

Back biting

The Arabic word for backbiting is Gheebah.

People backbite by:

1. Speaking.

When we say something bad about a person in front of them it will hurt them, e.g. when you say something bad about someone when they cannot hear you or when that person is not there it is classed as backbiting.

2. Hinting.

Saying things indirectly for example to say you know who I mean when they are talking about someone and do not want to mention the name.

3. Gestures actions signs

Using facial expressions or nudging with hands or legs in order to show or tease how a person walks talks.

4. Listening.

Listening to others backbite. Even if we do not say something it is still sinful to listen to other people backbiting.

5. Writing.

Writing false information about someone, for example, in a magazine or a newspaper. It is a great sin to backbite and Allah dislikes it so much that he also mentions a verse in the holy Quran. Backbiting is worse than eating your own dead brother's flesh.

Why do people backbite?

It could be for one of the following:

1. Anger towards another person.
2. To think about one's self better than others.
3. Jealousy towards another person's success.
4. Disagreement about something.

Our beloved Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) strongly disliked backbiting. He said the backbiter will not enter Jannah.

We should not backbite at all times. Allah will not forgive the person unless that person forgives him.

How to avoid backbiting

1. Keep in mind the seriousness of the sin.
2. Be aware that Allah knows everything that we think and do.
3. Admire the good qualities of the person rather than being critical about their weakness.
4. If we are amongst friends who are backbiting, then discourage such discussions by:
 - a) Changing the topic,
 - b) Correcting them in a pleasant manner, or
 - c) Walking away.

We can speak against someone: -

1. If we are asked to give facts in a court case.
2. When someone needs a person to work for him and they ask us about his work habits.

Remember, we must be honest and say only that which is necessary. After all, Islam teaches us to have a good relationship with everyone – Muslim or non-Muslim.

Here is an incident that took place during our beloved Prophet's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) time.

People from all over Arabia used to come to ask for our beloved Prophet's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) for advice.

Once, some people came to see him and said, "There is a pious lady who offers regular prayers (Fard) as well as optional (Nafl) ones. She fasts in the month of Ramadan and observes the optional (Nafl) fasts. She gives Zakaah as well as extra charity. But she has a sharp tongue. She is always critical of her family, friends and neighbours."

Upon hearing this, our beloved Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, "There is no good in such prayers, fasting and charity. Such people will be punished by going into Hell."

The companion then said, "There is another lady who observes only the Fard prayers, fast only in Ramadan and the only charity she gives is Zakaah. But she does not trouble her neighbours and is very good to her relatives and friends."

Our beloved Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was happy to hear about her and said, "This woman will go to Paradise."

From this incident, we learn that we must guard our tongue from backbiting, cursing, mocking, etc.

Allah (The Exalted) tells us in the Qur'an, Surah Baqarah, Surah number 2, Verse 263

“Speaking kind words and pardoning are better than charity followed by injury; and Allah is the Independent, Most Forbearing.”