

MODULE 3

Class Title: Our Tongue

Aim of the lesson: To understand how our tongue plays a pivotal role in making or breaking our Hereafter and how to safeguard it against sins

Category: *Tazkiyah*

Lesson Format: Power point presentation & discussion

Greeting to students) *Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*
(*Ta'awwudh*) *Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem*
(*Tasmiyah*) *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*
(*Du'a*) *Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli*
(Surah Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Slide 1:

One of the hallmarks of righteous behavior in Islam is good speech. A person who stays mindful of Allah (swt) will want to refrain from sins of the tongue such as backbiting, slander, gossip, lying, swearing, cursing and vain talk.

So today we're going to talk about how we can tame our tongue so that we only speak that which is good. We're going to discuss how to use it for our benefit. It's a part of each one of us which is really volatile. We have to handle it with extra care; otherwise it can lead to our destruction.

Slide 2:

What is the tongue?

Student: It's a muscle.

Teacher: Yes, it's a muscle.

Student: It's used for talking.

Slides 3-5:

Teacher: Yes. It basically serves two purposes: to identify taste and as a tool for communication. We interact with people through our tongue. Today, we're going to focus on this aspect—speech; something that we like doing most of the time.

Unfortunately, it's something that women are known to excel at.

Student: That's stereotyping; men gossip as well.

Teacher: Well women are notorious for it, aren't they? Anyway, as someone just said, it's a muscle. In fact, it's probably one of the most exercised muscles in our body! It's definitely moved much more than our limbs—our arms and legs.

Slide 6:

“Abu Saeed al Khudri (ra) reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

‘When the son of Adam wakes up from his sleep, all of his body parts seek refuge from his tongue, saying fear Allah with regard to us, for indeed we are a part of you. So if you are upright then we shall be upright, and if you are corrupt then we shall be corrupt.’”

This is hadith is in Tirmidhi.

Slide 7:

Our tongue is essential for communicating. We reveal our true personality by our speech, by what we say. Would you guys agree? When you see someone for the first time, you may immediately form a certain image just based on looks. She may seem rude, unfriendly or arrogant to you. You may form an opinion purely based on your first impression, her looks or her attitude. But once you begin talking to her, you may discover she's really not like that at all, that she's just shy.

Student: The facial expressions tell us about someone.

Teacher: Not definitely, no. It maybe that she has a really stern face and carries herself haughtily, but she's really not like that at all. So actually, it's our tongue that reveals a lot about our personality.

Slide 8:

So what is it that we talk about all day long? Let's analyze what we talk about. What do you guys talk about?

Student: Stuff.

Teacher: Stuff? Like what?

Student: Random useless things.

Teacher: Random useless things. How about you?

Student: School

Teacher: School. Ok, you may talk about what happened at school.

Student: Music.

Teacher: Music, ok.

Teacher: What do you talk about?

Student: Sometimes we talk about books.

Teacher: Ok, you talk about books. That's interesting.

Student: We backbite.

Teacher: Backbiting. I really like her honesty.

Student: We talk about other people, their looks, habits and all.

Teacher: You talk about people. Yes, yes, we're all very good at doing that, sadly. Backbiting, being sarcastic, even slandering.

Now, if our tongue is the most volatile thing...by the way, do you all know what 'volatile' means? It means something that's really fickle, apt to become suddenly violent or dangerous, totally unpredictable and prone to sudden change. Doesn't this describe our tongue perfectly?

So moving on, the tongue is something that we really need to handle with great care, as was indicated in the hadith we saw earlier. Remember, the hadith stated that all the body organs take refuge from the tongue, because if the tongue slips in any way, then the rest of the body can easily sin, too. Agreed? Isn't this exactly what happens most of the time?

Slide 9:

Have any of you heard of the book "The Picture of Dorian Gray" by Oscar Wilde? Has anyone read it?

The novel tells of a young man named Dorian Gray, the subject of a painting by artist Basil Hallward. Basil is impressed by Dorian's beauty and becomes infatuated with him, believing his beauty is responsible for a new mode in his art. Dorian meets Lord Henry Wotton, a friend of Basil's, and becomes enthralled by Lord Henry's world view. Espousing a new hedonism, Lord Henry suggests the only things worth pursuing in life are beauty and fulfillment of the senses. Realizing that one day his beauty will fade, Dorian (whimsically) expresses a desire to sell his soul to ensure the portrait Basil has painted would age rather than he. Dorian's wish is fulfilled, plunging him into debauched

acts. The portrait serves as a reminder of the effect each act has upon his soul, with each sin displayed as a disfigurement of his form, or through a sign of aging.

If we sin, if we do bad deeds, does that appear on our face? Does our nose grow like Pinocchio when we lie? Does our tongue go black when we lie? That's all fictional; nothing of the sort really happens.

Student: But doesn't a person's innocence show on her face?

Teacher: Sometimes, and sometimes not. However, our sins are reflected onto our book of deeds; they're recorded there. Our faces may not show that we've lied or cheated, gossiped, or hurt another, but our book of deeds will surely show them. Then, on the Day of Judgment, this book of deeds will be shown to us all. All that we did, all the sins that we committed with our tongue will be shown to us. So that book may be all dirty and really ugly, like this one.

Slide 10:

Allah (swt) has told us that whatever we say, whatever comes out of our mouth, is recorded by a vigilant angel: "...not a word does one utter, except that there is an angel watching, ready to record it." Surah Qaaf: Verse 18.

So clearly, every word that we speak is recorded.

Slide 11:

Do you all know that one important aspect of oral hygiene is to keep our tongues clean? The dentists say that you should not only brush your teeth but your tongue as well. In fact, one of the reasons for a person having bad breath or various diseases may be because she doesn't brush her tongue.

Now we're not going to talk about oral hygiene here, rather we're going to look at the tongue's role in maintaining moral hygiene. Do you understand what moral hygiene is? Let's just look at the various morally unhygienic things that the tongue can do for us.

Slides 12-13:

Firstly, we all know that we're being sarcastic when we pass a smart alec comment about someone. Right?

Allah (swt) has warned us against two sins in Surah Al Hujarat: Verse 11:

"O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better

than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers”.

In this ayah, Allah (swt) has told us there are two sins of the tongue. The first one is sarcasm.

Slide 14:

The Arabic word that Allah (swt) has used is “*sakharah*”. “*Sakharah*” doesn’t only means to mock or to make fun of; it essentially means to be sarcastic. Actually, sarcasm is more destructive than mockery. Someone can really destroy another person inside out with sarcasm. There’s no law or police that can protect another against it, is there, even though one can literally kill another with sarcasm.

Slides 15-16:

The second sin is name calling and making fun of, or ridiculing, others. Don’t people keep nasty names for others that they use behind their backs? They have these horrid names for their teachers, for their friends, for their neighbours, for their servants, and so on.

Student: Yes, we have nick names for different people.

Teacher: Oh, so you’re agreeing with the fact that you have nick names for different people. In fact, people keep such names for their enemies and even their own friends. Isn’t this really common amongst cousins and within families also? You may have heard of someone calling their slightly overweight cousin “*moti bhains*”(fat cow), even to her face? Do any of your friends call you funny names?

Student: Actually, I call them by funny ones.

Teacher: They call you or you call them. It may be that if a friend calls you “*moti*” (fat) or “*xyz*” she only means to be funny. However, deep down inside you might be getting hurt by such a seemingly innocent sounding name. In fact, it hurts even more if you’re called that in front of others. It would hurt, don’t you think?

It may be that you usually don’t get hurt by a certain name your friends call you, but there must be one instance in your life when you’ve been hurt by name calling. I’m not encouraging delving about what others call us; we shouldn’t upset ourselves with what so and so said about us, anyway. Rather, we should just think about ourselves—do we call others hurtful names? Do we put others through emotional pain and misery? If you do, then you better start avoiding this nasty and costly habit. It’s surely a habit which is

going to only cost us, and no one else; it'll cost us our precious good deeds when we'll need them the most.

By the way, we shouldn't participate when others are being made fun of. What this means is that even though we may not be doing it ourselves, by merely being around or watching those who are making fun of others, we become party to it. For instance, we may just be watching a TV program in which they're ridiculing celebrities or politicians, in which they're demeaning them.

Student: What about bloopers? They're funny!

Teacher: Do you mean stand-up comics? Are you talking about TV shows in which they make fun of people? Any shows, even bloopers, in which laughs are at the expense of ridiculing another person are a no-no. Some bloopers don't make fun of people, but just record people's reaction to certain events; those are ok.

Student: How about imitating others? Is that wrong?

Teacher: For sure! Anyone who ridicules others—their culture, ethnicity, tendencies, etc., such as jokes about Pathans, Balochis, or Sikhs, should all be avoided strictly. Stand-up comedians who make fun of some cricketers or politician's English are just getting laughs by ridiculing others. They should definitely be avoided, and definitely not enjoyed. All these ways of getting laughs are included in name calling, in mocking other people. We should definitely not do it ourselves!

Slides 17-18:

Moving on, let's look at the greatest vice of the tongue—lying. We've all been taught not to lie since we were toddlers and began coherent speech. It's probably the very first sin that parents warn their kids against. Why do you suppose that is? I'm sure you're all aware that one small lie can lead to many, many more lies and many, many more sins. It creates deception and mistrust, which can create anger, hatred and conflict. It's so bad, it's so grave, that in a hadith Rasulullah (pbuh) has declared,

“Verily lying leads to wickedness, and verily wickedness leads to the hellfire.” [Bukhari]

Student: It's actually easy for people to lie and get away with it.

Teacher: Well, a person may get away with lying and being deceitful in this world, but Hellfire is promised to liars in the next world, as we just heard in the earlier hadith. Besides, once discovered, liars are never trusted or respected, which only hurts them, even in this world.

Slide 19:

The next prohibited type of speech is profanity—cursing and using bad language. When provoked, it's something that comes out like rapid fire; it just rolls off tongues. It has become such an integral part of everyone's speech these days that we don't even think twice before saying it. Profanity has replaced even everyday words. If something bad happens, people say a bad word; if something good happens, people still say a bad word!

Even when someone's surprised, she exclaims with a bad word. In everyday interactions, profanity has replaced the use of normal words of expression.

I read this conversation between friends on Facebook, wherein instead of using a clean, innocent word, my friend exclaimed by typing a swear word. All the time—while chatting, while gossiping, besides while arguing and fighting, people use profanity. It's that bad now. People use it without even realizing it; and even if they do, they don't care. By the way, writing it down carries the same amount of sin as saying it does.

Slide 20:

Someone has described it really nicely: "They spark from the lips with effortless ease, and even less thought."

Slides 21-22:

Let's look at a fourth vice of the tongue: backbiting. With regards to backbiting, Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an:

"Do not backbite each other, would any of you wish to eat the flesh of your dead brother, no rather you hate it." (Surah Al Hujarat 49:verse12)

So in this verse, backbiting has been compared to cannibalism! Did you all know that? It's that horrible! Would we ever want to do that? No, of course we wouldn't. So next time before we indulge in backbiting or gossiping about someone, we should ask ourselves if we'd like to eat their meat!

Slide 23:

Another great sin of the tongue, which is often confused with backbiting, is slander. Backbiting is to talk about something truthful about another; whereas, slander is to falsely accuse, or attribute something, to another. Backbiting and slander are similar in that we're talking about another, only if what we're saying is true, then it's backbiting; and if it's false, it's slander. In both, we're not saying anything kind or good about another.

Student: What if someone gives something really cheap and bad and you tell a friend about that, just for conversation's sake?

Teacher: Just for conversation's sake? Good question. I'll just get to your question in a bit.

Slide 24:

With regards to slander, Rasulullah (pbuh) the said: Shall I not tell you the worst of major sins?" Associating partners with Allah (swt), disobeying parents." He was reclining, then he sat up and said, "and indeed giving false statements, and indeed bearing false witness...." And he kept repeating it until the companions wished that he would stop. [Muslim]

Please note that his position changes just before he mentions the sins of the tongue. That quick change in his posture, his body language—the fact that he sits up straight and more alert, indicates just how severe sins of the tongue really are. In this hadith, Rasulullah (pbuh) has stressed how bad it is to accuse others falsely and to bear witness against something untruthful. We already know the magnitude of shirk and disobeying parents with regards to sin; but by Rasulullah's (pbuh) mentioning it in the same hadith as these, the gravity of sins of the tongue is made crystal clear.

Slides 25-27:

Next we're going to look at another favourite past time of ours: vain talk. What do I mean by this? Vain talk not only includes gossip, but also chatting about irrelevant and unimportant things and events, and getting into the itty bitty gritty details of unimportant stuff. You know, like talking on the phone for hours and hours and telling your friend about every little things that happened in your day—like how you were sitting doing homework and it occurred to you that you hadn't seen that lovely ring your mom gave you last month blah blah blah! Vain talk also includes exaggerating and stressing the unimportant things, like, 'oh you know I went to the market yesterday and just before leaving so and so called, then there was no light for an hour, then my sister said to me blah blah blah, then oh yeah I was telling you about blah blah blah.....' Do u see any reason for the all this tongue exercise?

Do you know that when people talk a lot, when they speak incessantly, non-stop, there's no thought process behind their words. Naturally then, their words don't carry much weight. Besides, other people get bored listening to them. In fact, they're a nuisance, at times. When we talk a lot, what do we usually end up doing?

Student: Backbiting.

Teacher: Good, exactly; we end up backbiting. Gossiping, lying, slandering, and all the other sins of the tongue, form a big chunk of our useless chatter.

Student: The one who is a chatter box is not a good listener, and can get boring to be around.

Teacher: Yes, a chatter box is definitely not a good listener.

Slide 28:

Alhamdulillah, there's a hadith which informs us that we may say a word without even realizing the magnitude of it, that it may take us to heaven or it may take us away from heaven: "Indeed a servant may say a word from which Allah's (swt) pleasure is gained, and the servant does not realize it." Who's the servant here?

Student: We are.

Teacher: Yes. "Allah (swt) will raise him up levels. Indeed a servant may say words from which Allah's (swt) displeasure is gained and he does not realize it. Allah (swt) will put him in Hell due to it." [Bukhari]

Do you all realize how much weight our words can carry? As far as our relationship with Allah (swt) is concerned, every evil word that we say, without even realizing it, can take us to Hell; and every good word we say can take us to *Jannah*.

So these were just some of the sins our tongues do.

Slide 29:

Nowadays, however, our fingers have become an extension of our tongues. They can do exactly the same sins that our tongue can do. One doesn't have to utter the "--- word"; one can just type it! One need not call another person a loser; she can just basically show this. (teacher makes 'L' with finger) – we have become "chatter fingers"!

All the texting and typing going on

Slide 30-31:

What comes to your mind when I say the word "chat"?

Student: Talking

Student: Typing.

Student: Facebook.

Student: Texting.

Teacher: Texting—sms, yes. Sometime back, chatting was talking – face to face with someone or maybe over the phone as with our tongue. It would be like going to your grandmothers and getting all the updates from your cousins, all the gossip or whatever—but by speaking and conversing.

Now, if someone says they're "chatting", it could mean on MSN, Google Talk, Facebook, Twitter, Skype and so on. With the advancement in technology, our chatting has also advanced, hasn't it? Just remember though, whatever we chat on Twitter or Face book or whatever site, if the content is wrong, and by wrong I mean something that would not be approved of by Allah (swt), then it carries the same sin as if one chatted normally. It's still a sin; it's still gravely wrong. So don't think that because you're not saying something verbally, but typing it with your fingers, it's alright. No, it's definitely not alright. You may not say anything bad with your tongue, you may not make fun of someone with your tongue, and you may just press "tik tik tik tik" before sending. Even still, remember these text messages and chatting sessions will carry the same amount of sin as if you'd done it with your tongue, I repeat once again. This is extremely important for all of us to understand and remember.

We should also always remember that the angels record everything—and I mean absolutely everything, that we say as well as everything that we do—all of our words and actions. Thus, they record how we use, or rather misuse, social networking sites.

Slides 32-36:

For example, if you discreetly take a picture of someone just for the heck of it, maybe because someone dared you to, and then put it up on Facebook with a mocking caption, you haven't verbally made fun of that person, you haven't embarrassed her with your tongue, but you'll still be held accountable for mocking and doing *zulm* to another. Therefore, we really have to be alert and careful about what we say and do, at **all** times. Whether we mock someone verbally or through the social media, we will be accountable for both. So if we're online or texting all day long, then we really have to be careful of what we're texting or typing.

In fact, when we're sitting with friends or family, we often don't even realize what we're saying; our guard is down and we're so comfortable with them that we say whatever comes to our mind. We don't even realize the magnitude of what we babble without thinking. We get so involved in our chit chat, that we cross the line of decent speech. What's the line of decent speech? It's not what I've set or you've set, but rather, it's what Allah (swt) has already set for us.

Slide 37:

By the way, why do you suppose that aimless gossiping, lying and cussing have become such an integral part of people's speech these days? Do you guys ever wonder why? It's so easy to indulge in these sins nowadays. Seriously, have you guys thought about it? Why it is so easy for us to gossip, lie, ridicule and cuss?

Student: Because we're surrounded by it. It's all over in our environment.

Teacher: Exactly! It's widespread in our environment. It's widespread all over the media—TV, movies, and social media. Furthermore, everyone nowadays is exposed to all these mediums, the poor and the rich, young and old. Besides, the media has made it out to be something very normal, and nothing reprehensible that needs to be avoided. Everyone's telling us to talk like that, that it's the way to be cool, to be in, so we just keep on talking. You've all seen the billboards encouraging us to stay glued to our phones, such as "*Batain kartay raho!*" (keep on talking) Haven't you? There are mobile phone packages available in which we can talk all night—unlimited, for very little cost. So we keep on chatting!

Student: Miss, you know that in this world there is a price for *roti, kapra* (food & clothing) and everything else. Now the price for all of these is going up, but the price of sim cards is going down!

Teacher: You're so right. Whereas the price of *roti, kapra* and *makan* (food, clothing & shelter) is going higher and higher, the price of 'sim' cards and texting are going down. Exactly. Everyday we have various communication networks offering amazing deals, making texting more and more accessible and cheaper.

Slide 38:

In earlier times, there was a stigma attached to shamelessly ridiculing others and lying—if others found out about it, or if it was done in front of others, then one could have felt ashamed of people's reaction to one's wrong behaviour. However, with the advancement in technology, insulting others, mocking them and lying to them has become technical and private, and therefore much easier to do. In fact, since one isn't even face to face with another, it's easier to say whatever we want, isn't it?

Slide 39:

Thus, what must we do, all the time? Well, if we want to be good Muslims, if we want to please Allah (swt), then we have to be careful with our tongue and our hands.

In a very well known hadith narrated by Abu Musa Al Ashari (ra), he says, “ O Messenger of Allah (pbuh) which of the Muslims is better?” The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) replied, “Those who do not harm other Muslims with their tongues nor their hands.”” [Bukhari and Muslim]

Slides 40-44:

Now, I want to tell you all a story. At one time, there was this extremely knowledgeable scholar in Baghdad. He was once approached by a man who said to him, “Do you know what I’ve just heard about your friend? The scholar replied, “Hold on a minute. Before telling me anything, I want you to pass the ‘Triple Filter Test’. So before you tell me anything about my friend, let’s just go through this test. Firstly, is what you’re going to tell me the absolute truth?” “No”, the man stammered. “Actually, what I heard about your friend isn’t the truth.” “So what you’re going to say isn’t the truth?” So the man affirmed that. “Let’s try the second filter: ‘the filter of goodness’. Is what you’re going to tell me about my friend any good?” The man replied in the negative. “So what you’re saying is that what you’re going to tell me about my friend isn’t any good and nor is it the truth. Let’s see if it can pass the third filter. The third filter is, is what you’re going to tell me any use to me? He again replied in the negative. So the scholar concluded, “If what you’re about to tell me is not true, nor good, nor even useful to me, then why tell it to me in the first case?”

By the way, does this answer your question (teacher addresses student who had asked a question earlier)? you asked a while back if it was ok to tell someone about what a horrible present someone else gave, just for conversation’s sake? So next time you’re chatting with your friends, whether face to face or online, just remember to pass the info you have through the “Triple Filter Test”.

Is it worthy of mentioning, just for conversation’s sake, just so you have something juicy to say? Only if what you have to say is true, and good, and useful then only divulge it. Most of the time, if our conversations pass through this filter test, then we won’t end up saying anything false, worthless, useless, and on top of that—sinful!

Student: How do we know if some info is true or not?

Teacher: Very good question. The simple answer is that if we’re not sure if something is the truth or not, if we just heard it from someone on the grapevine—which is most of the times, then we shouldn’t pass it on. It’s as simple as that! Most of the times we just hear things from here and there and then start passing it on, without even confirming its truthfulness, forget about whether it’s even worthwhile or useful. We just have to tell others, for whatever reason. So before saying anything, from now, we’re going to make sure that in our minds we sift all our info through these three filters: filter of truthfulness,

filter of goodness and filter of usefulness. Right? If our info doesn't pass, then we should just stay quite.

Slides 45-46: In fact, Rasulullah (pbuh) has told us to say that which is good, or else remain quiet and not say anything at all.

Does this sound tough? Actually, all that is required is for us to train ourselves into thinking before speaking: "Is there really any need for me to say this? Do I really need to say so much?" We have to constantly remind ourselves that our every word is being recorded, and will be accounted for. Why else is it even being reported? Did you ever think about that?

Student: While we talk our record grows.

Teacher: Exactly. The more we talk, the longer our report gets. There's actually a very sound philosophy behind silence. Think about why we have two ears but only one mouth!

Student: Still, we talk more than we listen!

Student: The less we talk, the more we can hear.

Teacher: Definitely! If we speak less, than we can hear more.

Slide 47:

So how are we all going to try to tame our tongue? We're going to leave anything that does not concern us.

Again, this is recommended by Rasulullah (pbuh) in a hadith. "From the excellence of a man's Islam is leaving that which does not concern him." [Bukhari].

In other words, we're going to mind our own business. Aren't we?

We're going to try and reflect on each and every one of our words.

We're going to think before blurting out something, right? Yes, it's not easy to do, especially when we're emotionally charged up. But, we're all going to try and make a conscious effort to do so, anyway. Are you saying something?

Student: Is it a sin to curse?

Teacher: What do you think?

Student: What if you don't curse anyone but just say it? How about if you curse yourself?

Teacher: Oh, that's really bad. Why would you curse yourself, anyway; that's really bad. This is what we just talked about. Cursing is one of the sins of the tongue—all profanity, including cursing yourself, or swearing as a form of expression in a conversation.

Student: How about pointing the middle finger at someone?

Teacher: If you point your middle finger at someone it's the same as verbally cursing. It's just like texting; instead of your tongue you're using a body part to convey a profanity.

Student: Sometimes, you start talking and it just comes out, without you even thinking about it.

Teacher: That's what we're going to train ourselves to do, from today on. We're going to think about what we say. We're going to try and minimize cursing, gossiping, lying and mocking others. We're going to minimize idle talk—all useless chatter and banter. We're going to try and be really careful of the words, of spoken and written words, directed at someone. How's that?

Student: We shouldn't insult people.

Student: We shouldn't make fun of them.

Teacher: We have to be extra careful of what we pass on about others. What do I mean by that? This means no saying, "Do you know what she did! Blah blah blah" or "Do you know what she said about you! Blah blah blah."

We have to be extra careful about passing on information, especially that which has been passed around through the grapevine. In actual fact, what you're going to pass on may not be true, or you or someone before you may be exaggerating. Doesn't this happen a lot? Have any of you heard of Chinese whispers?

Students: Yes.

Teacher: What happens in Chinese Whispers is that the first person who hears or sees something says one thing, but as this info makes its way through different people, it ends up...

Student: ...As something completely different!

Teacher: Yes, something entirely different.

Student: We can play Chinese Whisper as a game.

Teacher: Well of course if you're just playing a game that's fine, but when we do it in real life, which we do often enough, it has grave consequences. After all, free talk is not really free, is it? What is the cost of free talk?

Student: Sin.

Teacher: Exactly. Whenever we say something, it's being recorded—being saved.

Student: What if a girl's best friend says something bad about her and so I tell the girl—who's also my friend, exactly what her best friend said, to expose the truth about her?

Teacher: Basically, you're sympathizing with your friend. As a result, you want to tell her what her best friend is saying about her. Am I right? Or is there some other ulterior motive? Anyhow, just let it go through the Triple Filter Test. Is it true? Is it any good? In all sincerity, ask yourself if it will do any good for her to know. The info you pass on may hurt her feelings. Lastly, is it useful? What if it creates a rift between them? Is that what you want, to create a fight? Why not let her find out how things really are by herself? If there's no use to the truth, then it'll be backbiting. If by telling her there's some benefit to her, or it'll save her from something, then yes it's good and useful. In this case, you can tell her; otherwise, just forget about it. Best to forget about it and not tell her. Ok, what else are we going to avoid?

Student: Profanity. We aren't going to swear.

Student: We should watch how much time we spend on the internet, or sending sms.

Teacher: Yes, for sure, *inshaAllah*. Furthermore, we're going to beware of **how much** we talk and **what** we actually talk about. When you guys go home, ponder for fifteen minutes about how much you talk, and what you usually talk about. Put some of the things you normally chat about through the Triple Filter Test. Eventually, I can say for certain, you'll come to the conclusion that silence is better. The cost of thoughtless and reckless talking is just too high; we can't afford to indulge in it.

Slide 48:

In fact, silence is a form of worship if done remembering the hadith,

“Whosoever believes in Allah and the last day then let him speak good or remain silent.”
[Agreed upon]

So as I'd said earlier, it's better to remain silent than to say something bad. Only if it's something good, then please do say it; if it's not worth while, then refrain from saying it.

Student: What if you're backbiting about someone who is backbiting about you; this is only fair?

Teacher: So if a person jumps off a cliff, then you'll also jump off the cliff? Two wrongs don't make a right, do they?

Student: No, but it's an eye for an eye, a tongue for a tongue; something like that.

Teacher: No, it doesn't have to be.

Student: It's in the Qur'an.

Teacher: Yes, the law of retribution, is in the Qur'an, but not in this context, (Surah Al-Maidah verse 45). You're using the wrong context entirely. This does not mean that if someone has gossiped about you, so you should backbite about her in return. If someone sins then we should sin, too?! No, just revenge is for those who've been unjustly treated—a loved one was killed wrongfully, or something was stolen, etc. Even in these cases, Allah (swt) says it's better for a believer to forgive.

Student: Miss, it's for justice with regards to crimes.

Teacher: Also with regards to injustice done to you by someone for e.g. someone is rude to you; but the thing is, it is a very fine line – cause if your revenge is even a little bit more than their injustice to you – you are in trouble! So it is better to forgive and leave it to Allah (swt).

(Du'a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika Rabbul Izzati 'amma yasifun wa salamun 'alal mursaleen, walhamdulillahi Rabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

References for Teacher:

- Riyad as-Salihin (The Gardens of the Righteous) by Imam Nawawi
254. Chapter: The prohibition against backbiting and the command to guard the tongue
- Al-Ghazzali On the Treatment of the Harms of the Tongue - Imam Abu Hamid al Ghazali, Translated by Muhammad Nur Abdus Salam, Publisher: Great Books of the Islamic World, Kazi Publications (2002), ISBN 1567446965
- *Jhoot* (lying) – Urdu Audio by Huma Najmul Hassan – www.al-ilm.com
- Watch your Tongue – short lecture by Nouman Ali Khan – Quran Weekly - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_57ZTxPRKHQ