

Part 25

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ، إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ، وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا، وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا، أَيُّحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا؟ فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ، وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ. يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا، إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ.﴾

“O you who believe! Avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do not spy nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful. O you men! Surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware. (49: 12–13)”

Qur'an for the good of this world and the hereafter

Interpretation of dreams is a science, which does not reach one without divine inspiration and grace and it is beyond common people. Almighty God had granted this knowledge to Ibn Sirrin. He gave amazing explanations conforming to facts. Once a man came to him and said: Last night I saw a dream, which has made me restless and helpless. What is its explanation? In my dream I saw that I possessed both this world and the Hereafter but then I lost both. What a loss! What does it mean or show? Ibn Sirrin thought over it for a while. Then said, “Did you not have a Qur'an which you have lost now?”

That man replied, “Why? It is so. I had a Qur'an but for the last few days it is missing.” Ibn Sirrin said, “This is what you saw in your dream. There is both this world and the Hereafter in the Holy Qur'an. If you want a pure life it is in Qur'an. If you desire a life of peace, security and comfort, it is in Qur'an. If

you want to be at ease in your Hereafter right from the time of your death till eternity it is Qur'an. You lost the Qur'an and hence lost both this world and Hereafter." Then that man asked, "What should I do now?" Ibn Sirrin replied, "Just sit down. God is, after all Almighty." Before long there came another person who also had seen a dream but quite opposite. He said, "In my dream I saw that both the world and the Hereafter have been granted to me." Ibn Sirrin said, "The copy of the Holy Qur'an which you have found belongs to this man. Please give it to him."

Qur'anic Commands and worldly comforts

What I wanted to convey by relating the above dream was that you should have connection with Qur'an. If you do so, both your world and Hereafter are fine. If you give up Qur'an, it means loss of both the lives, before and after death. The commands of Qur'an, which I have conveyed to you during the last few days about the calamities caused by the tongue are important also for your present worldly life besides the Hereafter. O Muslims! If you act according to the Holy verse:

﴿إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا﴾

"If an evildoer comes to you with a report, look carefully into it,"

And do not instantly believe any word which you hear and if you do not react recklessly at once and if you do not believe that word until you have made inquiries, then how much useful is it for the present world! How many troubles can be averted by following this divine instruction. Do not have adverse opinion about anyone. It is better for yourself. A man who thinks and imagines badly about others leads a life of misery. He even doubts his own wife. Can thereafter he live a peaceful life with that woman? He also thinks adversely about his children, his friends too. Bad opinion about others is a calamity, which destroys man's whole life.

Faultfinding is also prohibited in Islam. It is also harmful for your world. Mischief making and spreading scandalous news is harmful to yourself.

Imam Sajjad's words to a mischief maker

Once a man came to Imam Zainul Abideen and in a foolish gesture of sympathy, told him that in such and such gathering such and such fellow has backbitten you, saying that Ali bin Husain is misguided fellow and an innovator. Curse of God on every false allegation maker and against whom! Against Zainul Abideen. The Imam, who was busy worshipping his Lord in a corner of his house, addressed that person. Summary: First of all, you are dishonest to that person about whom you have complained. A person spoke badly about me in my absence. You have no right to tell it to me and expose what he hid when he considered you honest and trustworthy. Secondly, you did not observe my respect by telling me

a thing, which I did not need. Then the holy Imam said, “Did you not know that slanderers are dogs of hell. Tell that man we will die, our place will be the grave and the promise of Judgment Day has been given to us and Almighty God is the arbitrator between us.”¹

Restrain yourself from the beginning

Another fact is that when a man hears backbiting, then if he is habituated, he is unable to restrain and he also begins backbiting. He finds out a defect in someone and tells it to others. Then both parties fall in a continuing prohibited matter. As a result, backbiting is easy to indulge in and it becomes so common that its wickedness wanes and even those religious minded people who refrain from adultery devour backbiting like sweetmeats.

They become habituated to it and see nothing wrong in it and it becomes a routine thing. It is said: O parents! Do not speak badly in front of your children so that their respect may not vanish. Do not speak a lie in front of a child, do not give a false promise to him. If you have told your child: I am going to the market to buy sweetmeat for you, then do buy sweetmeats. If you do not bring it, the child feels that breaking a promise is an ordinary and easy thing and he also feels that lying is not so serious an offence. This is why backbiting becomes easy and common for the people. Consequently everyone indulges in backbiting and no one prevents anyone from it.

Pious looking backbiting

Sometimes one indulges in backbiting as a kind of piety. By so doing he puts a cap on his own head and on the head of people also. For instance, one comes to you, sits down, then takes somebody's name and says: How good a person so and so is, praises him for a while and then says: But alas, how much my heart is burning for him as he is not behaving nicely with his wife and children. The first words of sympathy and praise were a show, so that, thereafter, he may sting him and also boast that he did not indulge in backbiting.

Thus he added show-off to backbiting. It is a show of piety. It is, as if to say that I have a religious heart that is why I had to backbite one, to make allegation, to disgrace someone. He calls it religiousness and piety.

The late Second Martyr says in *Kashfur Reebah*: There also is a sin of joining the sin of backbiting with the sin of show-off. After the Second Martyr, whoever wrote a book about backbiting has considered the aforesaid backbiting (joined with show-off) as a most dangerous sin. How fine is the supplication of Dua Makarimul Akhlaq. You recite: O My Lord! Make my tongue mention You instead of uttering a bad and shameless word, instead of backbiting someone, instead of disgracing or insulting a believer, instead of attacking someone's honor.²

Too bad is a tongue, which can plant a tree in Paradise by saying, “There is no god except Allah”,

indulges in backbiting and thereby puts a few trees, which he had put to fire and burned them down. It is hoped that those who are present here will convey them to those who are not here and do not forget themselves. The Messenger of Allah says: By God in whose control is my life, (this is both from the Prophet and Amirul Momineen) faith does not become aright unless the heart does not become aright and the heart also does not become aright until this tongue is reformed.³ These three are always with one another: faith, heart and tongue. They are constantly attached to one another. If the tongue becomes right, the heart also gets steadiness and when the heart is right, faith also becomes correct.

Do not pride on one another

One more of the very big calamities brought by the tongue, which derails man from the road of faith and which creates many spiritual troubles and a lot of social losses is to show pride to one another. One boasts and glorifies himself before others about anything. The more ignorant is one, the more boasting he indulges in. One of such prides is to be proud of one's knowledge.

How many books have I read, I am a philosopher, I am an expert in logic and history, who knows, more than me? Such pride makes him more ignorant than the ignorants. It drives him to the lowest of the low places of Hell, where Balam Baoor had gone.

﴿فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ؛ إِنْ تَحْمِلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثُ أَوْ تَتْرُكُهُ يَلْهَثُ، ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا، فَاقْصُصْ الْقِصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾

“...So, his parable is as the parable of the dog; if you attack him he lolls out his tongue; and if you leave him alone he lolls out his tongue; this is the parable of the people who reject Our communications; therefore relate the narrative that they may reflect.”⁴

It is written that this man used to tell the truth. He was also a scholar, having twelve thousand students in those days, which is remarkable. Rather it is said that he was the one to write a book on Oneness of God. Such was this man. But how strange that this unfortunate fellow began to be proud of his knowledge with the words quoted above. In his opinion, he had obtained greatness by uttering the said words. But it is not so. Greatness is not obtained by reading. One does not get nearness to God without worship and prayer, humility, courtesy, lowliness in fact.⁵

You read all logics. O philosopher! What are you if you do not know what you want? What is the benefit if you did not recognize your weakness and extinction? At last, this man, Balam Baoor whose ignorance not only led him to pride, ego and disobedience of the legatee of Musa but, by and by, he began to tell Musa and his legatee: Who are you and whom am I! Woe unto such knowledge, which is not accompanied by Noor (light) of servitude and submission to Only One God. Finally he reached a bad

end and the Holy Qur'an likened him to a dog.

Being proud of race is also ignorance

After the pride of knowledge comes the pride of race or lineage, which is referred to in this Holy verse. This verse shows the remedy of this spiritual illness. Such pride of race was much prevalent among Arabs, it is, perhaps, there even now. It is hoped that non-Arabs who should hold fast to the Holy Qur'an will come out of such ignorance to such an extent that you will never be proud of 'my family', 'my mother'. Let your father be in his place. Give up all such superstitions.

Harmful interruption is also prohibited

Showing pride over race is a calamity brought by the tongue, which causes trouble and harassment to Muslims. By one word spoken by you, which makes one restless you ignite fire in your own grave. By the way, when our talk has come upto this, let me remind you of some jokes, which make others restless.

On the whole, everything, which makes others unhappy, is prohibited. It is possible that by a joke you give trouble to others. For example one enters someone's room suddenly or shouts loudly at someone. Such foolish gestures prick like a thorn. The Holy Qur'an ordains that if you want to enter your own house, do not enter abruptly. It may frighten someone inside. If a joke or wit, lie or backbiting is harmful, it is all the more prohibited, that is, its impermissibility is twofold: lying and backbiting, and harassing.

Sinister effects of telephonic talks

They once lied on the telephone to a poor mother: You son has met with an accident and his body is at such and such place and it will be brought at such and such time. The helpless mother got a shock and died. Though the one who had telephoned was joking. Such joking without any thought of the harm involved therein is prohibited.

It is quoted that a youth once went to his friend and by way of joking, told him, "I had gone to make inquiry. You have failed in your exams." That youth had no faith, which could have protected him. So he thought that as he has failed he has lost everything and his world has come to an end. I have heard that this youth of seventeen or eighteen years of age swallowed some tablets and died. Thereafter, it was revealed that, that fellow had only been joking. Even if it were true, it was prohibited to talk in this way.

Then how about a lie? I say: O young man! Suppose your friend had failed. Even then you had no right to come to him suddenly and say it. According to the Shariat, you are a security to your friend's blood. But you participated in killing a Muslim. Such jokes, which are harmful and shocking are also the calamities brought by the tongue.

God created all from a father and a mother

This command, which Almighty Allah has issued is an essential part of the knowledge concerning man.
O Man! Know thyself.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا، إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

“O you men! Surely, We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware. (49: 13)”

“We created you from one man and one woman”, father and mother. Adam and Eve. Now since the number of men and women is very big and as they are bound to live along with one another, distinctions are necessary. A gathering of millions and billions who have to deal with one another must be differentiated or distinguished so that there may not be any doubt about recognition. If there is no distinction, confusions may arise. Suppose one’s name is Zaid. Is he an Arab or a non–Arab, is he a resident of a city or he is a tribal, from which city is he, which area, which family. If these distinctions are not available then how will you find out the Zaid with whom you have made a deal. The word used in the verse in ‘Sho’b’.

It means big classes. Whether one is a dweller of a city or is a villager or Bedouin. Is he from Persia or is he a Turk or an Arab. Every one of them has further sects. If you have become one who knows mankind, you have understood that all of you and us are originally from one father and one mother and then became various tribes and from every tribe different families: O Arabs! And O non–Arabs! O Turks! These names are for disguising, not for taking pride. No Arab should say: Where am I and where a non–Arab. No Turk should boast “Where am I and where an Arab.”

Such pride of ones tribe over another tribe also brings haughtiness with it like the Bani Israel who think that they are higher than the entire mankind. They claim to be rulers over the whole mankind; that since they are the children of Yaqub, kingship is only their right and that all other people are their servants or slaves. Only they are free. This is the aim and object of their religion!

So much so that God made them disgraced and they became unable to obtain leadership. I am hopeful that, God willing, they will never be able to raise their heads. Otherwise, how many troubles and mischief would they create? They believe that ruling the world is only their right. The Holy Qur’an gives them a realistic reply: What are these claims? After all the origin of all of you and us are Adam and Eve. There is no high and low among us except from the angle of piety and righteousness. Those who are more

pious will refrain more from sinning and so only they are better.

Disbeliever's insult Bilal, the Muezzin of the Prophet

The muezzin (announcer of call for prayers) was a black Abyssinian slave. He was thin and his tongue did not work properly. Instead of 'Sh', he used to pronounce 'S' and said: As-hadu anna muhammadar rasoolallaah. When idols were broken in the Ka'ba after the conquest of Mecca, in spite of the enmity of Abu Lahab and Abu Sufyan, the Holy Prophet asked Bilal, "Go to the roof of the Ka'ba and announce 'there is no god except Allah'"

Bilal went there, placed his hand on his ears and recited the call for prayer. Of course his voice was not very melodious. When his voice was raised once, the cursed Utbah said, "Had Muhammad no one else? He sent this black crow up who makes such a noise." Another fellow came out and said, "Thank God my father died last year and did not live to hear this crowing." Abu Sufyan said, "I do not say anything. I am afraid God of Muhammad may inform him and we may have to face trouble." But Jibraeel informed the Prophet about the whole episode and he called all of them and said, "You said like this and you said like this." Then he recited this verse:

﴿إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا، إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ﴾

"Surely, We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); (49: 13)"

What you are saying are not the criteria. Do not say that I am pious and that person is not. "How do you know he fears God more? Be more away from sins. It is the measure of piety. Abstaining from sins, nearness to God, selflessness and sincerity are the criteria.

Abbas and Shayba show pride to Ali

Before the arrival of Islam and during the early years of Islam, one of the difficult tasks was to supply water to the Hajj pilgrims. Those who lived in Mecca, used to supply the water of the Zamzam spring. Those who were somewhat near Taif used to fetch water from another spring from a valley called Leemoo. But in the Hajj season it was hard to arrange water for such a large number of hajj pilgrims, especially in Mina and Arafat. Before the advent of Islam, Abbas, the Prophet's uncle had accepted this respectable job of supplying water to Hajjis. Shayba was holding keys of Ka'ba and was in charge of its construction work. Both these persons, Abbas and Shayba, used to show their pride before Imam Ali.

I have said several times that these vain thoughts were no criterion of nobility in the eyes of God. For example: I am an orator, I am a propagator, I am the president of the meeting, I am a reciter of Qur'an, I am a good reader of books, I am a writer, I am a whole-night worshipper. These 'I's are all vain. It has not the slightest value in the sight of God.

We look to the interior of the deeds. We do not see the exterior and the words. (Persian couplet)

This couplet is the translation of a tradition of the Holy Prophet.⁶

The Second Martyr has quoted in *Asrarus-us-Salat*. What is your heart, what does it want? O the one who climbs the pulpit! How much meekness and courtesy is there in your heart? Talking from the pulpit is no criterion. What kind of relation is really there between the speaker's heart and Almighty Allah? God does not look at this type of talking. He does not look at the pulpit. It is the people who look at the exterior. God, Who knows all hidden things, looks at the state of the heart of the speaker. Does he want to make a show of his oratory or he truly and sincerely intends to draw people towards God? Does he desire his own prestige or does he long for making the sinners return to God and repent? So the divine attention is to the heart, not to the tongue. Let us leave it here.

O Abbas! You say that you have the honor of supplying water to the Hajjis, which Ali does not have! O Shayba! You boast that you possess the key of Ka'ba which Ali does not possess! But Ali has faith. He is a struggler in the path of God. Ali is the one who does not care for his life in the path of Allah. You are comparing yourselves with Ali by such measures!

﴿أَجَعَلْتُمْ سِقَايَةَ الْحَاجِّ وَعِمَارَةَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ كَمَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَجَاهَدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، لَا يَسْتَوُونَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ، وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

“What! Do you make (one who undertakes) the giving of drink to the pilgrims and the guarding of the Sacred Mosque like him who believes in Allah and the latter day and strives hard in Allah's way? They are not equal with Allah; and Allah does not guide the unjust people.”⁷

Such prides are all wrong, as taking pride in one race is wrong. O intelligent! In this Supreme Court, nothing is accepted except the fear of God in hearts. What is the state of your heart in relation with God? How much does your heart show tenderness and how much humility does your heart show before God? The one who is lowlier before God is more graceful. What is noteworthy is that the one who is really and truly righteous never becomes proud or egotist except when he has to prove the truth or pull down falsehood. Here is an interesting story for you.

The words of Imam Hasan were no boastings

You must have heard that when Muawiyah captured Iraq through intrigues and Imam Hasan made a

treaty with him in helplessness. Muawiyah went on the pulpit in the Jama Masjid of Kufa and insulted Amirul Momineen. At that time Imam Hasan told him:

O the one who remembers Ali and speaks ill of him before me, I am Hasan. My father is Ali bin Abi Talib. You are Muawiyah and your father is Sakhar, that is, the one who, till the last years of the Prophet was the flag-bearer of the polytheists and unbelievers and had fought with the Prophet.

My mother is Fatima and your mother is 'Hind' that very woman, who was shameless and so brazen that she chewed the liver of Hamzah, the uncle of the Prophet and cut off his nose and genitals, and hung them around her neck.

My grandfather is the Messenger of Allah and your grand father is Harb. My grandmother is Khadijah, the mother of the faithful and your grandmother is Fateelah (who was among the openly practicing prostitutes).

Then he added: May God curse everyone of us and yours who is more shameless and whose lineage is lower and whose disbelief is older and whose hypocrisy is greater and whose entitlement to Islam is lesser.

The audience roared and exclaimed, "Amen!"⁸ You may also say: Amen. O Lord! Multiply your anger on Muawiyah and the entire Bani Umayyah.

The above words of Imam Hasan were for establishing the truth and for defeating falsehood. It was neither pride nor boasting. In fact, he disgraced Muawiyah with these short utterances so much that Muawiyah came down from the pulpit, very shamefully withdrew and went away. Know that, in the sight of God, words are not the criterion. Measure is God-fearingness. More righteous more dear and near is he or she to God.

Words of Imam Sajjad before Asmai

They have quoted from Asmai: Once, in the Masjidul Haram (Great Mosque of Mecca), I heard a heart-rending voice. I went near the Ka'ba and saw that, in Hajre Ismail, my master, Imam Sajjad was weeping deep-heartedly holding the curtain of Ka'ba. He was praying:

O the One Who answers the supplications of the helpless in the dark nights – O the One Who wards off all restlessness – Your guests are asleep around Your House. Only You are awake, You never sleep – O the Eternal Self-existent, Who never sleeps...

Then his voice felt silent. After a few moments he again began to recite these heart-rending stanzas: O Lord! Who is more guilty than me? Who is more denigrated than me? Which of the servants committed more crimes than me? O God! Will You, after all burn me in the fire? Then what will happen to my hopes? What about my fear? You Yourself have promised that You will not disappoint one who puts faith in You and who hopes from You. I hope that You will forgive me. Your pardon is the object of my hopes.⁹

Asmai says: Then I did not hear my master's voice. I went near him and found that he is Zainul Abideen Ali Ibnul Husain; and that he had fainted. I placed his holy head in my lap. My tears fell on his radiant face. He opened his eyes and asked, "Who is it?" I said, "It is Asmai, your slave. O my master! Your honor! And so much weeping and wailing! You are so pious, so chaste and faultless. Your grandfathers are the intercessors. O my master! You belong to the family about whose purity God sent the Verse of purification." When I said this, the master said, "Leave these things please. Don't you know that God has created Paradise for everyone who worships Him, anyone who is righteous, be he or she even a black slave. Hell is also created by God for every sinner even if he belongs to the noblest of tribes on earth.¹⁰

The noblest is Quraish. The Messenger of the last era Muhammad also belongs to this tribe of Quraish. These races and lineages are of no importance. Do not say: I am a Sayyid. Be whatever you are. Yes, a good tidings has come for a Sayyid Fatimid, provided his lineage is correct and, finally, he dies with repentance. On the Day of Judgment, intercession first reaches the Sayyids but not if their deeds are bad. It is not like that. In Islamic laws there are no exceptions. Every rule that is for the common people is also for the Sayyids. There is no difference. Just as a common man should pay Zakat and Khums so also should a Sayyid. It is so about every obligatory duty also, as well as about the prohibited misdeeds.

If a Sayyid, God forbid, indulged in adultery, he will not be differentiated from others. He will also be given a hundred lashes, not that, as he is a Sayyid, there should be some leniency. There is no difference in the commandments of Allah. In short, Imam Sajjad said, "Leave me alone. Hell has been created for every sinner even if he is a Quraishite and belongs to the noblest lineage on earth."

Thereafter he recited this holy verse: Tomorrow, on the Day of Judgment, no one will be asked: Whose son are you? In the Highest Court of God, there is no place for such questioning. They will not ask who your parents were? Did you belong to a noble family or a common one? These things belong to this world. These are mere delusions. The questioning there will be: Who is your God? Who is your deity? Whom did you worship? Whose word did you accept? Which religion you followed? Who was your Imam? Ali, Hasan, Husain...the Husain! Since you remembered them all your life, it is hoped that the one whom you remembered will come to your help.

-
1. Layaliyal Akhbar, pg. 603
 2. Sahifa Sajjadiya, Dua: 20
 3. Safinatul Bihar, 2:510
 4. Surah Araf 7:176
 5. Mafatihul Jinan, pg. 17
 6. Asrarus Salat, pg. 110
 7. Surah Tawbah 9:19
 8. Muntahaiul Amal, vol. 1, pg. 167. Events of Imam Hasan
 9. Biharul Anwar, vol. 11,pg.18
 10. Biharul Anwar

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/moral-values-of-quran-tafsir-hujurat-ayatullah-dastaghaib/part-25>