, win its domesticity and get it familiarized with you through showing it your leniency and love and in case of failure when angered, it won't tear of you save your body but unfortunately most people may think that your leniency and love is only a state of weakness on your part and they may avoid causing any harm to your perishable body lest they should fall into the strong hold of the law whereas they legalize rendering your eternal spirit a common wealth to all incoming and outgoing people and no law nor any court can prevent them from that!

We are as such in our Islamic societies where no single court for the human soul exists like that of the 'body court' to go along side by side with the march of the society; may be on account of too many hardships, difficulties and worries which encounter the Moslems in our societies because the judicial courts are all engaged in easing chronic bodily tensions but the turn

of the 'soul court' has not come yet to play its part in easing the chronic spiritual tensions.

In reality, it is faith and belief in the hard account of the Hereafter as well as in this world that shield man against committing sins and misdeeds and not the courts, however strict they may be in establishing justice and truth, they can never rise to the standard of the strictness of the courts of conscience which estimate and closely watch every incoming and outgoing items of man's everyday life and since long has it been driven in its trust to its sole Creator knowing well enough that the Critic is All-Seeing!

As long as society does not abide by the commands of the legislature, regarding the illegality of practicing backbite and trespassing the bounds of other people's rights, that society will never taste in its life the relish of satisfaction and consent, but boredom, jealousy, rancor, and transgression; and since backbite demands saying things about your brother in his absence which Allah, the Almighty, Himself has kept secure and secret, it does imply nothing of benefit or value save eating a part

of your dead brother's flesh- as the holy verse of the Quran eloquently does assert without being warned by religion nor by conscience.

Those who play this serious part in society bear only one cheap aim in their minds to fulfill represented, singly or jointly in: scandalizing others, causing mischief and ridiculing other people's rights but if they claim to have been sincere to the backbitten figure, they should have gone to him and spoken to him and advised him privately without blowing his honor and renown to the winds before his counterparts and fellows.

Allah, the Almighty, alone, is the Exalted, the Secret-Keeper of the whole of mankind, Most Forgiving His sinful slaves, accepting repentance, pardoning guilt, maintaining one's honor by bestowing His Mercy and Kindness upon His slaves; so how can the insolent slave of God give rein to his wanton desires to wallow in the abyss of backbite and entertain himself by degrading others and polluting their dignity without seeing anyone arise to prevent the backbiter from practicing this disgraceful act?!

Allah, the Almighty, in order to raise the standard of the human society from the bottom up unto the top of sublimity, reverence and perfection, He, Glory be to Him, sets out to preserve at the outset the reputation of the initial base or foundation of that society so that the building structure will properly be set up and even earthquakes and thunderbolts as being based upon reinforced foundations which can resist the strongest of storms and the fastest of floods and other catastrophes; and the building cannot become elevated unless the harmful substances and salts are removed from it.

The same thing is to be said about the secure society which cannot be maintained without rooting out those who strive to demolish everything upon which the society can depend to keep it secure from any blemish and defect and those of whom Allah, the Almighty has said: "Verily, those who like that (the crime of) illegal sexual intercourse be propagated among those who believe, they will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter and Allah knows and you know not." (Surah: An-Nur Verse:19)

(The Negative Consequences Of Backbiting)

Supreme religious authorities and jurisprudents define backbite in a spectrum of ways but the most proper of them may be this which describes it as: the mentioning of the hidden defects of an absent person. Sometimes a person publicizes some negative qualities about himself and therefore the mere mentioning of them is not regarded as a backbite because the backbitten figure himself has not kept his defect as secret and sometimes there happens to be someone who really has that defect in him and he does practice it, but in the meantime he doesn't like anybody to speak of it or mention it even before him; so, if you mention his defect in his absence then, it will be a backbite and this case is forbidden as it incurs the following points:

- * This matter is looked upon as aggression against the reputation and the personality of the mentioned figure.

- * Man, in general, used to practice this shameful act which, to him, has become a regular habit. If

you mentioned something about a person which is detrimental to him in his absence, you may tend then to mention another person in the same manner at other times and so on; and thus, with the passage of time, this affair will become familiar to you and as confirmed in the simile used in the holy Quran which states that if you once eat a small part of the flesh of a dead body, you will get familiarized to it at some other times. The Prince of the Believers-Ali bin Abi Talib (P.B.U.H.) says: "Don't go into the habit of backbiting because the regular practice of it is looked upon as a great sin."

* This debauchery is a cause of polluting the atmospheres of the society with what is negative in consequences and helps the spread of it. When we talk about the defect of a certain person of the people, your talk of his defect will be consolidated in the ears of the people who entirely get habituated to it until some time comes to hear someone backbiting you in lieu of that. Imam As-Sadiq (P.B.U.H.) says in this respect: "Don't backbite in order not to be

backbitten.”

* By backbiting the other you may be a cause of making him react against you. The whole talk of yours against him may reach him in one way or another; so, he strives to revenge himself upon you or to at least defend himself in the battle of regaining his lost dignity and reputation- a matter which may turn the whole society into a field of struggle, enmities, and spread of hatred and rancor.

* Indulging in Allah’s disobedience-purchasing bad deeds in lieu of good and submitting your entire favors to others on a day you feel you are in urgent need of the good acts you have done in your life with which you could have raised your balance of good.

In this regard a hadith has come from Allah’s Messenger (P.B.U.H.P.) in which he said:” On Doomsday, someone would be seen brought to stand between the Hands of Allah, the Almighty and was given his book but he doesn’t see his good acts recorded in it! So he says:” O My Lord! This is not my book. I don’t see my obedience! Then he is

replied: "Your Lord does not forget nor can He be misled. Your whole work in life has gone away by your backbiting the people.

"Then another person is brought and has his book given to him in which he can see so many worshipping acts recorded on his behalf and says: "My Lord! This is not my book". I haven't done all these worshipping acts"! He is replied: "because someone named ... has backbitten you; therefore his good deeds have been transformed to you and this is what makes the backbitten one pleased because he realizes just then that his right is well preserved with Allah, the Almighty.

Therefore, if a person is informed to have been backbitten by someone saying so and so about him, he will only show his anger at him-if he is an ordinary man or perhaps, follow suit, but if he is a faithful believer, he will neglect the whole affair or perhaps, pardon the sinner who has wronged him.

Man ought not to get surprised at the great emphasis religious texts earnestly attach to the

problem of backbiting. Here, indeed can he realize the incessant concern of the Islamic legislature in maintaining the reputation of others and their moral status in society; therefore, we find so many hadiths narrated from the Prophet and his family (P.B.U.H.P.) seriously forbidding the people from practicing backbite.

Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.P.) in his last speech which is well known as the Speech of Farewell (Khutbat Al-Wada'a) wherein he has concentrated upon the principal issues which profoundly concern the Islamic nation and we know well the significance of this speech as to what implications it bears in enlightening the people about the future of the Islamic nation in its wholesome comprehensiveness. He said:"Verily, your bloods, properties and honors are as sanctified as this day of yours, this month of yours and this State of yours.

A backbite is a crime of two-sided dimensions in that it is, on the one hand, a disobedience to Allah, the Almighty and a transgression against some person

on the other hand. There are so many other hadiths of this caliber from which we depict the following:” Verily, Allah, the Almighty, said to Moses: “He who dies repentant from backbite, will be the last to enter Paradise and that who dies persistent of practicing it will be the first to enter Hell.”

In another hadith narrated from Allah’s Messenger (P.B.U.H.P.) in which he said:” Backbite abandonment is lovelier to Allah than ten thousand voluntary prayer rak’as.”It is narrated from Imam Amir Al-Muminin Ali bin Abi Talib (P. B. U. H.) that he said:” The most detestable person in Allah’s Sight is the backbiter.”

It is incumbent upon Islam to root out any crucial matter which seems to be serious and difficult to manage especially that which bears so many negative effects to society and also to intensify the punishment of the evil doers and, indeed, this case is to be embarked upon by the great religion which glorifies the significance of man’s existence on earth and even exaggerates the magnification of his moral and material personality.

So, for the eradication of this chronic malady which dismantles the tightly joined parts of the society and render it with the passage of time severed and fragmentary, came Islam with its sublime laws blowing into them its refreshing breezes to make them more lustrous and fascinating than before in coping with all the maladies and make them immune and well fortified against tempestuous storms and successive atmospheric changes.

As the human being does his best to avoid diseases lest his body should get afflicted with them, it is equally important for him to strive to avoid the virus of backbite which is not less dangerous than bodily diseases if not exceeding them in ugliness, destruction and deformity.

It's a matter of a great wonder to find some people who never lose a chance of investigating the cause of the virus of a disease but they don't try once to investigate the virus of rancor, grudge, evil, malice and hostility within themselves. Man usually inquires about the diseases which afflict his body so as to

live, materially speaking, safe and sound whereas he should also inquire about the diseases of the spirit which, when neglected, pull out of his heart, the bliss of love, sympathy, compassion and good manners and spare nothing of value, morally speaking, in himself!

Due intensification of punishment and stimulation of abandonment with regard to backbite confirms the inevitable truth that: Islam is the religion which can fulfill the aspirations of both: the body and the spirit. As long as the body is safe and well maintained in his blood, his nation and his property, it is also well maintained, in his dignity, religion and esteem. I can definitely say that Islam is the only system among all the systems and constitutions of the world which defend man-as 'person' and 'personality'-the defense which ridicules death.

If we happen to witness some setbacks in the Islamic States in this respect, we will conclude that the defect lies in the applicant, not in the legislator and the shortcoming, if any, lies in Moslems and not

in Islam; therefore, on account of not returning to their perfect religion and the holy Quran; they got to be more and more closer to recession and retreat till they one day, perhaps, come to their senses once again and regain the lost glory of their ancient ancestors and resurrect from between the ruins which have encompassed them many scores of centuries ago for what their hands have acquired.

(How to behave in backbite get-togethers)

What is the duty of the believer when he attends a meeting wherein he hears some people backbite others? There are meetings or get-togethers whose main hobby is backbiting others; and there are groups of attentive listeners who can serve as fans to the backbiter and who feel rejoiced and delighted at hearing the backbite as though they were ordered to listen and mock at the stumbling steps of the victimized figure and thus encouraging the backbiter to disclose more defects in the backbitten one.

You may, unfortunately, find examples of such affairs in so many social medias of different standards

because of their differences in opinions or of their conflicting interests; therefore, some of them resort to mentioning the faults of others without bearing in mind that this affair is one of the greatest forbidden acts!

Some highly religious men feel boastful of themselves that they haven't got intoxicated nor have they committed adultery or made a shameful misdeed; and whenever they see or hear from others that so and so of people have become afflicted with such debaucheries, they promptly praise Allah, the Almighty for saving them from their commitment but, in the meantime, they spare no effort in disclosing the defects of others until they get their hearts filled to the brim with the pleasures of backbiting without putting into their consideration that it is of the greatest sins which is not less in effect than the other sinful acts as Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.P.) many a time has confirmed to the people the following truth by saying: "Backbite is worse than adultery."

The mistake that may arise from describing the

effect of backbiting as mentioned in the holy verses of the Quran and the holy hadiths lies in the fact that Allah, (Glory be to Him) forgives the adulterer for instance, in case he was determined to repent and feel sorry for what he had committed of hideous sins- the case is only between him and His Lord but as regards backbiting Allah, the Almighty, does not forgive the backbiter until the backbitten person whose dignity and reputation did encounter degradation and blemish becomes pleased and content to pardon the backbiter.

The strictness in a backbite punishment is due to the strictness of the backbitten person who may get determined not to forgive the backbiter whose claws have pierced his flesh before the people and this, of course, is a dilemma which befalls the backbiter who cannot settle this problem unless the backbitten one accepts to release his part after granting the consent of the victimized figure-contrary to the case of adultery whose settlement lies in the hands of the Creator Who, once the true repentance is made by the slave

of Allah, the Almighty, Allah will, in turn, forgive him his guilt, accepts his repentance and covers the defects of His slave as well, since his repentance springs from the depth of his heart and since he feels regretful of trespassing the bounds of the brilliant legislature.

Such intensification of the punishment with regard to the rights of the people is due to the human's persistent resort to exercising cruelty over his opponent-probably because of his weakness, helplessness and the incessant increase of heavy sins over his back and shoulders. But the matter of alleviating the punishment or pardoning the guilt-with regard to the rights of Allah, the Almighty, is due to Allah's Compassion Himself, towards His slaves which knows no limits, indeed. The Almighty is the Self-Independent Who feels no harm of even the weight of an atom-when disobeyed nor does He benefit even the weight of an atom from those who obey him. The outcome of the human's obedience or disobedience to His Lord is due to what he does in word and deed positively or negatively.

Suppose you happened to have attended a gathering or a meeting as such, what is your duty then? You may have released your part from practicing backbite but now you are exposed to hearing or, let's be stricter, to listening to the backbite from others; What is your attitude in a situation, like this?

Jurisprudents unanimously emphasize that listening to a backbiter is guilt, just like that who conveys it. If you listen to someone backbiting a fellow in his absence and you keep silent like the dumb or/ and the deaf or in other words remain handcuffed against the backbiter who goes on victimizing your brother believer, you will legally be regarded as a likewise shareholder of this backbite; therefore it is incumbent upon you to promptly retaliate the backbite and never slacken in refusing it.

Some, out of shyness, apologize which is not an acceptable excuse. If you are offered a glass of wine for instance, Will shyness be a justifiable means for you to drink it? And if it happens that you see someone eating the flesh of a dead man, and invites

you to share with him his lunch, can shyness serve as an excuse to take part in that or keep silent?

But some, if forbidden by you from speaking badly of others and that you have stopped them from wallowing more in the morass of the backbite, he may turn to you and say: "Verily, what I say is true! And this is not a proper justification for backbite practice. Backbite, in origin, means mentioning a person as he is and in whatsoever defects he owns in his absence.

In one of his hadiths Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.P.) has said: "Whoever helps his brother in his absence, Allah, the Almighty will help him in this world and in the Hereafter." On another occasion he said: "If a man was backbitten in a get-together and you were there; be a helper to the man and a condemner of the folk of the gathering and depart them as early as possible and let not yourself get appealed to sitting with them in the clubs of backbite as they are, in reality, the abodes of evil and debauchery."

One of my fellows related to me a few days ago that he was present at a meeting of highly ranked

religious scholars. One of the audience there started talking humorously about a respectable character who was absent at the time being. but one of his companions couldn't help listening any more to what was said about that character, he, angrily, stopped the backbiter from continuing his talk and said to him: "If you can tolerate the torment of such issue, you are free but we cannot bear the burden of that, so, don't return to such an affair in our meeting again – and this is, indeed, the proper procedure taken in this situation.

You may look strange and burdensome in the eyes of the backbiter when you face him with some advice or a frown or disgust or by showing him your displeasure and making him understand that you have got annoyed at what he had done to the victimized through his backbite.

To add more fuel to the fire, the audience of that meeting may even surpass the backbiter in not only confirming his attitude about the backbitten character but also in sharing with him their own attitude of

ridicule and mockery, as they desire to flock together with him in the sphere of this debauchery considering the backbiter the humorist who can take them much far away from the hardships of life by having them overwhelmed with this delicious 'fruit' which he lays forth at their roundtable banquets, night club parties and top level meetings with which they, for long, have got familiarized and are still familiarizing with it through their laughter, mirth, exchange of courtesy, topic of conversation and lip-service.

But after all, right remains much worthier to be followed than what they are wallowing in, even though its starters may taste rather bitter but the disserts are palatably delicious; and Whenever the objector confronts detestation, disgust or accusation of being sophisticated, the whole affair will inevitably be culminated in his victory and never does it flow into the stream of the backbiter's interests nor those who harmonize with him.

So, the end, in the end, will be the lot of the people of piety and not the people of passion and self-love;

and all will come to realize that the objector against backbiting an-x-of the people, he will, with same will or motive, oppose anyone who wants to take his liberty in backbiting them in the forthcoming days-a matter which renders him awesome, peacefully co-existent, highly esteemed and reliable in the eyes of all those who know him-entirely different from the backbiters and their listeners-whose wanton passions will, with the passage of time, take them sideways until be torn asunder and left like a heap of garbage, unworthy of being replaced even by a paltry.

(Expiation for the Backbite)

The tongue, as you know, is one of the greatest of Allah's countless bounties ever conferred upon mankind-small in size; yet, great in recompense-when well used or misused by man because faith and blasphemy cannot clearly express themselves except by the testimony of the tongue which can manifest them in both matters of obedience and rebellion and any slip of it can spoil the whole affair as it can sever the lovers, cut off close linkage, reap what man sows of good and generate evil deeds; in a word, it may lead man headlong to Hell.

Allah, the Almighty, in the holy Quran says:" They will say: "Woe to us! What sort of Book is this that leaves neither a small thing nor a big thing, but has recorded it with numbers. (Al-Kahf: Verse.49). The tongue reveals what may be hidden within man's interior of whims, thoughts and visions. If the thoughts are sound, brilliant and glowing, what percolates through the tongue will be words much sweeter than pure honey but if the thoughts are invalid, futile and wretched, so what

transudes through the tongue will be words as rotten and bitter as colocynth.

The tongue is, in fact, the formal spokesman of the human creature who can reflect both the positive and the negative sides of the human's personality – positive, when man is still of pure heart and clean conscience whose inner self is perhaps, weary of his character but the others feel at ease with him when they meet together- his tongue always emits roses and emanates a sweet scent of love, honesty and fidelity; and wherever he settles or travels, his tongue retains the aroma of reform, welfare and happiness.

As for the man whose heart is malignant and sickly, the case completely differs from that man who cherishes those praise-worthy virtues and this may also be due to his tongue which keeps on emitting its poison among the people and for this, they reap nothing of value from him save insolence, ridicule and vain self-esteem, like a virus which afflicts individuals and societies with this merciless epidemic and render them like scattered butterflies suffering from dispersion, pain and loss.

When you take unrestrained pleasure in your arguments at a meeting you may sometimes lose track of what you are talking about by the mere mentioning of certain items which you haven't put in mind of their possible impact on the audience who are there at the end of the meeting at which you feel you are bound to reply to any question the audience may inquire about to enforce you to pay the due charge; therefore, on the Day of Recompense, the good acts you did in your life will be transformed to the backbitten figures and when your good acts come to an end, Allah, the Almighty will take the evil deeds of the backbitten and lay them on yours although you haven't done them in your actual life.

As a result, the slave of Allah, the Almighty, will come on Doomsday with multitudes of good deeds like mountains but he, unfortunately, will find his tongue ruined them all over his head-as being held tightly by that whom he had slandered and whom he had backbitten or be taken by the neck by that whom he had ridiculed; therefore, in order to take himself away

from such heinous situations, he ought to pay the due expiation for all his backbites, slanders and gossips before death takes him away. Expiation for backbites lies in that man should wholeheartedly feel sorry and repentant to Allah, the Almighty for all the misdeeds he has ever done in his life.

Backbite is not only restricted to the tongue but it can also be in writing, gestures, remarks, lowering or raising eye-brows, movements and everything that may lead to the intended point. Imam As-Sadiq (P.B.U.H.) once said: "On backbiting someone indeed and that backbite did reach him, then invoke Allah, the Almighty, to forgive you and if it did not reach him, invoke Allah, the Almighty, to forgive him his sins."

Here, the second part of this hadith states;"And if the backbite did not reach him" may be for fear of some sedition would befall if the backbite reached the ears of the backbitten man or a strong reaction would he show for that like rancor, malice, hostility and exasperation or it would perhaps be difficult to get to him on account of his death and absence, and here, it is enough for you

to invoke Allah, the Almighty, to forgive him his sins for He is Most Merciful whose spacious Mercy covers all mankind if they are determined to honestly adhere to imparting friendliness, forgiveness, pardon and true affection to one another.

Allah, the Almighty, within the domain of His boundless mercy and lofty fairness towards His subjects may spare tormenting the true repentant, forgive him his sins and overlook his slips for it is He whose mercy preceded His anger; He (Glory be to Him) may get miles closer to His subject if the subject advanced a few yards towards his Lord.

It is possible for the sinner to feel sorry, repent to Allah, the Almighty and invoke Him to forgive any transgression against His rights occurred by him but Allah, the Almighty will not accept the repentance of anyone who transgresses against the rights of others except by the reciprocal reconciliation and consent of both conflicting parties and there is no chance for the sinful individual to avail to redeem himself save in this temporary mortal world. The honorable famous

hadith says:” Today work without account but tomorrow account without work.” Let the sinful person hasten to reach those whom he had done wrong-be it a backbite, a gossip or a slander before it becomes too late for him to do anything and to try earnestly to finalize his accounts with them in this world before the train of death comes along so fast that it will undoubtedly crush down all hopes, wishes and procrastinations under its wheels during which no regret or sorrow will do. It is quite common to find the backbiter get afflicted with some sort of shyness that makes him shrink from meeting the backbitten character face to face and this in fact causes him to tantalize between releasing his part from the backbiter or letting the whole affair be buried in oblivion but let him know that shyness is easier to man in this world than in the Hereafter for the possibility of rectifying things and reforming the conditions of this world; therefore, this world is but a good opportunity for those who can rightfully seize it and not let it be lost to cause futile regret and bewilderment.

(Conclusion)

Referring to what we have so far demonstrated about this prevalent phenomenon, we can conclude that backbiting is one of the factors which can help disperse the human society and cut it to pieces as fire does to wood and is rather one of the tremendous factors of ruining the entire nation as we can witness in our contemporary age the horrible widespread of backbites, gossips and slanders which are equally shared by the young and the old-male or female. Such parasites nestle everywhere and they almost encompass our assemblies, clubs and offices.

It is noteworthy to mention that they can principally serve as abominable catalysts in rupturing the intimate social relationships, devastating houses and sowing seeds of separation between relatives and companions if people remain hand-cuffed against the spread of such viruses or slacken the process of uprooting them to rescue the whole society from them.

Multitudes of families have, on account of backbite and gossip, dispersed and parted with

one another particularly, women's gossip. We also ought to know that backbite and gossip are of the greatest sins in Allah's Sight without any doubt and of the affairs whose doers can witness their tangible consequences in this world before tasting the relish of the predictable torment of the Hereafter.

Backbite is one of the most abominable debaucheries of the time and the most wide-spread phenomenon among the people of our contemporary age and few are those among the people who could shield themselves against this chronic malady but the overwhelming majority of the people were and are still suffering from the agonies of this burdensome malady. Therefore, it is incumbent upon every individual to strive to battle this crucial phenomenon and give deaf ears to most of what we hear and see and never attempt to speak disparagingly of anybody save what is legally not detrimental to him. Man should not utter anything that may scratch one's honor as regards his life or his death.

The best remedy to get rid of this malady lies

in two points: The first is how the human creature can grant his future when he returns unto Allah, the Almighty, for recompense on the Day of Reckoning and the second one lies in what he ought to do of good in this world for the sake of returning to Him with a sound heart.

Therefore, the maintenance of happiness in this world and in the Hereafter necessitates man to meditate earnestly on the serious marks backbiting may leave behind in this world and in the Hereafter and to deeply contemplate on the process of having his sins doubled against himself and even his righteous deeds transferred to those whom he had unjustly backbitten and finally expose them to the mind to choose what can be of value and interest to him.

As far as work for one's self in this life is concerned, it is incumbent upon every individual to habituate himself to abandoning the indulgence in such abominable debauchery and vow to lock his tongue through permanent monitoring of it and

make a covenant with himself not to return to this fatal sin. In a brief span of time, he will find himself simultaneously abhorring it and refraining from committing it according to his temperament, the kind of work he could be used to it.

The wise man, on the other hand is, in fact, the man who is all the time busy with his own shortcomings and never has any time to spare for discovering and exposing other people's defects and blemishes. The holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.P.) in this respect says: "Blessed be the person whose defects detracts him from the defects of others." Within this same context, one of the poets say:"

If your 'eye' has shown you some defects

Say to her: "O my Eye! men have eyes"

Keep your tongue off defects and be wise

Men have tongues to show you your defects.

Anybody who wants to purify himself first and his final report next, it is inevitable for him to closely watch his tongue and should follow the example of Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.P.) who says:" Those who

will be rolled down over their faces unto the Hellfire are the people who have borne upon their shoulders and backs the harvests of their tongues.”

Therefore, men of understanding and knowledge and those who are eager to meet Allah, the Almighty, are all invited to focus their attention to this fatal debauchery, to the recompense which is kept in store for such sinners on Doomsday and to their heinous consequences and deteriorations which it leaves behind on the individual and the society,

Translated By:
Division of Culture & International Media
Hussein Al-Bazzaz

(Contents)

(An Inevitable Word).....	3
(Backbiting).....	6
Warning against Backbiting, Slander & Gossip.....	12
The philosophy of the illegality of Backbiting, Slander, Gossip.....	23
(Backbiting) Causes, Effects, Cures & Points of Exceptions.....	29
Listening to Backbiting & Implied Backbiting	36
(Backbiting and its marks on society).....	46
(The Negative Consequences Of Backbiting).....	55
(Expiation for the Backbite).....	72
(Conclusion).....	79