

Beware of self-made excuses
and the whispering of the Shaytān

Beware of self-made excuses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah who created the creation and did not leave it forsaken. And may the peace and abundant blessing be upon his Messenger Muhammad, his family and those who follow him in goodness until the Day of Judgment.

And thereafter:

An inescapable reality every Muslim must realize and prepare for is that he inevitably will stand before his Lord who will hold him accountable for his beliefs and his deeds in the worldly life.

Al-Bukhārī narrates in his Sahīh from 'Adī ibn Hātim – *radiAllāhu 'anhu* – who said that the Messenger of Allāh (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) said:

مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا وَسُيُكَلِّمُهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، لَيْسَ بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَبَيْنَهُ تُرْجُمَانٌ، ثُمَّ يَنْظُرُ فَلَا يَرَى شَيْئًا قُدَّامَهُ، ثُمَّ يَنْظُرُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ فَتَسْتَقْبِلُهُ النَّارُ، فَمَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَتَّقِيَ النَّارَ وَلَوْ بِشِقِّ تَمْرَةٍ.

“There is no-one among you, except that Allāh will speak to him of the Day of Resurrection, and there will be no interpreter between Allāh and him. Then he will look and he will see nothing in front of him. Then he will look (again) in front of him and facing him is Hellfire. So whoever among you is capable of avoiding the fire even with half of a date (should do so).” (Sahīh Al-Bukhārī – Kitāb Ar-Riqāq)

And among the facts which are certain regarding this meeting are that Allah will be aware and have full knowledge about everything which you have hidden in your heart, what you have spoken with your tongue and what you have performed with your limbs, of both good and bad. Furthermore the criteria for what is good and what is bad, what is acceptable and what is not, what is allowed and what is not, and what is loved and what is hated, is solely what Allah has revealed in His Book and upon the tongue of His Messenger (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*).

Allah – the Exalted – said:

قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

“Say: ‘Verily the death which you flee from, it will verily find you. Then you will be returned to the One who knows the unseen and the seen, and He will inform you about what you used to do.’” (Al-Jumu’ah 62:8)

And He – the Exalted – said:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

“And We revealed to you the Book, with truth, confirming the Scripture that preceded it, and superseding it. So judge between them according with what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires away from what has come to you. For each of you We have assigned a law and a method. Had Allah willed, He could have made you a single nation, but He tests you through what He has given you. So compete in righteousness. To Allah is your return, all of you; then He will inform you about which you disagreed in.” (Al-Maidah)

So from the unthinkable for a sane Muslim is, that he – or anyone else for that matter – will meet Allah and be judged according something else than the laws, rules, obligations, prohibitions, recommendations, warnings, exceptions and excuses of Islām.

If Islām obliged a deed, he will be held accountable for leaving it.

And if Islām prohibited a deed, he will be held accountable for performing it.

And should there be any excuses for leaving the obligatory or performing the forbidden, or should there be any exceptions where an obligation is lifted or a prohibition is removed, then these are only the excuses and exceptions which Islām has made valid, and not those which we make up ourselves.

For verily are self-made excuses in the religion a disease which can afflict the Muslim who is not attentive. He neglects seeking knowledge in issues which are relevant for him and the accursed Shaytān comes to him and inspires him with false excuses which he adopts until they become his opinion in the issue. And thus the *Shari’ah* is forsaken for self-made excuses based upon whims and desires. May Allāh protect us all.

Allāh has given a decisive example to how a self-made excuse is *fitnah* in itself and whoever tries to excuse him-self with an excuse that has no basis in the Islamic Legislation, he has already fallen in *fitnah*.

Allāh – the Exalted – mentions the incident of a man from the hypocrites who tried to excuse him-self from following the Messenger of Allāh (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) in the battle of Tābūk. He – the Exalted - said:

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَقُولُ ائْذِنْ لِّي وَلَا تَقْتَبِنِي ۗ اَلَا فِي الْفِتْنَةِ سَقَطُوا ۗ وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ

”And among them are the one who says: ‘Allow for me (to stay home) and do not put me in *fitnah* (trial).’ Verily, they have already fallen in *fitnah*. And verily is *Jahannam* encompassing of the disbelievers.” (At-Tawbah 9:49)

At-Tabarī – *rahimahullah* – said in his *tafsīr* of this verse:

16788 – حدثنا ابن حميد قال، حدثنا سلمة، عن مُجَدِّ بن إِسْحَاق، عن الزهري، ويزيد بن رومان، وعبد الله بن أبي بكر، وعاصم بن عمر بن قتادة وغيرهم قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ ذات يوم وهو في جهازه، للجد بن قيس أخي بني سلمة: هل لك يا جدُّ العامَّ في جلاذ بني الأصفر؟ فقال: يا رسول الله، أو تأذن لي ولا تفتني، فوالله لقد عرف قومي ما رجل أشدَّ عُجْبًا بالنساء مِنِّي، وإني أخشى إن رأيت نساء بني الأصفر أن لا أصبر عنهن! فأعرض عنه رسول الله ﷺ وقال: قد أذنت لك، ففي الجد بن قيس نزلت هذه الآية: (ومنهم من يقول ائذن لي ولا تفتني)، الآية، أي: إن كان إنما يخشى الفتنة من نساء بني الأصفر وليس ذلك به، فما سقط فيه من الفتنة بتخلفه عن رسول الله ﷺ والرغبة بنفسه عن نفسه، أعظم.

16788 – Ibn Humayd narrated to us and said: Salamah narrated to us, from Muhammad ibn Ishāq, from Az-Zuhrī, from Yazīd ibn Rūmān and ‘Abdullāh ibn Abu Bakr and ‘Āsim ibn ‘Umar ibn Qatādah, and others than them, who said: “*The Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) said one day while he was in his armor, to Al-Jadd ibn Qays, the brother of Banū Salamah: ‘What do you say about fighting Banū Al-Asfar (the romans) this year?’ So he said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh. Allow for me (to stay behind) and do not put me to trial. By Allah, verily do my people know that there is no man more amazed by woman than me, and I verily fear that if I see the women of the romans then I will not be able to have patience from them.’ So the Messenger of Allah (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) turned away from him and said: ‘I have verily allowed for you (to stay behind).’ So regarding Al-Jadd ibn Qays this verse was revealed: “Allow for me (to stay home) and do not put me in fitnah (trial).” Until the rest of the verse. Which means: If he really feared the fitnah of the women of the romans – and (in reality) he did not fear it – then what he fell*

in of fitnah of staying behind from the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) and him preferring his life over his (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) life, is much bigger.”

And the answer and solution for Al-Jadd ibn Qays was to look into what Islām said about the issue and then force his soul to be pleased with that and implement that in himself. Allāh – the Exalted – says about those who are allowed to remain behind:

لَيْسَ عَلَى الضُّعَفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَىٰ وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (91) وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا أَتَوْكَ لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ قُلْتَ لَا أَجِدُ مَا أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ تَوَلَّوْا وَأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا يَجِدُوا مَا يُنْفِقُونَ

“There is no blame upon the weak, nor upon the sick, nor upon those who cannot find what to spend, when they are sincere towards Allah and His Messenger. There is no ground (for complaint) upon those who do good. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. Nor (is there any blame) upon those who come to you to be provided with mounts. (And when) you said: ‘I do not find what to carry you upon’, they turn away and their eyes are filled with tears in sorrow over that they don’t have anything to spend.”

(At-Tawbah 9:91-92)

So as long as Al-Jadd ibn Qays cannot find himself in the types of people mentioned in these verses, then he must know that the obligation of following the Messenger (sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam) is still applying for him. Yet he listened to the Shaytān and took his advice and made an excuse for himself which only increased him in misguidance and farness from Allāh.

And so it is with every self-made excuse in every issue of the religion. Whoever adopts an excuse which exempts him from performing the obligatory or avoiding the forbidden and this excuse is not in accordance with the Qurān and *Sunnah* with the understanding of the *Salaf*, then his opinion is misguidance and will bring along nothing good. And he is inevitably sinning by neglecting an obligatory act or performing something forbidden based upon lust and desire.

This religion has been completed by the Owner of Divine Wisdom, Who knows while we do not know.

Allah the Exalted says:

الر كِتَابٌ أُحْكِمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ

“Alif-Lām-Rā. (This is) a Book whose verses has been perfected, and then explained in detail by One who is All-Wise, All-Aware.” (Hūd 11:1)

And He – the Exalted – said:

وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“And perhaps do you hate something while it is good for you, and perhaps do you love something while it is bad for you. And Allah knows while you do not know.”
(Al-Baqarah 2:216)

So every issue – along with its excuses and exceptions – has been explained in sufficient details for the slaves. It is only for us to investigate whatever is relevant for our own situation in order to worship Allāh upon knowledge and evidence, and not upon ignorance and whims and desires.

And among the examples in which a believer may apply these self-made excuses while they in reality are not applicable could be among the following:

Postponing the prayer without a valid excuse:

Some people delay the prayer beyond its prescribed time, under the excuse that they cannot pray at work, or during travel or due to other circumstances which Allāh has not made an excuse for not praying on time.

Allāh – the Exalted – said:

فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوَاتِ فَسُوفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غِيًّا

“Then after them came successors who neglected the prayer and followed desires; so they are going to meet evil.” (Maryam 19:59)

Ibn Kathīr mentions in his *tafsīr* of the verse:

وَقَالَ الْأَوْزَاعِيُّ عَنْ مُوسَى بْنِ سُلَيْمَانَ عَنْ الْقَاسِمِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ فِي قَوْلِهِ " فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ " قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَضَاعُوا الْمَوَاقِيتَ وَلَوْ كَانَ تَرْكًا كَانَ كُفْرًا

"Al-Awzā'ī said, from Mūsā ibn Sulaymān, from Al-Qāsim ibn Mukhayrah regarding His words: "Then after them came successors who neglected the prayer." He said: "They verily neglected the prescribed times. And if it meant (them) leaving it, then this had been kufr."

وَقَالَ وَكَيْعَ عَنِ الْمَسْعُودِيِّ عَنِ الْقَاسِمِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ وَالْحَسَنِ بْنِ سَعِيدٍ عَنِ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ أَنَّهُ قِيلَ لَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُكْثِرُ ذِكْرَ الصَّلَاةِ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ " وَ " عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ " وَ " عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ " فَقَالَ ابْنُ مَسْعُودٍ عَلَى مُوَافِقَتِهَا قَالُوا مَا كُنَّا نَرَى ذَلِكَ إِلَّا عَلَى التَّرْكِ قَالَ ذَلِكَ الْكُفْرُ

And Wakī' said, from Al-Mas'ūdī from Al-Qāsim ibn 'Abdur-Rahmān and Al-Hasan ibn Sa'īd, from Ibn Mas'ūd that it was said to him: 'Verily Allāh mentions the prayer a lot in the Qurān: "Those who delay their prayer from their fixed times." (Al-Mā'un 107:5) And: "Those who remain constant in their prayers." (Al-Ma'ārij 70:23) And: "Those who guard their prayers well." (Al-Ma'ārij 70:34). So Ibn Mas'ūd said: '(That is) in their prescribed times.' They said: 'We used to think this was about leaving (the prayer).' He said: 'That (i.e. leaving the prayer) is kufr.'

وَقَالَ مَسْرُوقٌ : لَا يُحَافِظُ أَحَدٌ عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ الْحُمُسِ فَيُكْتَبُ مِنَ الْعَافِلِينَ وَفِي إِفْرَاطِهِنَّ الْهَلَكَةُ وَإِفْرَاطُهُنَّ إِضَاعَتُهُنَّ عَنْ وَقْتِهِنَّ

And Masrūq said: 'A person does not guard his five prayers, so he is written among the neglectful. And in the negligence of them is the destruction. And the negligence of them is neglecting their prescribed times.'

وَقَالَ الْأَوْزَاعِيُّ عَنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ يَزِيدٍ : إِنَّ عُمَرَ بْنَ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ قَرَأَ " فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوَاتِ فَسُوفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غِيًّا " ثُمَّ قَالَ لَمْ تَكُنْ إِضَاعَتُهُمْ تَرْكُهَا وَلَكِنْ أَضَاعُوا الْوَقْتَ

And Al-Awzā'ī said, from Ibrāhīm ibn Yazīd, that 'Umar ibn Abdul-'Azīz recited: "Then after them came successors who neglected the prayer and followed desires; so they are going to meet evil." Then he said: 'Their negligence of them was not leaving them, rather they neglected the time.'" (Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr – Sūrah Maryam)

Allāh did not make work, travelling, disease and not even fear an excuse for postponing the prayer beyond its time, and He – the Exalted – provided his slaves with easy solutions for the traveller, the one who has fear and the sick person. So let the attentive slave make sure he is not included in the words of Allah:

فَسُوفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غِيًّا

"So they are going to meet evil." (Maryam 19:59)

The scholars disagreed regarding the meaning of the word *ghay* (evil) which has been used in this verse. Some said it means a river in *Jahannam*, some said a well in *Jahannam*, some said it means destruction, while others said it means evil. May Allāh protect us from it all, *āmīn*.

Delaying the performance of *Hajj* when one is capable

Some people delay the performance of *Hajj* while being perfectly capable of this, under the excuse of not being able to leave work, or leave the kids, not feeling ready in their religious state and other excuses which have no basis in the Islamic Legislation. Allah – the Exalted – said:

وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

“And mankind owe to Allāh *Hajj Al-Bayt* (a pilgrimage to Makkah), whoever is capable of finding a way thereto. And whoever disbelieves (in this), then Allāh has no need for Al-‘Ālamīn (mankind, jinn and everything that exists).” (Āli ‘Imrān 3:97)

And Ibn ‘Abbās (*radiAllāhu ‘anhu*) narrated that the Prophet (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) said:

مَنْ أَرَادَ الْحَجَّ فَلْيَتَعَجَّلْ

“Whoever wants to perform *Hajj*, then let him hurry up (before something happens which will prevent him).” (Musnad Imām Ahmad, and its *isnād* is *sahīh*)

At-Tabarī mentions in his *tafsīr* of the abovementioned verse:

5919 – حدثنا يحيى بن أبي طالب , قال : أخبرنا يزيد , قال : أخبرنا جويبر , عن الضحاك في قوله : { من استطاع إليه سبيلا } قال : الزاد والراحلة , فإن كان شابا صحيحا ليس له مال , فعليه أن يؤاجر نفسه بأكله وعقبه حتى يقضي حجته . فقال له قائل : كلف الله الناس أن يمشوا إلى البيت ؟ فقال : لو أن لبعضهم ميراثا بمكة أكان تاركه ؟ والله لانطلق إليه ولو حبوا! كذلك يجب عليه الحج

“5919 – *Yahyā ibn Abū Tālib* narrated to us and said: *Yazīd* narrated to us and said: *Juwaybir* informed us, from *Ad-Dahhāk* (who said) regarding His words: **“Whoever is capable of finding a way thereto.”** He said: ‘(This means) provisions and transport. So if he is a young and healthy man and he doesn’t have money, then it is upon him to only spend on food and living (i.e. to save) in order for him to perform his *Hajj*. So someone said to him: ‘Did Allāh oblige upon the people to

walk to the House (i.e. Ka'bah)?' So he said: 'If some of them would have some inheritance in Makkah, would he then leave it? By Allāh, he would go to it, even crawling. Likewise is Hajj obligatory for him.'" (Tafsīr At-Tabarī – Sūrah Āli 'Imrān)

So a person should not gamble with this act of worship, which is one of the pillars of Islām. Rather he should perform it as soon as possible before something befalls him which prevents him from going, in which case he has to prepare an answer to Allah as to why he did not perform Hajj when he was capable.

Backbiting

Many people indulge in backbiting their Muslims brother and sisters, for reasons which has no basis in Islām. This could be a person's mistakes, his appearance, his situations, personal grudges, disagreeing in the religion in issues where the disagreement is allowed. And some people think it is not backbiting as long as what you are saying is true. Others say: 'I am willing to say these things to his face if I see him', and by this they think the backbiting is justified.

The Prophet (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) said:

أَتَدْرُونَ مَا الْعِيْبَةُ؟ قَالُوا: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ، قَالَ: ذِكْرُكَ أَخَاكَ بِمَا يَكْرَهُ قِيلَ: أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ فِي أَخِي مَا أَقُولُ؟ قَالَ: إِنْ كَانَ فِيهِ مَا تَقُولُ فَقَدْ اغْتَبْتَهُ، وَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِيهِ مَا تَقُولُ فَقَدْ بَهْتَّهُ

"Do you know what backbiting is? They said: 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' He said: 'That you mention your brother by what he hates (to hear).' It was said: 'What if what I am saying about my brother is true?' He said: 'If it is true then you have verily backbitten him, and if it is not true then you have invented a lie against him.'" (Sahīh Muslim)

And both backbiting and inventing lies against a Muslim man or woman are forbidden. So for every word, which is said about a person behind his back – of negative words which he does not like to her – then it is considered backbiting and if not the expiation of this is performed, then the backbitten person will be allowed to take from the good deeds of the backbiter on the Day of Judgment.

Ibn Taymiyyah said on this issue:

وَمَنْ ظَلَمَ إِنْسَانًا فَقَذَفَهُ أَوْ اغْتَابَهُ أَوْ شَتَمَهُ ثُمَّ تَابَ قَبِيلَ اللَّهِ تَوْبَتَهُ ، لَكِنْ إِنْ عَرَفَ الْمَظْلُومُ مَكْنَهُ مِنْ أَخَذِ حَقِّهِ ، وَإِنْ قَذَفَهُ أَوْ اغْتَابَهُ وَلَمْ يَبْلُغْهُ فَبِهِ قَوْلَانِ لِلْعُلَمَاءِ هُمَا رَوَايَتَانِ عَنْ أَحْمَدَ : أَحْسَنُهُمَا أَنَّهُ لَا يَعْلَمُهُ أَنِّي اغْتَابْتُكَ ، وَقَدْ قِيلَ : بَلْ يَحْسُنُ إِلَيْهِ فِي غَيْبَتِهِ كَمَا أَسَاءُ إِلَيْهِ فِي غَيْبَتِهِ ؛ كَمَا قَالَ الْحَسَنُ الْبَصْرِيُّ : كَفَّارَةُ الْغَيْبَةِ أَنْ تَسْتَغْفِرَ لِمَنْ اغْتَابَتْهُ .

“And whoever makes injustice towards a person by slandering him, or backbiting him, or cursing him and then repents then Allah will accept his repentance. But if the wronged one knows about it, then this makes it possible for him to take his right. But if he slanders him or backbites him and this does not reach him, then there are two opinions, and they are two narrations from Ahmad: The most correct of them is that he does not let him know that he spoke bad about him behind his back. And it was verily said: He should rather show goodness toward him in his absence just like he did him wrong in his absence. Just as Al-Hasan Al-Basrī said: ‘The expiation for backbiting is to ask for forgiveness for the one whom you have backbitten.’” (Majmū’ Al-Fatāwā 3/291)

The *Sharī’ah* has only allowed speaking negatively about a person in his absence in six cases:

1. If a person complains to an authority about an injustice made to him, in order for the authority to rectify the issue, then this is not considered backbiting.
2. If a person is only known by a bad name, then using this name about him is not considered backbiting, such as Al-A’mash (blear-eyed).
3. If a person warns other people about a person who has a wrong ‘*aqīdah*, or he is a cheater, then this is not considered backbiting.
4. If a person sins in public and he doesn’t care if people see him or knows about his sins, then it is not considered backbiting to expose him and warn about him.
5. If a person asks for *fatwā* and describes the situation which he is asking about and it contains some information about a person, then this is not considered backbiting.
6. If a person asks for help in stopping a wrongdoing or removing a harm of a third person or some people, then this is not considered backbiting.

So remember, that if you find yourself mentioning the faults and mistakes of a Muslim in his absence, and none of the abovementioned scenarios are applicable to your situation, then you have fallen in backbiting and the best thing for you to do is repent to Allah, and also ask Allah for forgiveness for the one that you have backbitten. Or else this will meet you on the Day of Judgment, where nothing from us will be hidden.

Speaking to the opposite sex

It is definitely also worth mentioning those on a regular basis speak to the opposite sex, or meet in private or chat in private under self-made excuses such as: 'I have to teach him/her about Islām', or 'She doesn't have a *wālī*', or 'I was only asking him/her about advice in religion', and other invalid excuses which Allah and His Messenger (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) has not made valid reasons for speaking to the opposite sex in private.

The Messenger (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) said:

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلَا يَخْلُونَ بِامْرَأَةٍ لَيْسَ مَعَهَا ذُو مَحْرَمٍ مِنْهَا ، فَإِنَّ تَالِثَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ

“Whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day, then let him not under any circumstances be alone with a woman who do not have with her someone who is her mahram. Because verily the Shaytān is the third among them.” (Narrated by Ahmad – Classified Sahīh by Al-Hākim and Adh-Dhahabī agreed with him)

So whoever has found an argument in Islām in which they are excepted from the prohibition of the Messenger of Allāh (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) then let them bring it forth, or else they should stop what they are doing and fear Allāh!!

So beware, and then again be aware of self-made excuses based upon the whispering of Shaytān, lust and desires.

For everything you do, Islām has already clarified how to do it, what is allowed in it and what is not. And every time a person does something then it is his own responsibility to investigate the rules in the given matter.

First and foremost, whoever says *Lā ilāha illa Allāh Muhammadu RasulAllāh*, then it is his responsibility to seek knowledge about the meaning of these two testimonies – which the whole religion is built upon – and what they necessitate of beliefs and deeds, and what invalidates them.

Likewise, whoever worships Allāh, then it is his responsibility to seek knowledge about the worship so he performs it in a correct manner. Whoever prays, then it is his responsibility to seek knowledge about the prayer so he performs it in a correct manner and in the correct times. Whoever performs *Hajj*, then it is his responsibility to seek knowledge about the *Hajj* so he performs it in a correct manner and in due time. Whoever becomes a spouse, a father, a mother, a brother, a *wālī*, a divorcee or something similar to

this, then it is his responsibility to seek knowledge about the rights of the people so he fulfills them in a correct manner. Whoever acquires money and wealth, then it is his responsibility to seek knowledge about the *zakāh*, so he pays what is due upon him. And whoever deals with the wealth of others, then it is his responsibility to seek knowledge about the wealth of others so he does not perform injustice to them in this. And so it continues with everything the slave does.

And we should not think that because we convinced ourselves that our self-made excuses are valid, that they then become valid with Allāh. Rather, this only increases us in sin, transgression and ignorance towards our Lord. Allāh – the Exalted – said:

أَمْ لِلْإِنْسَانِ مَا تَمَنَّى (24) فَلِلَّهِ الْآخِرَةُ وَالْأُولَى

“Or will the human have as he wishes? Rather both the next life and the first belongs to Allah.” (An-Najm 53:24-25)

And the Shaytān – may the curse of Allāh be upon him – will naturally be there to remind us about this when it is already too late. Verily does Allāh – the Exalted – inform us about the speech of the Shaytān given to the people on the Day of Judgment, when He said:

وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعَدَ الْحَقُّ وَوَعَدْتُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُمْ وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي فَلَا تَلُومُونِي وَلُومُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ

“And the Shaytān said, when the matter has been decided: ‘Verily Allah promised you a promise of truth, and I also promised you, but I broke my promise. I did not have any authority over you, except that I invited you and you answered me. So do not blame me, rather blame yourselves.’” (Ibrāhīm 14:22)

This reminder does not in any way suffice as an answer to all those things in which we find non-valid excuses for ourselves, and thereby becomes sinners an unjust towards ourselves. Rather it is an advice for the slave to discipline his soul to seek the relevant knowledge in the relevant places, so that everything he does is based upon knowledge and evidence. And furthermore to discipline and force his soul not to be satisfied or at rest with anything except this, even though that might be hard.

Sufyān Ath-Thawrī – *rahimahullāh* – said:

مَا عَاجَلْتُ شَيْئًا قَطُّ أَشَدَّ عَلَيَّ مِنْ نَفْسِي , مَرَّةً عَلَيَّ , وَمَرَّةً لِي

“I have never dealt with anything harder for me than my own soul. Sometimes it is against me and sometimes it is with me.” (As-Siyar 7/258)

We ask Allah for beneficial knowledge, a good provision and deeds that will be accepted.
Allāhumma āmīn.

Abū Hājar