

What's gossiping?

Have you ever met someone guilty of cannibalism? Probably not, yet if many of us who gossiped were to go by any name – it would be this. This is the way backbiting is described in Islam and many of us know it.

Allah warns us: *“O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion, indeed 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 God, verily, God is the one who accepts repentance, Most Merciful.” (49: 12)*

As the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) informed us, backbiting 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.”*

Why do people gossip?

When someone loves to gossip, it is usually for one or more of the following reasons:

- Ignorance
- Low Self-Confidence
- Envy
- Boredom/Wasting time
- Trying to impress you
- Low faith

What to do when people gossip?

Sometimes we feel we have been dragged into it and really want to avoid situations where gossip takes place, and though we really want to do it, we don't know how to get out of the conversation let alone put a stop to it. Here are some tips to help you out insha'Allah:

1. Praise the person being talked about

Witness your iman increase up as you defend them as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

“Whoever defends his brother's honour, Allah will protect his face from the Fire of the Day of Resurrection.” (Tirmidhi)

There may be that moment just before speaking up in which you hesitate, but muster up some courage: once you get the first few words out, you will feel good about doing the right thing and people will realize that they are engaging in wasteful talk.

2. Invite truth from each other

Though it might be quite an outrageous act at first, you could ask the one who is gossiping to actually come with you and check the truth about what they are saying in the presence of the one they talked about! You don't really need to go and verify but this is an action which is really part of the Sunnah, for we should prevent lying about one another and tarnishing people's reputation especially if it is based on rumours.

3. Explain it's none of your concern:

This is probably the hardest part we stumble upon when a group of friends slip into gossip, however we should imply that it's none of the gossiper's business to discuss other people affairs unless it is in a permissible manner. If you can encourage someone to not speak about others badly, then you can also tell them that it does not interest you or is irrelevant to you – instead find a mutual topic of interest to discuss other than people!

Al Hasan Al Basri said: *“A sign that Allah has turned away from a servant is that He makes him busy with matters that are of no concern to him.”*

4. Put yourself in their shoes

Asking the person gossiping(or even ourselves for that matter) the question: “How would I feel if this vicious rumour was said about me?” should make one regain some sense of integrity and put himself in the position of the one he just spoke against, hopefully repelling him/her from talking about another.

5. Change the topic

If you've tried the steps above and still find someone engaging in gossip about useless matters, find something else to talk about; take the lead in bringing up a subject you know they are interested in, or ask them to tell you about themselves.

6. Leave

If all else fails and you've tried to pull out all of the above tips– simply excuse yourself and leave the gathering. For Allah has advised us in the Quran:

“When you see men engaged in vain discourse about Our Signs, turn away from them unless they turn to a different theme. If Satan ever makes you forget, then after recollection, do not sit in the company of those who do wrong.” [[Al-An'am 6:68](#)]

How to stop yourself from gossiping?

What about if it's you who's responsible for the vain talk?

Hold your breath and recall these tips before saying a word.

1. Remember backbiting is a major sin in Islam and is one of the causes for entering the Hellfire.

2. Ask yourself:

“Would the person I am about to speak of like what I'm going to say? Would I say it if the person was present? Will I feel good about myself after saying it?”

You can save yourself some guilt ridden apologies later by simply asking these questions to yourself. In addition, you can try to think about how you felt the last time you found out that people were speaking badly or falsely about you.

3. *Is it useful for anyone to know?*

Allah Most High has said: *“Successful are the believers, who are humble in their prayers, and who turn away from pointless talk” [23:1-3] And “Those who do not bear witness to what is false, but when they pass by pointless talk, pass by with dignity” [25:72], “When they hear pointless talk, they turn away from it” [28:55]*

These verses describe the characteristics we should embody in speech. A top tip to help you is to cut short telephone conversations and keeping chat to essential things.

4. *Is it necessary for anyone to know?*

Even if it is, does it require your intervention? Often it is the trick of shaytan when we indulge in backbiting, as we seem to feel better about ourselves if we downgrade others. Instead ask yourself how we can improve our own character and lives.

5. Imagine that the person you are talking about can hear everything you are saying. However, know that Allah Ta’ala is The All-Seeing, All-Hearing, and All-Knowing. We should not forget about Day on which we will be held accountable for our deeds. Remember backbiting is a bad reflection on your own character.

6. *Be mindful of the company you keep* Keep away from people who usually turn to gossip. Recall the times in which you usually find yourself gossiping and keep yourself busy during that time with other tasks or even better – invite friends to learn about the grave consequences of gossiping!

7. *Are you 100% sure about it?*

Spreading false information is slander as it is creating discord and problems between Muslims. As we are told in the Quran:

“Why, when you heard it, did not the believing men and believing women think good of themselves [i.e. one another] and say: ‘This is an obvious falsehood’?” [24:12]

8. Rejoice at the time and reward you’ll gain by stopping this nasty habit not to mention the good deeds you will accumulate to efface the bad ones. You’ll be surprised about the time, energy, and faith boost you will gain in this life, and the reward that awaits you in the akhirah insha’Allah.

9. *Look for positive qualities in people.* If you really have to talk about someone who’s not there, talk about how great, hardworking, funny, humble they are instead of deficiencies; as I often say *‘we are always quick to find imperfections in others but not ourselves’*.

10. If you feel you have to say it to someone and that you can’t keep the news for yourself, write it in your diary or on a private piece of a paper. Reread it after a couple of days and evaluate if you still want to let the world know you are not trustworthy enough to keep a confidential fact to yourself! Discard the paper, and of the thought in your mind – disciplining your thoughts to be good of others should be instilled instead.

11. **Repent** and make the intention to stop, you could keep the verses and ahadith about the punishment of this sin on your wallpaper or screen to remind you at work (where people politics can enter!). Lastly make dua'a to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) to help you and while it takes effort, don't give up:

“Whosoever believes in Allaah and the Last Day, then let him speak good or remain silent.” [Al-Bukhari]

And the Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) was asked: “O Messenger of Allah, which of the Muslims is best?” He (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “He whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe from.” [Al Bukhari and Muslim]

What about if someone is gossiping about you?

Send them a gift. They are providing you with rewards!

Someone was told: “So-and-so has gossiped about you” so he sent him a dish of dates, with the message: “I heard that you had given me your rewards as a gift, and I want to return the favour; please excuse me for not being able to pay back in full!”

Whilst this is amusing, it bears great dignity for one to befriend the one who has backbitten him

To conclude, make the intention to purify your heart today by applying these practical tips to stop wasting your life on a grave act. Share other tips you have here below!

Read more: <http://productivemuslim.com/practical-tips-to-stop-wasting-time-in-gossip/#ixzz27EICwaNP>

HOW TO STOP BACKBITING

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BACKBITING are words that bring upon the one who utters them shame and ignominy and that consign him to the Fire. Such a person has given in to his vain desires and succumbed to his destructive tendencies.

Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessing be upon him said: A man might speak a word without thinking about its implications, but because of it, he will plunge into the Hellfire further than the distance between the east and west. (Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

The following are tips to stop ourselves from backbiting other.

Fear of Allâh. We can protect ourselves from speaking ill of others by cultivating our fear of Allâh and our sense of shame before of our Lord. The Prophet said: Feel shame before Allâh

as you ought to feel shame before him. So guard the head and what it contains, guard the stomach and what you put in it, and think upon death and returning to dust. (Sunan al-Tirmidhi)

Introspection. We can reflect upon just how much we lose every time we utter some bad words about another person.

The Prophet one said: The one who is bankrupt from among my followers is he who comes on the Day of Resurrection with prayer, charity, and fasting to his credit. However, he had insulted this person, struck that person, and seized the wealth of other, on account of which his good deeds will be taken from him. Then, if his good deeds are exhausted, the sins of those whom he wronged will be taken from them and foisted upon him and then he will be cast into the Fire. (Sahih Muslim)

Our "garbage bin". A beneficial remedy that can help us to rid ourselves of this evil habit is to reflect upon our own shortcomings and work to improve ourselves. If we preoccupy ourselves with our own faults, we will not find time to worry about the faults of others. We should fear that if we speak about someone else's shortcomings, that Allâh might punish us by afflicting us with the same.

Good company. Keeping to the company of righteous people and avoiding bad company helps us to avoid backbiting. The Prophet said: "The likeness of a good companion and a bad companion is that of a person carrying musk and another who works the bellows. The person carrying musk might give you some of it or at the very least you will enjoy the pleasant scent. The person with the bellows will either singe your clothing or at least make you suffer from the bad smell." (Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

Islam Today

Backbiting is a matter in Islam which is always forgotten by people. Many people take this matter lightly, actually this is one of the main reasons why people go to the **hellfire**.

"Whoever speaks evil about you behind your back, do not become angry for they are in reality giving you their good deeds on a golden plate."

When I log in to my facebook account yesterday, there was a status which had caught my attention, it was originally in my native language, *"When the gathering for connecting ukhuwah (for Islamic brotherhood or sisterhood /silaturahmi) turned to be the "discussion forum" for talking about people who can not attend, is that still be called "silaturahmi"?* "Meaning, the gathering at that time had **switched** from the noble purpose to the forbidden matter.

Sometimes, we are **very easy** to forget and unconsciously talking about others, even me. With this one of my "weakness", Sometimes I avoid to come to some gathering (which is actually not good for not attending), which is I knew very well.. I will be very easy to slip in to backbiting. I just worried my reward for coming to meet people and connect the Islamic brotherhood at that time, will be easily **wash away** by slipping in to **unnecessary conversation**, because of my "weakness".)D:

"Tongue" is one part of our body with no bones, but very "powerful", even it can caused **the war** between 2 countries and **separated** between friendships...

Some people may think that they don't do backbiting, when we know that they clearly talking about others in front of our eyes... Here beautiful explanations about misconceptions of BackBiting.

May Allah protect us from this...ameen...

5 Misconceptions of BackBiting and How To Respond To Them

By Muslimah (Muslim sister Maria)

Backbiting is one of those Islamic topics that often gets sidelined. Appearing as one of the frequent tarbiyyah topics in common circles and gatherings, the issue may be forgotten or ignored.

This is severely problematic, as backbiting is one of the most devastating sins a person can ever commit, and not keeping ourselves reminded about it can lead to grave consequences.

To make it fresh in our minds again, let's tackle the issue in a practical way. Here are 5 common misconceptions that we ourselves or others you encounter may have about backbiting, what is misunderstood, and how to respond to them.

1) I'm not backbiting, I'm just saying:

When people respond with, "I'm just saying," they're telling themselves that what they're mentioning is not something so bad as backbiting, it's just "saying" things as they are.

In other words, they're trivializing the act, and telling themselves that backbiting isn't really all that bad. But backbiting is no walk in the park. It's one of the most disgusting acts one could ever commit. That's why Allah asks those who backbite:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبِ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"O ye who believe! Shun much suspicion; for lo! some suspicion is a crime. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Ye abhor that (so abhor the other)! And keep your duty (to Allah). Lo! Allah is Relenting, Merciful" (Surah Hujurat 49: 12)

*Allah Himself is comparing backbiting to something **vilely rancid**, so no one is fooled to think it's not an inhuman act like that of murder or rape. The **imagery** of you **eating the dead carcass of the person** you're talking about really paints a clear picture.*

*Not only that, Allah is asking us if we would love eating that flesh. It's as if He is saying not only is backbiting as disgusting as eating that person's dead flesh, when we backbite, it's as if we **enjoy** eating it, too.*

Response: Describe to them how disgusting an act backbiting really is: "You're not, just saying. You're going to that person's body after their janazah, ripping off their thigh, chewing it up, and enjoying it, too."

2) I'm not backbiting, everyone already knows about this person, anyway:

If a person is mentioning things about someone already known, not only are they still backbiting, they're **following the footsteps of hypocrites**.

The hypocrites of Medina spread rumors about Ayesha (RA), and as a result were **cursed by Allah to the depths of Hellfire.**

Hellfire, which was intensified by Allah for thousands of years, turning its flame from orange to red to yellow to black³, and burns 70 times worse than Earth's fire (minimum 210th degree burns?)⁴.

The same Hellfire where those who spread lies about others get hooks pierced into their cheeks and slammed back to rip off their faces, and are given scalding hot puss to drink as relief.

If everyone already knows about it, why spread it and potentially go to the horror that is Hell? And if not the Hellfire, then being punished in the grave with copper nails repeatedly scratching your face and chest off? The risk simply isn't worth it.

Response: Remind them about the punishment of backbiting and how it makes spreading rumors not worth the risk.

Mentioning what everyone already knows about somebody is a dangerous path to Hellfire.

Is spreading the news so important that it's worth living with black fire that's 70 times hotter, boiling puss drinks and having your cheeks ripped off your face?"

3) I'm not backbiting, I'm warning others about a person's mistakes

Human beings have a natural desire to warn others about harm. That's why when they see something wrong with someone else, they'll personally identify those characteristics as a problem, make a decision to be careful about it for themselves, and naturally want to notify others about it as well.

But that's where the problem comes in. We want to naturally talk about someone else's faults, but if we do, **it's backbiting.**

How can we get past this natural desire that's so troublesome? Simple, first we need to realize which of these **natural tendencies** is okay and which isn't. It's completely okay to be adverse to the faults of others.

However, telling others about those mistakes, while naturally easy, **is the major sin of the two.**

Rasulullah (SAW) said backbiting is "talking about your brother in a manner which he does not like."
(Muslim)

That means saying anything about the person that **they wouldn't want you to counts as backbiting.**

If you know the person you're talking about wouldn't like what you're saying about them, **don't say it.**

If we feel the desire to go out and warn someone about it, do so on the person with the faults in the first place in **a kind and sincere manner.**

Our problem as Muslims is that we talk a lot about people behind their backs but **never** confront them in person.

Secondly, on an encouraging note, remember that by not backbiting, we get closer to guaranteed Paradise.

Rasulullah (SAW) said: "whoever guarantees control over what is in between their thighs and their jaws, he will guarantee them Paradise."(Bukhari)

This guarantee is awesome in two ways. Not only makes not backbiting easier because of the amazing goal attached to it, it comforts us in the fact that our religion understands.

Notice Rasulullah (SAW) asked for whoever guarantees control, showing that he knows it's natural to lose control. But at the same time, he's encouraging us to take that control and work towards Paradise.

Response: Explain to them what backbiting is and the reward of abstaining from it.

"Talking about others negative traits in anyway shape or form is backbiting and none of your business, and if you stay away from it you're working towards guaranteed admission to Paradise."

4) I'm not backbiting, I'll tell them later or I don't care, I can say it to their face

Some people justify backbiting by thinking if they inform the person later they were talking about them behind their back, it makes the act okay.

But telling someone you backbit about them after the fact is a part of the process of repenting and making up for the sin.

*It has to be done sincerely, with **regret and shame** for the act, driven by a balanced fear of Allah's punishment and a hope in His Mercy.*

Trying to justify backbiting by telling someone you backbit about them is like trying to justify believing Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him, as the son of Allah by saying you will just repent later.

Not only is it an imbalance between fearing Allah and having hope He will forgive you, it doesn't make the act okay to commit in the first place. What's worse is when some people claim they, "don't care" about backbiting and they supposedly can or will say what they backbit about someone to their.

Not only is that even more of a misunderstanding than planning to tell them later, it just shows two things.

*One, they're just a jerk. It isn't bad enough that they're backbiting, but they have to go and act "brave" by claiming they can tell the person the insult to their face. In addition to being a jerk, they also need to be careful when they say, "I don't care." **Do they really not care?** And what do they not care about?*

They don't care about incinerating in that 70 times hotter black fire we mentioned before? And having their cheeks ripped off your face and having to drink searing hot puss afterward?

*Are they really sure they don't care? **Chances are no.***

Response: Backbiting about someone with the intention to tell them later doesn't make it okay. It's still backbiting. And claiming you, "don't care" and can say it to their face shows that you're a jerk and don't care about the Hellfire.

5) I'm not backbiting, it's true

This, by far, is the most **common misconception** and **response** we find Muslims making when we warn them about backbiting. They think that backbiting is only when you mention bad things about people that aren't true.

Is that really the case? Going back to **the definition of backbiting**, Rasulullah (SAW) said:

“Backbiting is to mention things about your brother (or sister) which they don’t like.” After the Companions heard this definition, one of them asked, “What do you think about if what I say about that person is true?” “If (that) is actually found (in that person) what you claimed, you, in fact, backbit him. And if that’s not in that person, its slander,” Rasulullah (SAW) answered.

This shows that we’ve got it all wrong. **Just because what we’re saying is true, doesn’t mean it’s not backbiting.**

In fact, it proves that we are indeed backbiting, because backbiting is true information.

If it wasn’t true, we’d be doing something **worse than backbiting, slander.** That makes a whole lot of things count as backbiting.

That’s why when Ayesha (RA) said about Şafīyya (RA), the wife of Rasulullah (SAW) who was the daughter of a Jewish leader, that, “she’s short,” he got upset and said, “you have said a word that if were to be dropped into the sea it would contaminate it.” (Al-Tirmidhi)

Ayesha (RA) and Rasulullah (SAW) knew about Şafīyya (RA) height. So did everyone else who saw her in Medina and all the people from her tribe before she married the Prophet.

In other words, what Ayesha (RA) said was as true as it gets. But the fact that it was true made it backbiting. And if something as small as what she said was poison to the entire sea, what about when we talk about how people may be gaining weight, undergoing a divorce, losing their hair, struggling to control their anger, failing to give up a public sin, or anything else they wouldn’t like said about them?

Response: Inform them about truth being backbiting and falsehood being slander.

“Yeah, you’re backbiting, because Rasulullah (SAW) if it’s true, which you’re saying it is, then it’s backbiting

Conclusion:

*Backbiting is no misdemeanor. It’s a **federal offense**. In fact, it’s more than that. It’s a universal act of ethical treason, the likes of which transcend this world and has severe consequences in the next.*

*We need to remember that when we signed up to become Muslim, **we agreed to follow all of the rules, and one of the rules is that for anyone else who signed up for the contract of Lā ilāh ha illa Allāh, Muḥammad al-rasūlullāh you can’t ever talk behind their back.***

Doing so is not only a horrible sin and a disgusting act, it’s one of the worst things you could ever do to your Muslim brother or sister.

While you may be fired up to use the responses to these misconceptions and are trying to think of people you could use them on, ask yourself if the person to respond to is none other than you.

Do you have these misconceptions about backbiting? Have you ever made any of these five justifications or something similar to them? If so, give yourself the responses and work on yourself first, and eventually, you can work on correcting others, as well.

The definition of backbiting is to say something about a muslim that he dislikes, in his absence. It is allowed to backbite on six different occasions:

1. To complain about transgression and oppression. If someone wrongs you, you may complain to the judge, police, or anyone who has authority and is able to bring justice to the person who wronged you.
2. To seek help in order to remove some evil. If you see an evil and know someone who has the authority to remove it, you may go to him and say for instance; " So and so is perpetrating such and such evil; please go and stop him". Your purpose and intention should be to eradicate the evil; otherwise (if your intention is, for instance to put down a person you don` t like), you are perpetrating a haram (forbidden) deed.
3. To seek a Islamic legal ruling from a scholar. When necessary, you may go to a scholar and speak about how someone from your family, such and such brother or person wronged you, in order to learn from him what course of action you should take in dealing with your situation. You can, however, show some caution, which is better, yet still fulfill your purpose by not mentioning names.
4. To warn and advise muslims about evil. For example when a witness is brought before a judge, people can testify against the witness if he is known to have an untrustworthy character.
5. To warn people about someone who openly flaunts his evil, regardless of whether that evil is an innovation or a wicked deed. If someone openly drinks alcohol or if he cheats people of their rights openly and with impunity, you may warn people about him, but only about those of his evils that he performs publicly, you may not mention those of evils that he perpetrates when alone, unless any of the other five categories discussed here applies to him.
6. To identify a person. By saying the blind one, the deaf one, the mute one. If your intention is to clarify the identity of the person you are talking about. Otherwise if your intention is to belittle him, it is haram (forbidden). Similarly, if you can avoid to use these kind of words and still make clear his identity, it is better.

Scholars such as An-Nawawee have mentioned these six reasons as being justifiable reasons for backbiting; there is consensus about most of them, and they are based on authentic, well-known hadeeth.

Extract taken out of " the book of manners".

As for the first eight reasons:

1) To alleviate hatred.

This happens when something causes you to be angry with someone else. So if your anger rages you will relieve yourself by mentioning some of his bad traits, and your tongue will naturally race to do this... And you might withhold your rage when you get angry so you hide your rage in yourself until it then becomes a fixed hatred, and that will be the ongoing reason for you to mention bad traits in the person; for hatred and anger are major motivators for backbiting.

2) Being agreeable with peers and entertaining comrades and partaking in their conversations.

If your peers begin telling jokes by mentioning bad traits in someone, you might think that if you oppose them or stop sitting with them they will be uncomfortable with you and leave you, so you partake in the conversation with them and see this as a gesture of being sociable, and you will think that this is an entertaining way of companionship. Your friends might get angry at times so you need to be angry as they are to show that you can contribute in easy times and hard times, so you delve with them in mentioning flaws and bad traits of other people.

3) You will have the feeling that a person will try to seek you out and insult you or will disgrace you in an embarrassing situation, or will confess to something about you, so you "beat him to the punch"

before he can disgrace you and you slander him so the affect of his confession will be weakened, or you begin to backbite by mentioning something good about him just so you can lie about him after that, hence you prepare your lie by first telling a truth and then you add proof to this by saying: "I don't usually lie, because I told you such and such about him and it was as I said."

4) You are affiliated with some bad action, so you wants to vindicate yourself from it, and you do that by mentioning another person who did the act.

You only have the right to vindicate yourself from the action, not mention the one who did the act. So you aren't supposed to affiliate someone else with the act, or say that the person participated with you in the act in order to bring about an excuse for yourself in doing the act.

5) The desire to show off and boast.

This is done by raising your own status through downgrading other people, so you say, "so and so is ignorant, and his understanding is shallow, and his statements are weak." By doing this, your goal is to establish virtue for yourself, and show other people that you are more knowledgeable than that person. Or you are afraid that they will honor the other person as they honor you so you defame him for that reason.

6) Jealousy.

You might be jealous of someone whom the people praise and whom the people love and honor, so you desire to remove this blessing from him, but you can't find any way to do this except by slandering him. You want him to lose face among the people so they can stop honoring him and praising him because you can't stand hearing people speak about him and praise his virtues and honor him. This is the epitome of jealousy and it is different from anger and hatred; for they are things that call for harm to be done to the one who the anger is directed to. Jealousy, on the other hand, could exist with people you like, even with an amiable friend and an agreeable companion.

7) Playing, joking, humor, and passing time by laughing.

These things cause people to mention other people's bad traits that cause others to laugh "in the name of" storytelling. This backbiting arises from arrogance and self-amazement.

8) Mocking, ridicule, and contempt.

These things might take place in the person's presence or absence, and these things arise from arrogance and the desire to belittle the one who is mocked.

This is a rough approximate translation of a piece about the tribulations of the tongue by Imam Ghazali. So let me know if there are any typos, mistakes, or if you have any comments and questions about the post.