

## THEME 37 - AVOID BACKBITING

### تَحْرِيمُ الْغَيْبَةِ

#### Learning objectives:

- To learn that it is important to control the tongue.
- To understand the meaning of backbiting and its different forms.
- To learn why backbiting is so bad.

#### In this theme, you will learn:

Backbiting is strictly prohibited in Islam, as it involves speaking ill of someone behind their back, damaging their reputation, and sowing discord among people. We are urged to refrain from engaging in backbiting and to cultivate a culture of forgiveness, empathy and constructive communication. Backbiting can involve gossiping and spreading rumours about someone. It causes enmity and hatred and is a major sin therefore it is prohibited.

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿ وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾ [الحجرات 12]: وَقَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا ﴾ [الإسراء: 36].

Allah ﷻ says: “Neither spy on one another nor backbite about each other. Would anyone of you like to eat the meat of his dead brother? Never! You would hate it. So be fearful of Allah. Allah is indeed Forgiving, Caring” (49:12). “Do not follow blindly without knowledge, use your senses: hearing, seeing and thinking, you will be questioned about them” (17:36).

[1] عن أبي هريرة عن النبي قَالَ: «مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكَلِّمْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ» متفق عَلَيْهِ.

1. Abu Hurairah ؓ reported: The Prophet ﷺ said, “The person who believes in Allah and the last day must say good things or remain silent.”

[2] عن أبي موسى قَالَ: قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَيُّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ أَفْضَلُ؟ قَالَ: «مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ» متفق عَلَيْهِ.

2. Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari ؓ reported: I asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: “Who is most excellent among Muslims?” He ﷺ said, “The one from whose tongue and hands other Muslims are safe.”

COMMENTARY: This hadith conveys a profound lesson on the importance of controlling one's speech and actions in Islam. Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari (may Allah be pleased with him) asked the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) about the most excellent among the Muslims, and the Prophet's response highlights the significance of exhibiting impeccable character and conduct.

[3] عن سفيان بن عبد الله قَالَ: قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ حَدِّثْنِي بِأَمْرٍ أَعْتَصِمُ بِهِ قَالَ: «قُلْ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقِمْ» قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، مَا

أَخَوْفُ مَا تَخَافُ عَلَيَّ؟ فَأَخَذَ بِلِسَانِ نَفْسِهِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: «هَذَا» رواه الترمذي.

3. Sufyan bin ‘Abdullah رضي الله عنه reported: I asked: “Messenger of Allah! Tell me something that will keep me steadfast.” He ﷺ said, “Say: My Lord is Allah and then remain steadfast.” Then I said: “Messenger of Allah! What do you fear most about me?” He took hold of his tongue and said: “This.”

[4] عن ابن عمر قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: «لَا تُكْثِرُوا الْكَلَامَ بِغَيْرِ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ؛ فَإِنَّ كَثْرَةَ الْكَلَامِ بِغَيْرِ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى قَسْوَةٌ لِلْقَلْبِ! وَإِنْ أَبْعَدَ النَّاسِ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى الْقَلْبُ الْقَاسِي» رواه الترمذي.

4. Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Do not indulge in excessive talk except when remembering Allah. Excessive talking without the remembrance of Allah hardens the heart; and those who are the farthest from Allah are those whose hearts are hard.”

[5] عن أبي سعيد الخدري عن النبي قَالَ: «إِذَا أَصْبَحَ ابْنُ آدَمَ، فَإِنَّ الْأَعْضَاءَ كُلَّهَا تُكْفِّرُ اللِّسَانَ، تَقُولُ: اتَّقِ اللَّهَ فِيْنَا، فَإِنَّمَا نَحْنُ بِكَ؛ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَمَّتْ اسْتَقَمْنَا، وَإِنِ اعْوَجَجَتْ اعْوَجَجْنَا» رواه الترمذي.

5. Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri رضي الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ said, “When the son of Adam gets up in the morning, all the limbs humble themselves before the tongue and say: Fear Allah for our sake

because we are with you: (i.e. we will be rewarded or punished as a result of what you do) if you are straight, we will be straight; and if you are crooked, we will become crooked.”

[6] عن أبي هريرة أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ: «أَتَدْرُونَ مَا الْغَيْبَةُ؟» قَالُوا: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ، قَالَ: «ذِكْرُكَ أَخَاكَ بِمَا يَكْرَهُ» قِيلَ: أُرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ فِي أَخِي مَا أَقُولُ؟ قَالَ: إِنْ كَانَ فِيهِ مَا تَقُولُ، فَقَدْ اغْتَبَبْتَهُ، وَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِيهِ مَا تَقُولُ فَقَدْ بَهَتَّهُ» رواه مسلم.

6. Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Do you know what is Backbiting?” The companions said: “Allah and His Messenger know better.” Then he ﷺ said, “Backbiting is talking about your brother in a way, that he dislikes.” It was said to him: “What if my brother is as I say.” He ﷺ said, “If he is actually as you say, then that is backbiting; but if that is not, then that is slander.”

COMMENTARY: The hadith highlights that backbiting involves speaking about one’s brother in a manner that he dislikes, even if what is being said is true. This emphasises the significance of respecting others’ privacy and reputation, regardless of their flaws or shortcomings. True brotherhood in Islam encourages empathy, understanding, and support rather than engaging in idle talk that may harm someone’s feelings or reputation.

[7] عن أبي هريرة أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ: «كُلُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ حَرَامٌ: دَمُهُ وَعَرَضُهُ وَمَالُهُ» رواه مسلم.

7. Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “The blood, honour and property of a Muslim is sacred for another Muslim.”

**Activities:**

- Discuss how the tongue can be good but also dangerous.
- Discuss different scenarios about backbiting and how to stop backbiting.
- Design a poster on the manners of speaking and what to avoid.

**In this theme you have learnt:**

- Not to backbite.
- The example given for backbiting is like eating the flesh of the dead.
- Do not accept things without proper knowledge of them.
- You are answerable for your hearing, seeing and thinking.
- He who believes in Allah and the last day must either speak good or remain silent.
- The most excellent amongst you is the one from whose tongue and hands others are safe.
- Do not talk too much as this will harden your heart.
- Slandering is worse than backbiting as it exaggerating a lie.