

Backbiting, gossip and the honour of a Muslim

A conversation can feel harmless while it consumes another person's honour. Islam teaches us how to recognise backbiting and stop feeding it.

CENTREPIECE Surah al-Hujurat 49:12, Sahih Muslim 2589

FIRST KHUTBAH

1. Backbiting can be true and still be forbidden

The Prophet (peace be upon him) defined backbiting as mentioning about another person what they dislike. When asked about a statement that is true, he explained that truth can be backbiting, while a false statement adds slander to the wrong (Muslim 2589).

Source: Muslim 2589

2. The Quran makes the ugliness visible

Allah compares backbiting to eating the flesh of one's dead brother (al-Hujurat 49:12). The image breaks the spell of a lively conversation and shows the violated honour that the absent person cannot defend.

Source: Quran 49:12

3. Change the direction of the room

Do not merely remain quiet while the conversation continues. Defend the person's dignity, change the subject or leave. If you have caused harm, stop, seek Allah's forgiveness and take wise advice on how to repair it without creating a second injury.

SECOND KHUTBAH

Invite the congregation to think about the spaces where backbiting has become normal: family groups, workplace breaks, private chats and community politics. A clean tongue requires a plan for those familiar rooms.

Suggested closing: O Allah, purify our tongues from backbiting and our hearts from enjoying it. Help us return every honour we have taken and protect our own faults with Your mercy.

ONE ACTION FOR THIS WEEK

For one week, refuse to discuss an absent person's fault unless there is a genuine need and the conversation is with someone able to help.

PREPARATION NOTES

1. Read every cited verse or hadith in full before using it.
2. Add one example your own congregation will recognise.
3. Check questions of fiqh and recognised disagreement with a qualified local scholar.

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