

Part 16

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ، وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِنْ نِسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ، وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ، وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ، بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ. يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِنَ الظَّنِّ، إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ، وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا﴾

“O you who believe! Let not (one) people laugh at (another) people perchance they may be better than they, nor let women (laugh) at (other) women, perchance they may be better than they; and do not find fault with your own people nor call one another by nicknames; evil is a bad name after faith, and whoever does not turn, these it is that are the unjust. O you who believe! Avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do not spy... (49: 11-12)”

They mocked her for her short stature and a lengthy dress

The summary of the explanation of this verse is that God Almighty, the Lord of the Universe has issued three commands: First: It is unlawful for a Muslim to belittle any Muslim, to look at him with contempt, to consider him lower. He, sometimes, utters a word or gestures, which indicates that he is mocking or humiliating someone. For example, suppose he points his finger indicating that he wants others to look at that person's stature; how short it is!

As mentioned with regard to Ayesha and Hafsa who pointed out towards Umme Salma, indicating what a short stature she had! Umme Salma was thus humiliated.

Or, for instance, they said that Umme Salma had put on a long dress; that her clothing dragged on the ground behind her when she walked. Ayesha and Hafsa uttered, “Look, her apparel is dragging behind like a dog's tongue! Her covering sheet is touching the ground.”

To mock someone either by gesture or twinkling of the eye, all of it is unlawful. It is possible that one whom you mocked is better than you in the sight of God. As explained earlier, your imagination is not the criterion for measuring people's rank.

To disgrace others is to disgrace oneself

Second:



“...and do not find fault with your own people...”

The Arabic word ‘Lumz’ means defect. Do not find faults or disgrace yourselves. This is worth pondering upon. God says: Do not disgrace yourselves. He does not say: Do not disgrace others, do not disgrace a Muslim or do not disgrace a community etc. He says: Do not point out to your own faults and defects. This means that to disgrace a Muslim amounts to disgracing your own self. Outwardly, you humiliated others. But inwardly you yourself have become blameworthy and faulty.

How and why? This requires deep thinking. Those who have intelligence can see how meaningful and effective are the wordings of Qur’an. They deal with deep meaning in brief, clear and eloquent phrases. Qur’an is the word of the Lord of Worlds. It is very high and great. Here He says: When one finds fault with another. He, in fact, has made himself faulty. He says about another person: He is miserly and shameless. The Holy Qur’an says: By so saying, you have pointed to your own defects. So do not disgrace yourselves. Apparently, there are three reasons for saying so.

All are to meet the same one and hence are equal

The first reason indicated is that all of you are united together. Your spiritual father is same, that is, Muhammad Mustafa. The spirits of all the believers have a kind of unity and sameness. Their father is Muhammad and Ali, from the spiritual viewpoint. From physical point of view also they have one father and one mother, that is, Adam and Eve. But from the spiritual aspect, their father is one, that is, Muhammad and also Ali as they are one soul. So now, if one disgraces another, he has disgraced his own brother. There is no difference. All are from one source and origin.

There are some narrations from Imams. One of them says: Ours is a holy tree. Its root and origin is, our grandfather, Muhammad Mustafa. It has twelve branches, that is the Imams, the first being Ali and the last, the awaited Mahdi. Leaves of this holy tree are the general Shias. All believing men and women are the leaves of this holy tree. Due to common leaves and common branches they are all united and one.

According to another narration: Tomorrow, on the Day of Judgment, there would be the holy tree, Tuba. Rooted in the house of Ali, its branches will extend to the houses of all the Shias in Paradise. Thus every believer is connected with the Tuba tree. Thus if one of them becomes faulty, it means all have become faulty. If you want to understand this fully, remember that by disgracing a believer Shia of Ali, you have hurt Ali, especially if that person whom you disgraced was a real and true Shia.

Spiritual connection of Shias with Ali

Rameelah was a Shia of Ali. He says: While in Kufa, I suffered from fever and shivering for some days. I was unable to attend prayer with Amirul Momineen. It was Friday. I found some relief and experienced that my fever had reduced. I thought how nice if I take Friday bath and go to the mosque to pray behind Ali. So I came to the Mosque of Kufa. Ali began to give sermon from the pulpit. My fever returned and I began to tremble again but I controlled myself. After completion of sermon and concluding the prayer, Ali sent someone for me. I went to him. He asked me, "Rameelah! What had happened to you when I was on the pulpit? You looked very restless and uncomfortable!"

I replied, "I am suffering from fever for quite some time. I felt somewhat better today and hence I came to the mosque to attend your sermon when again I was disturbed by fever and shivering."

The summary of Imam Ali reply is, "This fever and shivering of yours has also entered me." I asked, "Is it so with those who are in the Mosque or it is so with those outside too?" Amirul Momineen said, "Throughout the world, be it in east or west whenever one of our Shias becomes restless, we too experience that restlessness."

How do you know? Perhaps you hurt the heart of the person with whom you found fault. It is also possible that person is spiritually related with the holy Imam. You might have made the Imam of the time restless by finding fault with a believer?

Every action has its reaction

Another aspect that some commentators have mentioned is that one, whom you abuse, in turn, abuses (finds fault with) you. It is the condition or nature of creation. Who forgives? Not even one in a thousand forgives his or her abuser. So, by finding fault with others, you aided faultfinding with yourself. Hence, do not talk bad about anyone so that he may talk badly about you. Do not abuse anyone so that no one abuses you. This is testified by the tradition, which says: Curse of God on the one who abuses his parents. I asked, "O Master! Who abuses his or her own parents?" He replied, "The one who abuses the parents of anyone else and in return he or she abuses his parents. This amounts to abusing one's own parents."

Why did you take the name of anyone's father? He will abuse your father in retaliation. Why did you abuse anyone's mother whereby he will abuse your mother! Here is another fine reason.

Whatever you do, you do to yourself

Whatever befalls one it is only due to one's own deeds. Nothing comes from outside or from another person. Man kills himself. It is so when one finds faults with another. By God! In fact, in that case one makes his own self faulty but he does not realize. What is he doing while finding faults with others? He makes himself or herself a target of cynicism, pessimism, enmity and jealousy. These are the evils which man brings to himself by abusing others. When you say: Such and such person is shameless, you are decreasing your own modesty.

In the words of Lady Zainab as she told Yazid: You think you beheaded Husain, but in fact, you have beheaded yourself. You did not peel off but your own skin. Otherwise, Husain is near the Throne (Arsh) of God. The head of Husain is high. Husain is the chief of all creation in the other world. You are degraded and headless. You have deprived yourself of every honor. You have become valueless. Look at the facts. O unlucky Yazid! What do you know? You imagined that you hit my brother with your swords and spears. No, you inflicted all these wounds on your own dirty and inauspicious soul. You have wounded yourself. Husain's life will be extended and your death will be nearer. O Muslims! If you have abused anyone, you have abused your own self. If you have harmed anyone, you have harmed yourself. Whatever you do, you do it to yourself as it returns to you.

Do not call one another names

﴿وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ﴾

"...nor call one another by nicknames... (49: 11)"

That is, do not give bad titles to anyone. If one was Jew formerly and thereafter became a Muslim, do not call him: O son of a Jew! One was earlier a drunkard but then repented. Do not call him a drunkard.

﴿بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ﴾

"...evil is a bad name after faith... (49: 11)"

This man has faith. He says: There is no god except Allah. Never say he is a disbeliever or a denier. Curse on him who calls a Muslim "disbeliever." Giving a bad title to anyone is totally unlawful. Rather every address, which grieves the addressee, is unlawful. For example you call someone "bald." You are not lying, yet it is unlawful to say so if it makes him unhappy. Such a bad or ugly title, which makes a man grieve, is prohibited. Whenever a Muslim called another Muslim, it must be with a good and nice

address. As a narration, in brief: A man once came to the Imam. His name was not known. The Imam asked him, “O Saad (lucky gentleman)! How are you?” Saad means fortunate. See how nice is the address! It is prohibited to call a believer by an ugly title or address. O short statured! O tall fellow! It has become common practice to use such words although it is absolutely unlawful.

It is must to repent after sinning

After mentioning the unlawfulness of these three things, it is being mentioned that as these three things are unlawful, Muslims is one who, when he comes to know that he has committed a sin, he repents. For example: You were in a meeting place. A man gave a bad title to another person. It is a must for you to tell the former to repent. It is also compulsory for the former to accept the latter’s advice and to say: ‘I seek Allah’s forgiveness’. Do not leave him until you hear him repenting. You must continue to give him good advice and guidance towards good from evil. It is obligatory for you to admonish him and it is obligatory for him to accept your advice. If he does not accept then:

﴿وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾

“...and whoever does not turn, these it is that are the unjust. (49: 11)”

The Holy Qur’an says oppressor is one who commits a sin and then fails to repent, whatever that sin may be.

I have oppressed myself

Certainly it is “oppression of oneself”, one has oppressed himself. In the words of Khwaja Rabee, he used to weep during the nights instead of sleeping and he was begging to God. His mother asked him, “What sin have you committed that you are weeping so much restlessly? You are burning you heart so much. If you have killed someone, tell me. Do not fear. I will go there and make the victim’s relatives pleased and make them forgive you.” Listen to the reply of Rabi. What a nice reply. He said, “Mother! I have killed a soul, but not anyone’s soul. I have murdered myself. Ill luck is upon me. I have made myself valueless in front of Almighty Allah. I do not dare to raise my head before Almighty God.” It is suicide. A sinful man has killed and oppressed himself!

Suspecting a believer is unlawful

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ، إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ﴾

“O you who believe! Avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin... (49: 12)”

The following verse also has given three commandments. We are speaking about these verses at length. You must keep in mind these off repeated descriptions and should not neglect or forget them while doing anything. O Faithful! You must, as a demand of your faith, give up three other things also. First, suspicion then spying and thirdly, backbiting, as these are inter-connected most of the time. If there is no suspicion, spying and backbiting does not follow. Since suspicion is the fountainhead of these evils, it is banned so that you may not indulge in spying and backbiting.

Spying is also not permissible

It is recorded in Islamic history that once in the middle of the night, Umar for over-seeing the people, moved in the streets and lanes of Medina. He reached the door of a house wherefrom he heard some voices of play or amusement. He climbed wall, looked into the house and, in a harsh voice, asked loudly, “O Lewd person! What are you doing? Have you no decency or modesty?” etc.

The owner of the house, who by the way was a knowledgeable person, replied, “O Caliph! If I have committed one sin, you have committed a number of sins and offences. First: God has forbidden entering a house from behind:

﴿لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا﴾

“...and it is not righteousness that you should enter the houses at their backs...”¹

Why did you come from behind the wall? God has commanded that one must enter a house from the entrance:

﴿وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا﴾

“...and go into the houses by their doors...”²

Secondly: Allah orders in Qur’an:

﴿لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا﴾

“Do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission and saluted their inmates...3

Take permission from the owner of the house. Entering a house without such permission is unlawful. You cannot peep into a house even if it is your friend's. I say more than this: Even if it is your father's house. Take permission before entering even your father's house. May be your father's wife is near him in a position, which they may not like to be seen by anybody. It is desirable that you must not enter even your own house without announcing. It is possible that ladies inside may be in a condition they may not like that even her husband should see her. Third: God has in Qur'an commanded:

﴿وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا﴾

“...and saluted their inmates...”4

Say Salam (salute) before entering any house. Say Salam to the people in your house. God has ordered it. O sir, you must salute your family. Do not say: Should I salute my wife! What is there in doing so? Do say Salam to her. Discard thoughts like, 'my wife in lower than me'. If you are in the Ummah (community) of Muhammad then hear what he says: There are three things which I would not give up until my last moment: Salam to the youngsters, children and being first in saying Salam.

The Prophet saluted everyone he saw, be he big or small, young or old, on foot or mounted. He never paid attention to such things. He never waited for anyone's Salam. Summary: Say Salam while entering your house, even to your wife and children, even if they did not say Salam to you first. It is desirable that one who comes should say Salam to those who are present there. It is also written that one should say Salam even if there is no one in the house. He should keep in mind the angels including the record-keeper angels and should say: Peace be upon you and the mercy and blessings of Allah (As salaamu alaikum wa rahmatullaah wa barakaatuh).

It is also mentioned in narrations that if there is no one in the house, say: Peace be upon us from our Lord (As salaamu alainaa mir rabbina) or say Peace be upon us and upon the righteous servants (As salaamu alainaa wa alaa ibaadillaahis swaaliheen). In short, do not enter any house without saying Salam. Fourth: Allah says in Qur'an:

﴿وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا﴾

“...and do not spy... (49:12)”

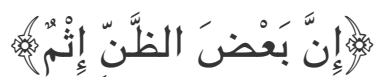
Do not indulge in spying (inquisitiveness) in people's affairs. Do not peep from any hole or from a corner

of a door or window. So not look from the terrace to observe what is going on in a house. Curse of God on every spy! What right have you to interfere in the affairs of others. Everyone is free in his or her own house.

If a spy loses his eye while spying....

Jurists have opined that if one peeps into the house of others, it is lawful to hit him throwing anything on him to prevent him from doing so. No matter if the indecent peeping Tom loses his eye as a result. Qur'an says such spying is unlawful. Muslims must have freedom in their homes. Maybe the one who lives in the house does not like to be seen by others. He may be sitting by the side of his wife. What right have you to look at him? He may be playing with his children and may not like that others observe him. Everyone may have his or her own secrets to be kept in their house. One may not like to show others what they are eating or what they are doing.

Suspicion is from one's own evil



“...for, surely, suspicion in some cases is a sin... (49: 12)”

Make correction from the very beginning. Keep away from spying and backbiting. We will describe this in detail – if Allah wills. Correct your thinking. Do not think evil about anyone. There are some who have made suspicion their habit. Whenever they look at anyone, they never see the bright side. They find only the evil deeds of others and say, that one is prejudiced, he is selfish. Do not look at it. He thinks so as he himself is not good-natured; his thoughts are devilish. Whenever he hears anything from anybody he derives a dark side from it. As he himself is not right, his eyes see wrong in everyone. He thinks that the other person is selfish, liar etc. He suspects even his own wife and relatives and begins to spy on them. Spying leads to backbiting and thus stocking fire for himself in hell.

Prevent suspicion by having a good opinion

First of all, improve your imagination. Think in a good direction. What knowledge you have. You only imagine and you are that what you think is right? He says: I saw it with my own eyes that he came out of the house of a prostitute. I do not say that you are lying. All right, you saw him coming out of an ill-famed house. But are you sure that he had gone there for an evil deed? May be he had gone in search of a vacant house, to talk with the landlord or to purchase it or he may have any other building or construction business or any other personal matter.

Do not rely on doubt. Maybe he went there by mistake. Looking at every house, you imagine that as there is corruption, this man is also definitely an evil fellow. The Second Martyr says in *Kashfur Reebah*: If detect a foul smell in someone's breath you have no right to say that he has consumed wine. You did not see him drink. You only saw him intoxicated. It might be that he had gone to a gathering where others had forcibly poured wine in his mouth. There can be any slight doubt. You cannot give a testimony that I saw him drink. There are some eatables, which give out foul smell. It may be something other than wine.

Calling someone Sufi is also suspicion

I myself saw him returning from a Sufi monastery (Khanqah). They said he is a Sufi! First of all, what is a Sufi? Do you know the meaning of Sufi? Then on what ground do you call a monotheist believer a Sufi? Are you not afraid, that tomorrow, on Judgment Day, he will hold your collar and ask: Why did you suspect me? Or, for instance, there are some ignorant people who insult the great scholar Shaykh Bahai, alleging that he believes in Sufi doctrines only because he has quoted some Sufis or has praised someone's stand. Why do you not form a good opinion?

Say: Shaykh Bahai agreed with such and such scholar in this legal matter or he has quoted his words to support his stand. Support of Shaykh Bahai to someone in this way does not mean that Shaykh Bahai concurs with all the views of that person. You are insulting a great Shia scholar by having such opinion and by saying that he is a Sufi.

﴿إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ﴾

"...for, surely, suspicion in some cases is a sin... (49: 12)"

Imam Kazim and Shaqeeq Balkhi

There is a tradition in both Sunni and Shia sources, mentioning a miraculous event concerning the seventh Imam, Musa bin Ja'far. *Kashful Ghummah* is one of authentic books in view of both Sunni and Shia brothers. It is through Ibn Jawzi and some Sunni scholars have preserved it in poetic form. This tradition has many benefits: Shaqeeq Balkhi says: I proceeded for performing Hajj and we started moving with a caravan from Kufa. Everyone took the provisions from the first stage of the journey. (Formerly pilgrims traveled in caravan, on camels or on foot.) In the meantime, I saw a young man in ordinary dress and simple footwear having nothing else with him; neither food articles nor money. I formed a bad opinion about him and thought that perhaps he is a Sufi. Why? Only because his appearance and apparel were like them. I imagined that he wants to be a burden on others.

There are some Sufi saints (dervishes) who beg to fulfill their needs and do nothing except wandering

here and there. I thought that I should go to him and give him some advice. I thought I must tell him that this way of life is improper; that if you want to perform the Hajj, do come, in whatever way you like but do not be a burden on others. When I approached him, before I could say anything he said, “O Shaqeeq!” Avoid most of suspicion...

He called him by his name and asked why he (Shaqeeq) was having a bad opinion about others? Looking at a Sufi-like dress you say that he is a Sufi? If someone speaks the words of a Sufi, does he become Sufi?

O Muslims! Your tongues must not be uncontrolled. Allegation or calumny is a Greater sin. You are harming your own selves. You have pointed out your own drawbacks, like this Shaqeeq. Had the Imam not helped him he too would have acted like the enemies of Ahle Bait. Why? Because the appearance of the Imam was like that of Sufis. This is mere imagination, not a fact. You are storing fire in your own grave. Do you not fear that, that person could be pious? Do not be so fearless of hell.

Shaqeeq says: I asked myself: Who was this gentleman who addressed me by my name and who knew even the thought in my mind? It seems he is one of the friends of Allah. I must go to him and seek pardon. But when I intended to go to him he disappeared. Then I could not find him until we reached the next stage. I saw him from a distance. I told myself: Good. I must go to him and beg his pardon and repent. When I came near him, the Imam began himself saying: O Shaqeeq!

﴿وَأِنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ لِّمَن تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدَى﴾

“And most surely I am most Forgiving to him who repents and believes and does good, then continues to follow the right direction.”⁵

God has promised that He will forgive everyone who repents and amends his way. Rightly guided is one who makes excuse before God and His creation. This is the path of his repentance. He makes amendment in his behavior and resolves to give up the habit of suspicion. He entertains good opinion about others. Instead of speaking badly about others he talks about their virtues.

Bad description turn into good. If he had spoken badly about someone in his absence, he tells himself: I have made a serious mistake. This is his repentance. There is no other way for his salvation. Good opinion is the repentance of bad opinion. Thus, the Imam gave me good tidings that God had accepted my repentance. I made an apology. Thereafter I did not see the holy Imam. I repented before Almighty Allah.

Satan's regret for misguiding a believer

There is a narration for amusement of all. It is reported that the Holy Prophet said: It sometimes so happens that Satan, after misguiding a person, repents over what he (Satan) did and says: Oh! I should not have made this man commit this sin. People asked, "How is it that the devil repents over his misguidance to man?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Because that particular man, as an aftermath of his sinning, repents, burns within himself and melts his heart so much that finally he becomes dear to God forever. The devil slaps his head saying, 'Oh! I should not have led this person to sin.' He, after committing the sin, repents too much and feels ashamed before God and thus he goes nearer to God and his face turns radiant!"⁶

Now, this Shaqeeq – He committed a sin of forming an adverse opinion, but then he repented so much that, from the moment he could not see the Imam, till the next halt he wept profusely before God. Now, after so much repentance and improvement what a high status he reached.

The narration is exhaustive and detailed. It is mentioned in *Kashful Ghummah* and also quoted in *Muntahaiul Aamal*. The rest of the tradition is like this: He (the unknown youth) said this much and went away. I told myself that this man must be a mystic because twice he talked to me, remaining hidden. Thereafter I did not see him until we reached Zabaala. There I saw that this gentleman standing besides a well with a water can. He wanted to fetch water, but all of a sudden the can fell from his hand. He raised his head towards heavens and said: O Lord! You are the One Who quench my thirst whenever I look at water and You alone are the Nourisher Who feeds me whenever I am hungry.

Then he said, "O My Lord and master! I do not have any other utensil except this. Kindly do not take it away from me." Shaqeeq said, "By God! I observed that the well boiled up and its water arose." The youth extended his hand and took hold of the can and then filled it up. Then he made ablution and offered four units of prayer. Then he turned towards a sand hill. He took some grains of sand therefrom, poured them in the can and shook it and then drank from it. When I saw all this, I went to him, saluted him and said, "Please give me also from what you got from God as a bounty." He said, "O Shaqeeq! The bounty of God Almighty had been, openly and secretly, with us always. Therefore, always have a good opinion about Him (your Lord)."

Then he handed over his can to me. When I drank from it I felt that it was tasty, sweet and pleasing. By God! Till today, I have never tasted anything sweeter and more deliciously fragrant than that drink. I was fully gratified, to such an extent that, for several days I did not feel hungry and thirsty. Thereafter, again I did not see that youth until we reached Mecca. Once at mid-night I saw that he was busy in prayers and weeping continuously. He went on praying with humility till daybreak.

Then he kept sitting on his prayer mat and recited the rosary. He performed the Morning Prayer and made seven rounds of the Holy Ka'ba and went out. I followed him to find that, contrary to his former condition, he had high dignity, nobility and many servants. People gathered around him and saluted him.

Then I asked a man, “Who is this gentleman?” He replied, “He is Musa bin Ja’far bin Muhammad bin Ali Ibnul Husain bin Ali bin Abi Talib.” I told myself: Had I observed these miraculous things from anyone other than the holy Imam it would have astonished me, but since they were from the Imam, I have no cause to wonder.

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1. Surah Baqarah 2: 189
 2. Surah Baqarah 2: 189
 3. Surah Nur 24:27
 4. Surah Nur 24:27
 5. Surah Taha 20:82
 6. Mustadrakul Wasael

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