Dear Brothers and Sisters In Islam!

Today, I want us to focus on THE HARMS OF TONGUE.

O people! Fear Allah, the Exalted, and preserve your tongues, since the results of tongue indulgence leads to one’s ruin. It was reported on the authority of Mu’adh bin Jabal (r.a.) that he said: “I asked the Prophet (s.a.s.): Messenger of Allah, tell me of something which should cause me to be admitted to Paradise and will keep me away from the Fire. He answered: “You have asked about a matter of great importance but it is easy for one for whom Allah makes it easy. Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him. Observe Prayer, pay the Zakaah, observe the Fast of Ramadan and perform the Pilgrimage if you can afford the journey. Then he added: “Shall I inform you of the gates of goodness? The fast is a shield. Charity puts out sins as water puts out fire and also the Prayer in the middle of the night. Then he recited “Their limbs do forsake their beds of sleep, the while they call on their Lord, in Fear and Hope: and they spend (in charity) out of the sustenance which We have bestowed on them. Now no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden (in reserve) for them, as a reward for their (good) Deeds” (As-Sajdah: 16-17). Then he added: “Shall I tell you of the root of the matter and of its contours and of its top?” I said: “Certainly, Messenger of Allah.” He said: “The root of the matter is Islam, its contours are Prayers and its top is working in the cause of Allah (Jihad).” Then he asked: “Shall I tell you of that with which you can control of all this?” I said: “Certainly, O Messenger of Allah.” Then he took hold of his tongue and said: “Keep this in control.” I said: “Shall we be called to account in respect of that which we say?” He answered: “May your mother lose you, will people not be thrown face down into Hell only on account of the harvest of their tongue.”

Dear Brothers and Sisters! The harvest of tongue is the unlawful sayings, which are many, and among which: there are **sayingsequivalent to disbelief**. Mockery of Allah, His religion, His Book, His messengers, His signs and symbols of Islam (seairil Islam such asHajj, Safa and Marwa ,masjids and congregational prayers, scholars and imams, recitation of Qur’an and calling athan, saying Bismillah, elhamdulillah, maa-shaa Allah, AllahuEkber, slaughtering a permissible animal in Eid Al Adha), and His righteous servants as regards their modes of worship, all lead to disbelief in Allah and the exclusion out of the fold of faith. This mockery is one of the harms of the tongue. Falsehood, backbiting, tale bearing, obscenity, reviling and cursing, are all forms of the harms of the tongue. In a Hadith, it was stated that Allah treats with displeasure a person who is given to loose and vulgar talk.

O people! Many people picked up bad moralities that are related to the harms of their tongues. Most people pay no attention to falsehood, as they do not derive a warning from the Prophet’s saying: “Falsehood leads to Al-Fujur (i.e. wickedness, evil-doing), and Al-Fujur (wickedness) leads to the (Hell) Fire, and a man may keep on telling lies till he is written before Allah, a liar.” Certain persons may sometimes have unreliable guesswork, which they divulge among people carelessly, though their guess may defame other Muslims, thus incurring the sin of falsehood and transgression committed against their fellow Muslims. It is feared that such people will be included in the category concerning which the Prophet (s.a.s.) said: “A man may utter a word, in which he finds no faults, though it may cause him to fall down into the Hell for seventy years.” In Sahih Al-Bukhari, it was narrated on the authority of Samurah bin Jundub, in a part of the dream seen by the Prophet (s.a.s.): “Two angels came to him and, while they accompanied him, they passed by a person lying and another standing with an iron hook in his hand pushing it inside the mouth of the former till it reached the jawbone, and then tore off one side of his cheek, and then did the same with the other side; in the meantime the first side of his cheek became normal again and then he repeated the same operation again.” The two angels told the Prophet (s.a.s.): “He was a liar and who used to tell lies, and the people would report those lies on his authority till they spread all over the world. So, he will be punished like that till the Day of Resurrection.”

Such are those who convey their baseless conjectures to people as if they were realities. Perhaps such conjectures may sow hatred among people and lead to the disintegration of society and dispersion of the team spirit, for nothing but illusions. Some people may propagate rumors that they hear from others, which if investigated, will turn out to be mere lies or versions of original reports distorted by exaggerations. However, a prudent believer should ascertain news and their sources before conveying them to others, in order to avoid committing falsehood. In a Sahih Hadith the Prophet (s.a.s.) said: “A man may utter a word without his being on a clear ground regarding it (i.e., without considering its being truthful or not or its being good or evil) which causes him to slip down into the Fire (in a depth) greater than the distance between east and west.” In another Hadith it was related that the Prophet (s.a.s.) said: “A person will be considered as committing a great sin if he relates all that he hears.”

O Muslims! Restrain you tongues! Do not let them loose, bringing about your destruction. When you are about to utter a word, just remember Allah’s saying in SuratQaaf verse 18), that:

مَّايَلۡفِظُمِنقَوۡلٍإِلَّالَدَيۡهِرَقِيبٌعَتِيدٌ۬“Man does not utter any word except that with him there is an observer prepared to record”, and the Prophet Muhammad’s saying (SAW): “The ones who believe in Allah and the Last Day shall say something good, or better keep silent.” Verily, you will be called to account for every word that you say. So, be prepared for that critical time when you will confront with the words that you uttered without carelessly! Do not hasten to utter all that comes to your imagination or all that you heard, for your imagination or the report you heard may be far from truth, in which case you will lose greatly.

Muslims now suffer two unrestrained diseases, though immunity from them is easy for those who are seeking to be protected by Allah. These **two diseases are backbiting and tale-bearing.** Backbiting (Ghibah) denotes slandering (IFTIRA) a person, speaking evil about any of his characteristics or his deeds. Many of the counsels of Muslims today are not free from indulgence in backbiting people and criticizing them, despite the fact that those backbiters themselves are not free from faults and blemishes; rather they harm themselves and those who listen to their reports without denouncing them.

Our duty when you hear others backbite your brothers is to be earnest to forbid the backbiter and to defend the honors of Muslims, just as the case when you find a man eating from the flesh of a dead body. Allah the Almighty said: **يَـٰٓأَيُّہَاٱلَّذِينَءَامَنُواْٱجۡتَنِبُواْكَثِيرً۬امِّنَٱلظَّنِّإِنَّبَعۡضَٱلظَّنِّإِثۡمٌ۬‌ۖوَلَاتَجَسَّسُواْوَلَايَغۡتَببَّعۡضُكُمبَعۡضًا‌ۚأَيُحِبُّأَحَدُڪُمۡأَنيَأۡڪُلَلَحۡمَأَخِيهِمَيۡتً۬افَكَرِهۡتُمُوهُ‌ۚوَٱتَّقُواْٱللَّهَ‌ۚإِنَّٱللَّهَتَوَّابٌ۬رَّحِيمٌ۬**

“**O People who Believe! Avoid excessive assumptions; indeed assumption sometimes becomes a sin (ISM), and do not seek faults, and do not slander one another; would any one among you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? So you will hate that! And fear Allah; indeed Allah is Most Acceptor of Repentance, Most Merciful**.” (Al-Hujurat: 12).

It is likely that a backbiter will be punished on the Day of Resurrection by ordering him to eat from the flesh of the dead bodies of those whom he backbit in this life, who will be presented as dead in front of him. It was narrated in the Hadith relating the story of Mi’raj: “The Prophet (s.a.s.) passed by people with copper fingernails, with which they scratch their own faces and chests. He asked: “Who are those, Gabriel?” Gabriel answered: “Those are the people who eat the flesh of other people and vilify their honor.” The Prophet (s.a.s.) said in an occasion: “O you who declared faith with your tongues, but your hearts are not imbued with faith! Do not backbite Muslims, and do not search for their faults, for if anyone searches for their faults, Allah will search for his fault, and if Allah searches for the fault of anyone, He disgraces and exposes him in his house”.

Sometimes when backbiters are advised to give up such bad habit, they plead innocence by stating that they are telling the truth. The Prophet (s.a.s.) was asked concerning backbiting thus: “Suppose that there are actual faults in the one I am talking about?” The Prophet (s.a.s.) replied: “If what you tell about your brother (in faith) is truth, then you will still be guilty of backbiting, but if what you say concerning him is untruth, you will be guilty of committing falsehood against him”. Thus, the Prophet (s.a.s.) explained to his Ummah that backbiting denotes mentioning the real faults of a person. However, the worse evil is to backbite a believer by mentioning faults, which are not in him. Imam Ahmad, as well as the scholars who adopted his school, maintained that backbiting is one of the major sins. This gives a warning to Muslims to stop backbiting others and to be concerned with their own faults. Once a person finds a fault with his brother, he should advice him and guide him to eliminate such fault rather than vilifying him.

The other rampant (unrestrained) disease is Namimah (tale-bearing, or going about with calumnies), which denotes carrying the statements made against some people and transmitting such statements to those backbitten people, with the aim of spreading corruption and sowing enmity and hatred among people. This kind of Namimah is considered the most grievous of all, and one who is guilty of it is to incur torture in the grave, as well as the torment of the Fire of Hell. The Prophet (s.a.s.) said: “No talebearer shall ever enter Paradise.” The Prophet (s.a.s.) once passed by two graves and said: “They (The dwellers of these graves) are now being tortured, because of something which was not difficult to resist: One of them neglected cleansing his genitals following urination and the others was given to tale-bearing.” Anyone, to whom a report is carried, telling that someone is vilifying him, should condemn such an act and forbid the tale-carrier from persisting in his sin. He should also take care of such a talebearer for, just as he carries tales of people to him, he most likely carries tales from him to other people. Allah the Almighty says: وَلَاتُطِعۡكُلَّحَلَّافٍ۬مَّهِينٍ (﻿١٠﻿)هَمَّازٍ۬مَّشَّآءِۭبِنَمِيمٍ۬“And do not obey every worthless habitual swearer [And] scorner, going about with malicious gossip,” (Al-Qalam: 10 -11). May Allah guide you and I to the best of manners and deeds and keep us away from the bad manners and deeds and guide us to His straight forward path.

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Why do people commit this sin: BACKBITING? According to Imam Al Ghazali, a great Islamic scholar, there are 10 reasons people mostly backbite:

1-**Anger and enmity**: to belittle and disgrace a person or group:and thus relax

2-**Jealousy-envy**, which is haram, a sin in Islam. Different than admiring someone, it is totally negative against the person(s).

**3-Needing to talk about something**: due to lack of knowledge and wisdom. That’s why is more common among cahilun, uneducated, simple-minded people. If the person is muslim, he/she should at least repeat the praising words for Allah SWT and His Messenger, recite the memorized chapters from Qur’an, ask forgiveness, repent, and similar things.

**4-Just to add some taste and joy into the conversation**: Backbiters think that they cannot enjoy conversations and socializing if there is no backbiting.

**5-Just to accompany friends or follow them blindly to not lose their friendship:** Some backbiters do not have strong character and lack leadership skills, and therefore they feel that they should join these kind of conversations simply because they cannot lead the conversations. However, a muslim person in this case, must either prevent this backbiting right away, or if can’t, he/she should leave that place to protest. There is something better than everything: which is to defend the person whose being backbit.**According to the hadith in Taberani**: “Whoever protects the honor of his/her brother or sister, Allah SWT will protect that person’s honor on the Day of Judgment.” Another hadith from Taberani again narrates: If a muslim person is being disgraced and you do not support and protect your brother/sister while you are there, Allah SWT will disgrace and embarrass you in the Hereafter.

**6-To take revenge from the person who backbit you before**: If the things that were said about you were true, it is wise of you that you correct those shortcomings. If they are untrue, it would be slander, not backbiting.Then you should defend yourself so that others are not misinformed or disinformed. In Surat**Al Muminun verse 96**, Allah SWT says: **Idfa’ billetiyhiyeahsenusseyyieh. Venahnua’lemubimayasifuun”: which means: “**Repeltheir evil by means of what is best. We are most knowing of what they describe”.

On the other hand, if people are backbiting about you, you are getting their reward so you should not be unhappy. In fact, Hasan al Basri RA used to send a gift to those people who were backbiting about him. He advised someone by saying that “If you cannot stop backbiting people, do it against your parent, your mom because she is the one who deserve the most to get my rewards in the Hereafter.

**7-to diminish or weaken the one who is competing or your opponent: This is haram in Islam. Islam encourages to compete in donating sadaqah, charity, studying, in working to be better in fearing Allah SWT and becoming more pious person**.

**8-To prove that he/she is not the only one backbiting and so they relax themselves:** Even the worse evil persons feel shame to some degree. That’s why they always accompany other backbiters. Of course, this will not reduce the harm or sin just because you were not the only one.

**9-To glorify themselves by disgracing others:**Felatuzekkuenfusekum: Do not glorify .

**10- Unable to hide their disappointments**

Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded. Aqimissalah! ……