

# KHUTBA

Friday 24.06.11

English

## Slips of the tongue, backbiting and tale-bearing

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 (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: **"I asked the Prophet (saws): 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."* [32:16-17]**

Then he added, **"Shall I tell you of the root of the matter, its pillar and its highest point?"** I replied: **"Yes! Certainly, O Prophet of Allah."** He said, **"The root of this matter (foundation) is Islam, its pillar (mainstay) is As-Salat (the prayer) and its highest point is Jihad (fighting in the Cause of Allah)."** Then he asked, **"Shall I tell you of that which holds all these things?"** I said: **"Yes, O Messenger of Allah."** So he took hold of his tongue and said, **"Keep this in control."** I asked: **"O Messenger of Allah! Shall we really be accounted for what we talk about?"** He replied, **"May your mother lose you! People will be thrown on their faces into the Hell on account of their tongues."**

O people! The harvest of tongue is the unlawful sayings, which are many, and among which there are sayings tantamount to disbelief. Mockery of Allah, His religion, His Book, His messengers, His signs, 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 fruits of the tongue. Falsehood, backbiting, tale bearing, obscenity, reviling and cursing, are all forms of the fruits 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 fruits 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 (saws) 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."** It

was narrated on the authority of Samurah bin Jundub, in a part of the dream seen by the Prophet (saws): **“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 (saws): **“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.”** [Bukhari]

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 (saws) 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 (saws) 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 that which translates as: **“Not a word does he utter but there is a sentinel by him, ready (to note it)”** [50: 18], and the Prophet’s saying: **“Let him who believes in Allah and the Last Day say something good, or better keep silent.”**

O People! Verily, you will be called to account for every word that you utter. So, be prepared for that critical time when you will be confronted with the words that you uttered without carelessly!

O Muslim! 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.

Allah the Almighty says which translates as: **“O ye who believe! Fear Allah, and (always) say a word directed to the Right: That He may make your conduct whole and sound and forgive you your sins: he that obeys Allah and His Messenger, has already attained the highest Achievement. We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it; - he was indeed unjust and foolish; With the result) that Allah has to punish the Hypocrites, men and women, and the Unbelievers, men and women, and Allah turns in Mercy to the Believers, men and women; for Allah is Off-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”** [33:70-73]

O people! Muslims now suffer two rampant diseases, though immunity from them is easy for those who are protected by Allah. These two diseases are backbiting and tale-bearing. Backbiting (Ghibah) denotes maligning 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.

O Muslims! Allah presented one who backbite his fellow Muslims in the most repulsive picture, in which he is depicted as eating the flesh of the dead body of one who is backbitten.

O Muslims! Your duty when you hear someone 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 what means: ***“O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: and spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, ye would abhor it. But fear Allah: for Allah is Oft Returning, Most Merciful”*** [49:12]

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 the world, who will be presented as dead in front of him. It was narrated in the Hadith relating the story of Mi'raj (Ascent) that: ***“The Prophet (saws) passed by people with copper fingernails, with which they scratch their own faces and chests. He asked: “Who are those, Gabriel?” It was answered: “Those are the people who eat the flesh of other people and vilify their honor.” The Prophet (saws) 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”.***

O Muslims! Sometimes when backbiters are advised to give up such bad habit, they plead innocence by stating that they are telling the truth. The Prophet (saws) was asked concerning backbiting thus: ***“Suppose that there are actual faults in the one I am talking about?” The Prophet (saws) 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 (saws) 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. This is the requisite for establishing a real bond of brotherhood based on faith, and the torch that guides to the way of Islamic methodology.

The other rampant 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 (saws) said: ***“No talebearer shall ever enter Paradise.” The Prophet (saws) 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.”***

O Muslims! 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 which translates as: **“Heed not the type of despicable man, ready with oaths, a slanderer, going about with calumnies...”** [68:10-11]

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 straightforward path, for He is Most Bounteous, Most Generous. May Allah bless our Prophet Muhammad (saws), his family and his companions.