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النميمة Slander

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*In the Name of Allâh,
the Most Gracious,
the Most Merciful*



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Publishers Note

Slander and backbiting has been condemned by the Noble Qur'ân which compares the act of carrying tales to that of carrying wood. The allegory is superb. Just as wood spreads fire, so does backbiting which ignites passions, creates ill-will, and foments hatred.

There are several Verses in the Noble Qur'ân denouncing the tendency to evil talk:

﴿هَآءِذَا مَشَآءَ بَنِيمٍ﴾ [القلم: ١١]

“A slanderer going about with calumnies.”
(68:11)

﴿مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عِنْدٌ﴾ [ق: ١٨]

“Not a word does he utter but there is a watcher by him ready (to record it).” (50:18)

﴿وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ﴾ [الهمزة: ١]

“Woe to every slanderer and backbiter.”
(104:1)

The Arabic word for slandering is *Nameemah*, referred to as the act of carrying tales from one

person to another. However, *Nameemah* is much more than this. It also includes disclosure of information, whether oral, written, or symbolic expression, calculated to tarnish a person's image.

This and other aspects of *Nameemah* have been highlighted in this small book. The publication is yet one more in the series of small books brought out by Darussalam Publishers and Distributors to educate the people on true Islamic values by discussing issues that have a bearing on our day-to-day conduct.

In this regard, Darussalam has published many books on various topics which include religious fundamentals, Islamic guidelines, monotheism, implication of the *Sunnah* and the creed factors. Some books have been prepared in the form of easy questions and answers so that every reader, be he a child or an adult, a well-learned or a person with little education, may understand it without any difficulty.

On day-to-day problems, the most popular series of books published by Darussalam is *Fatawa* presentations. Up till now we have published

Fatawa on Fasting, Zakat & Taraweeh, and Islamic *Fatawa* regarding women. More books of this series are under printing in other languages also besides the English language.

We invite the readers to thoroughly study the books published by Darussalam, and send their reviews, comments and suggestion to us so that we may be able to improve the publications produced by us.

We hope that this publication will appeal to both Muslims and non-Muslims. Through this, they will get an idea of the importance that Islam attaches to the need for right conduct, which leads to right action. May Allâh the Almighty guide us on the right path. *Ameen!*

Abdul Malik Mujahid
General Manager
Darussalam

Slander

The Muslim *Ummah* is distinctive with the qualities of love and brotherhood, affection adorns the hearts and smiles beautify the faces. The principles among the believers are those of brotherhood and good friendship. Allâh has said:

﴿ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ ﴾ [الحجرات: ١٠]

“The believers are nothing else than brothers.” (49:10)

Allâh has prohibited the believers from anything that may induce enmity and hatred amongst them:

﴿ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَيْرِ وَالْيُسْرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْهَوُونَ ﴾

[المائدة: ٩١]

“*Shaitan* wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allâh and from *Salât*. So, will you not abstain?” (5:91)

Allâh has conferred His favor upon His slaves

in joining their hearts. He said:

﴿وَأَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا﴾ [آل عمران: ١٠٣]

“And remember Allâh’s favor on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together so that by His Grace you became brethren.” (3:103)

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَيْدَكَ بِبَصَرِهِ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝ وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَا أَلَّفْتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ أَلَّفَ بَيْنَهُمْ﴾ [الأنفال: ٦٢، ٦٣]

“He it is Who has supported you with His help and with the believers, and He has united their hearts. If you had spent all that is in earth you could not have united their hearts, but Allâh has united them.” (8:62-63)

Every *Mukallaf*^[1] should safeguard his tongue against all kinds of loose talk except when it is evident that talking will be a means of beneficence. When talking and being quiet are

[1] *Mukallaf*: a competent person in complete control of all faculties.

both equal as a prudent measure, then the *Sunnah* is to abstain from speech. This is because even lawful speech may lead to unlawful or unpleasant matters. This is, unfortunately, a common practice.

Abu-Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

«مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ».

“Whosoever believes in Allâh and the Last Day should speak what is good or be silent.” (Agreed upon)

This *Hadith* is clear and indisputable that a person should not talk unless what he wants to say is good and there is benefit from it. However, when he doubts whether there would be benefit or good, he should then not speak. *Imam Shafi‘ee* said:

“If a person wishes to say something then he should think before he starts talking. If there is good, then he should speak, otherwise he should not.”

Definition of *Nameemah* (Slander)

The word *Nameemah* (Slander) usually refers to the act of carrying tales from one person to another. However, *Nameemah* is not limited only to that. It includes disclosing things that are disliked, whether by the person being told, the person being discussed, or a third party. This disclosure can be by speaking, writing, nodding, intimating (hinting) or signalling. The disclosed matters can be actions or speech, and may be a defect in the person being discussed or not. The reality of *Nameemah* is to disclose a secret and expose something about someone who doesn't like having such thing exposed.

A person should not talk about anything that he may see in people and dislike. He should only say something if, inherent within it, it is good for a *Muslim* and to block a wrong or a harm. If he sees, for example, someone mistreating another's property, then he should testify to obtain the right of the person. But if he sees someone hiding his own property and he discloses this, then it is *Nameemah* — the revealing of a secret. If what is stated is actually a fault or defect about the person

being discussed, then it is a combination of *Gheebah* ^[2] and *Nameemah*.

Nameemah is carrying discussions from one to another for the intention of mischief, disclosing secrets and exposing secret matters. *Buhtaan* ^[3] about an innocent person is heavier in sin than the weight of the skies. Woe to the one who goes around telling lies about an innocent person to one in authority or others, such that they believe him. He may bring about evil to an innocent person.

Yahya Bin Aktham said: "The *Nammaam* ^[4] is a greater evil than a magician. The *Nammaam* does in one hour what a magician cannot do in one year." It was also said, "The acts of *Nammaam* are more harmful than the acts of *Shaitan*. *Shaitan* acts by imagination and whispering, while the *Nammaam* acts face-to-face and openly."

[2] *Gheebah* : backbiting

[3] *Buhtaan* : saying something untrue about a person

[4] *Nammaam/Nammaamah* : male/female performing *Nameemah*