



## Core Curriculum

### 6 Measuring Good and Bad in Islam

#### 6.12 **Sinning Against Others and their Delayed Punishment**

##### INTRODUCTION

Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahīm, As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. Peace be upon you brothers and sisters.

Welcome back to the Muslim Converts Channel! Sins can be divided into multiple levels. On the basic level, any sin that we commit in this world affects us directly. They also affect others indirectly as the damage we do to ourselves leaves an imprint in this world.

They not only pollute us but they also pollute the air around us. Think about a cold, you get sick and you sneeze. When you sneeze, the virus goes air born and people catch it.

But looking at it from the context of “indirect effect” we aren’t held fully accountable by God for the indirect effects of our sins. That’s part of God’s mercy. However, there are sins in which we not only damage ourselves, but we also directly affect others.

This is when we commit deliberate acts of evil against others. In this lesson, we will look at two things. First, we will list some of the direct sins we commit against others. Second, we will look into the question of why God sometimes delays His punishment of people who commit these deeds.

##### BODY OF TEXT

“And be afraid of the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah. Then every person shall be paid what he earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly.” (Chapter 2, verse 281 of the Holy Qur’an)

When we talk about the kind of evils we commit against others, the first thing that comes to most of our minds are things like murder or theft. But the kind of evils we commit against others are much more than these two, and they are more subtle. The following are a list of some sins we commit against others:

### **Backbiting (ghībah)**

Backbiting or ghībah is speaking ill of someone behind their back. Ghībah is saying something that is true about someone, but is something that a person does not want exposed. In one hadith from the Messenger of Allah (s), the following is narrated:

The Prophet (s) once gave counsel to Abu Dharr (r) , saying: “O Abu Dharr! Beware of backbiting, for backbiting is graver than adultery (zina’).” Abu Dharr (r) said: “Why is that so, O Messenger of Allah?” He (s) replied: “That is because when a man commits adultery and then repents to God, God accepts his repentance. However, backbiting is not forgiven until forgiven by its victim.” (wasā’il al-shī’ah)

The hadith tells us that ghībah is worse than zina or fornication. Why is it so? Remember that the Muslim community is a cradle that nurtures our souls. It is in a healthy community where there are strong religious bonds of trust that people spiritually grow the best in.

By backbiting or lying which is also harām and a sin, erodes the bonds of our community by instilling hatred and mistrust of others.

### **Lying**

The Prophet Muhammad (s) once said the following about lying:

“When a believer utters a lie without a valid excuse, he is cursed by seventy thousand angels. Such a stench emanates from his heart that it reaches the sky and because of this single lie Allah writes for him a sin equivalent to that of committing seventy fornications. Such fornications that the least of which is fornication with ones mother.” (Mustadrak al-Wasā’il)

Like ghībah, lying also erodes the trust that exists between people. Without trust, there are no bonds between people and without bonds, there is no ummah. But the problem goes even further. Lying leads to feuds between people, it leads to wars and economic corruption. It not only erodes trust, but it ruins the lives of whole nations.

Most of the injustices, corruption and poverty people face in countries stems from one vice: lying. Much of the wars and poverty people suffer from are due to lies. This is why lying is worse than zina!

### **Breaking Promises**

Imam Jafar al-Sādiq (as) once said:

“A believer’s promise to his believing brother is a vow that has no expiation (It cannot be broken). But one who goes back on his word declares his opposition and enmity to Allah, and invokes the anger of Allah.” (wasā’il al-shī’a)

Breaking a vow is another sin that directly affects another person. Like backbiting and lying, it also erodes trust between people, corrupts the ummah which again, is essential as it is the nurturing womb for people’s souls.

Breaking promises does something else as well, and this one is very detrimental. Breaking promises sows the seeds of hypocrisy in our hearts. What is hypocrisy? It is saying one thing but doing another.

Hypocrisy is an act of deceit, it is deceiving others by creating the

appearance of virtue while succumbing to sin. In other words, it is choreographing and maintaining an illusion to others. So the question here is, can anything stand on an illusion?

### **Why Allah Delays His Punishment of Sinners**

We've talked about sins that are committed against others. But a question that is often asked is the following: if Allah hates injustice and evil, why doesn't He punish it immediately? Why the delay? Doesn't this encourage people to do more bad deeds?

This question can be answered on two levels. The first level is that when Allah punishes a sin to its full extent in this world, it is an act of mercy for punishment in the next world is much, much worse. If a person fails to see much of a punishment vetted out against him or her in this life, you know that he or she is in real trouble.

The second level is that all sins are punished in this world. What we call delay is a delay in "full punishment". Consider the following hadith about backbiting from the Prophet Muhammad (s):

"Whoever backbites a Muslim spoils his fasts and breaks his wudu', and shall come on the Day of Resurrection with his mouth's stench more putrid than a carcass', and it shall irk those who are with him in his station (mawqif). If he dies before repenting, his death is like that of one who dies while considering permissible that which is prohibited by God, the Exalted and the Glorious." (wasā'il al-shī'a)

Notice that people don't get a mouth that stench due to backbitting. People will only see that on the Day of Judgment, and the sin will be punished in its fullest in hell. Yet people are still punished in this world, as in the previous one we quoted earlier about God humiliating us in this world for speaking ill of others.

So people are punished in this world for all the misdeeds they do. First, the punishment comes through the pollution and darkening of one's soul. Second, God is often subtle in His punishments where it comes to

us in ways we don't expect or notice.

Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu 'Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh