Summary

1)     The danger of major sins.

2)     The harm and evil effect of backbiting.

3)     Texts prohibiting backbiting and frighten people from it.

4)     The danger of the tongue.

5)     Islaam encourages stopping and preventing people from backbiting.

6)     Defining tale bearing.

7)     Texts prohibiting tale bearing and frighten people from it.

8)     Exceptional cases where backbiting is allowed.

All praise is due to Allah. May peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, his household and companions.

Fellow Muslims! ***“Fear Allah and obey Him. Be afraid of the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah. Then every person shall be paid what he earned; and they shall not be dealt with unjustly”****(Al-Baqarah: 281).*

Brothers in Faith! Major sins are indeed the cause for all misery, evil and torment in this world and the hereafter. And the worst of all sins are those that are greatest in harm and danger. Among the destructive major sins are backbiting and slandering. These two sins were forbidden by Allah through His Prophet because they sow enmity, evils and discord among people and lead to destruction. They make their perpetrator regret when regret will be of no avail. They cause hostilities between people of the same household and between neighbours and relatives. They can decrease in good deeds and increase in evil ones and lead to dishonour and ignominy.

Backbiting and slandering are shame and disgrace. Their perpetrator is detested and he shall not have a noble death. Allah forbids these acts in His Book when He says,***“O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion; in deeds some suspicions are sins. And spy not 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 accepts repentance, Most Merciful”****(Al-Hujuraat: 12).*

This verse strongly forbids backbiting for Allah likens the backbiter to one who eats the flesh of his dead brother. If he would hate eating the flesh of his brother, he should also hate to eat his flesh while he is alive by backbiting and slandering him.

When one reflects deeply over this assimilation it will be enough to keep one away from backbiting.

*Abu Hurrairah* narrated that the Prophet said, ***“Do you know what backbiting is?” They said, “Allah and His Messenger know best.”*** He then said, ***“It is to say something about your brother that he would dislike.”***Someone asked him, *“But what if what I say is true?”* The Messenger of Allah said, ***“If what you say about him is true, you are backbiting him, but if it is not true then you have slandered him.”*** *(Muslim).*

*Abu Bakr* narrated that the Prophet said in *Mina* on the day of slaughtering (10th day of *Thul-Hijjah*), ***“Veriliy, your blood, property and honour have become sacred to one another as the sacredness of this day of yours in this month of yours and in this city of yours. Indeed, have I conveyed the Message?”*** *(Al-Bukharee & Muslim).*

Therefore, guard your tongue, fellow Muslims, from this debasing sin, for whoever guards his tongue from sins and uses his limbs in acts of obedience to Allah has prospered. *Sahl ibn Sa’d*narrated that the Messenger of Allah said, ***“Who protects his tongue from unlawful utterances and his private parts from illegal sexual intercourse, I shall guarantee him entrance into Paradise.”****(Bukharee & Muslim).*

*Abu Moosa Al-Ash’aree* said, ***“****I asked the Messenger of Allah: Who is the best Muslim?* The Messenger of Allah replied, ***“He is the one from whom Muslims are safe from the evil of his tongue and hands.”*** *(Muslim).*

Dear Muslims! Beware of slipping of your tongues and do not give it free hand to wreak havoc on you. For free tongue destroys its owner and causes him calamities and evils.

*Abu Sa’eed Al-Khudree* narrated that the Messenger of Allah said, ***“When man wakes up in the morning each day, all parts of the body warn the tongue saying, ‘Fear Allah as regards us for we are at your mercy; if you are upright, we will be upright and if you are crooked, we become crooked.’”****(At-Tirmidhee).*

*Mu’aath ibn Jabal* said, ***“****I said: O Messenger of Allah tell me of a deed that will make me enter Paradise and keep me away from the Fire*. The Prophet said***, ‘You have asked of a great matter but it is easy for whosoever Allah makes it easy. You should worship Allah without associating anything with Him, perform Salaah, pay Zakaah (charity), fast during the month of Ramadaan and perform pilgrimage if you are able to.’ He said further, ‘Should I show you the gateways to good? Fasting is a shield (from evils), charity extinguishes sins as water extinguishes fire and praying in the middle of the night.’*** He then recited this verse, ***‘Their sides forsake their beds to invoke their Lord in fear and hope and they spend (charity in Allah’s cause) out of what We have bestowed them. No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do.’*** *(As-Sajdah: 16-17)* The Messenger of Allah then said, ‘Should I tell you the head of the matter, its pillar and its peak?’ I said: Yes O Messenger of Allah. He then said, ‘The head of the matter is Islam, its pillar is Salaah (prayer) and its peak is Jihaad in the way of Allah.’ He then asked, ‘Should I tell you of the foundation of all that?’ I said: Yes O Messenger of Allah. He then took hold of his tongue and said, ‘Hold back this.’ I said: O Messenger of Allah, are we going to be held responsible for what we utter? He said, ‘May your mother be bereaved of you[[1]](http://alminbar.com/khutbaheng/2177.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn1%22%20%5Co%20%22)[1], does anything cast people into the Fire on their faces except what their tongues have uttered?’” *(At-Tirmdhee)*

Anas narrated that the Messenger of Allah said, “When I was ascended to heaven, I passed by a people who had copper nails with which they scratched their faces and chests, and I said, ‘O Jibreel, who are these?’ He said, ‘These are those who used to eat other people’s flesh and attack their honour.’” *(Aboo Dawood)*

Therefore do not treat the issue of backbiting with indifference because it is a great sin. Allah says,

“You considered it a little thing, while with Allah it was very great.”

*(An-Noor 24: 15)*

Aboo Bakr used to take hold of his tongue and say this is that which caused me destruction.” He said this as a sign of humbleness.

Backbiting is so widespread that it has become the topic of people’s meetings and an avenue for expressing their anger, misgivings and jealousy with those who indulge in backbiting believing that they are hiding their own imperfections and harming others. They are oblivious of the fact that they are only harming themselves. This is because the backbiter if the wrongdoer and his victim is the wronged and on the Day of Resurrection both the wrongdoer and the wronged will stand before Allah Who is the Just Judge and the wronged will appeal to Allah to avenge the wrong done to him, Allah will then give this wronged person from the good deeds of the person who wronged him in accordance with his wrong by backbiting his brother on a Day that no father will give his son any of his good deeds nor a friend to his friend. All will be saying, ‘Myself, myself.’

The Messenger of Allah said, “Usury has seventy something kinds, the smallest of which is for a man to have intercourse with his mother and the highest act of usury is for a Muslim to attack the honour of his Muslim brother.” He also said, “Whoever protects the honour of his brother, Allah will protect him from Hellfire on the Day of Resurrection.” *(At-Tirmidhee)*

So prevent the backbiter of affronting the honour of Muslims. Allah says,

“O you who believe, keep your duty to Allah and fear Him and speak (always) the truth.”

*(Al-Ahzaab 33: 70)*

Fellow Muslims! Fear Allah for whoever fears Allah, He protects him from torment and doubles reward for him. Allah says,

“And indeed We have created man and We know what his own self whispers to him. And We are nearer to him than his jugular vein (by Our knowledge). (Remember) that the two receivers (recording angels) receive (each human being after he or she has attained the age of puberty), one sitting on the right and one on the left (to note his or her actions). Not a word does he or she utter, but there is a watcher by him (ready to record it.”

*(Qaaf 50: 16-18)*

Brothers in Islam, gossiping about others is also another vicious type of backbiting. It means carrying tales from one people to another with the intention of sowing dissention among them. Allah condemned this deed when He said,

*“And obey not everyone who swears much, and is considered worthless. A slanderer going about with calumnies.”*

*(Al-Qalam 68: 10-11)*

The Prophet said, “The gossiper will not enter Paradise.”

Fear Allah therefore, dear brothers, and call yourselves to account before you are called to account and weigh your own deeds before they are weighed for you.

Be aware also dear Muslims, that the Ulamaa have explained that it is allowed for the wronged to inform the authorities of the wrong done to him as it is allowed for the person who sees vice to inform those who are capable of removing it and prevent its perpetrator from committing further vice. It is also allowed for the one seeking for religious decision to mention the wrong done to him to the knowledgeable man from whom he is seeking a decision in order to make things clear for him. It is also permissible for you to tell whoever seeks your advice on a person of something about him. It is not allowed for you to hide what you know about him so that he will not be deceived. All these types of speaking about others are lawful.