

Hadith for October

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1. Backbiting in Islam and Its Expiation

Importance of guarding the tongue in Islam

The Muslim has to guard his tongue and avoid things that have been forbidden. Among these forbidden things which people often take lightly are ghibah (backbiting), buhtan ([slander](#)) and namimah ([malicious gossip](#)).

Ghibah or [backbiting](#) means speaking about a Muslim in his absence and saying things that he would not like to have spread around or mentioned. Buhtan or [slander](#) means saying things about a Muslim that are not true, or in other words telling lies about him. Namimah or malicious gossip means telling one person what another said in order to cause trouble between them.

Prohibition of backbiting, slander and gossip in Islam

There is a great deal of evidence to show that these actions are haram (impermissible). It will suffice for us to mention just a few of them in order to demonstrate that they are haram.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Neither backbite one another. Would one of you 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-Hujurat:12**]

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Do you know what ghibah (backbiting) is?” They said, “Allah and His Messenger know best.” He said, “Saying something about your brother that he dislikes.” It was said, “What if what I say about my brother is true?” He said, “If what you say is true then you have backbited about him, and if it is not true, then you have slandered him.” [**Muslim**]

Ibn ‘Abbas said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed by two graves and said, “They are being punished, but they are not being punished for anything that was difficult to avoid. One of them used to walk about spreading malicious gossip (namimah), and the other used not to take precautions to avoid getting urine on himself when he urinated.” Then he called for a green branch, which he split in two and planted a piece on each grave, and said, “May their torment be reduced so long as these do not dry out.” [**al-Bukhari, Muslim**]

It is proven from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “When I was taken up into heaven, I was taken past some people who had nails of copper with which they were scratching their faces and chests. I said: Who are these, O Jibreel? He said: These are the ones who ate the flesh of the people and impugned their honor.” [Imam Ahmad and Abu Dawood] The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) defined Ghibah as saying about your brother that which he dislikes. [**Source: [Islamqa](#)**]

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For a person to say of another, “He cannot control his tongue (or he has a loose tongue)” is undoubtedly one of those things that a person would dislike to have said about him. If it is true, then it is ghibah (backbiting), and if it is not true then it is buhtan (slander).

2. Expiation for backbiting, slander, and gossip

Everyone who does any kind of [backbiting](#) , slander or malicious [gossip](#) has to repent and pray for forgiveness, and that is between him and Allah.

If he knows that any of his words reached the person about whom he was speaking, then he should go to him and ask him to forgive him.

But if he does not know, then he should not tell him; rather he should pray for forgiveness for him and make du’a (supplication) for him, and speak well of him in his absence just as he spoke against him.

Similarly, if he knows that telling him will provoke more enmity, then it is sufficient to make du’a for him, speak well of him and pray for forgiveness for him.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever has wronged his brother with regard to his honour or anything else, let him seek his forgiveness today, before there will be no dinar and no dirham, and if he has any good deeds to his credit they will be taken from him in a manner commensurate with the wrong he did, and if he has no good deeds, then some of his counterpart’s bad deeds will be taken and added to his burden.” **[al-Bukhari]**

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said: Whoever wrongs a person by slandering him, backbiting about him or insulting him, then repents, Allah will accept his repentance, but if the one who was wronged finds out about that, he has the right to settle the score.

But if he slandered him or backbit about him and the person did not hear of that, then there are two views according to the scholars, both of which were narrated from Ahmad, the more correct of which is that he should not tell him that he spoke against him in his absence. It was said that he should rather speak well of him in his absence just as he spoke badly of him in his absence, as al-Hasan al-Basri said: the expiation for ghibah is to pray for forgiveness for the person about whom you backbit.” **(Majmu’ al-Fatawa)**

Source: [IslamQA](#)

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3. Listening to Others' Backbiting

It was narrated that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: "Whoever among you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand (by taking action); if he cannot, then with his tongue (by speaking out); and if he cannot, then with his heart (by hating it and feeling it is wrong), and that is the weakest of faith."

Al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Note that the one who hears any backbiting about a Muslim should refute it and rebuke the one who says it. If he does not rebuke him in words he should rebuke him by his actions. If he cannot rebuke him by his actions or his words, then he should leave that gathering. If he hears any backbiting about his Shaykh (teacher) or anyone else who has a right over him or is one of the righteous and virtuous people, then he should pay even more attention to what we have said.

In the book of al-Tirmidhi we narrated from Abu'l-Darda (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever protects the honour of his brother, Allah will protect his face from the Fire on the Day of Resurrection." **[Al-Tirmidhi] End quote. Al-Adhkaar.**

And he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Do not envy one another, do not artificially inflate prices, do not hate one another, do not turn away from one another, do not undercut one another. Be, O slaves of Allah, brothers. The Muslim is the brother of his fellow Muslim. He does not wrong him, let him down or despise him. Piety (taqwa) is here" – and he pointed to his chest three times. "It is sufficient evil for a man to despise his Muslim brother. The whole of a Muslim is sacred to another Muslim, his blood, his wealth and his honour."

Narrated by Muslim (2564).

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4. When Is Backbiting Allowed in Islam?

The scholars have stated that [Ghibah is permitted in certain situations](#):

- [Complaining](#) . It is permissible for the one who has been wronged to complain to the ruler or judge and others who have the authority or ability to settle the score with the one who wronged him.
- [Seeking help to change evil](#) and bring the sinner back to the right path, so he may say to the one who he hopes is able to do something: “So and so is doing such and such; tell him not to do it.”
- **Seeking advice or a Fatwa (religious ruling)**, by saying to the scholar, “So and so/my father/my brother has wronged me by doing such and such, does he have the right to do that? How can I solve this problem and ward off his harm from me?”
- **Warning the Muslims of someone’s evil**, such as highlighting the weakness of some reporters or witnesses or authors. That also includes seeing someone buying faulty goods, or someone keeping company with one who is a thief or adulterer, or giving a female relative of his to such a man in marriage, and the like. You should tell them about that by way of sincere advice, not with the aim of causing harm and spreading mischief.
- **If a person openly commits evil or [follows Bid`ah](#) (innovation)**, such as drinking alcohol and seizing people’s wealth unlawfully, it is permissible to speak of what he is doing openly, but it is not permissible to speak against him any other way, unless it is for another reason.
- **For identification**, if someone is known by a nickname such as the dim-sighted one, or the blind man or the one-eyed or the lame one, it is permissible to identify him as such, but it is impermissible to mention that by way of belittling him, and if it is possible to identify him in some other way, that is better.

Source: [IslamQA](#)