

Examining Others with Suspicion

Allah, the Almighty, says in Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا • (حجرات 49:12)

O believers! Avoid immoderate suspicion, for in some cases suspicion is a sin. Do not spy on one another.

In this verse, three attitudes are forbidden: One is suspicion, second is spying i.e. trying to find out the weaknesses of other people and the third one is backbiting.

اسلام اور دور جدید کی تبدیلیاں۔ معاشرے مستقل تبدیلی کا شکار رہا کرتے ہیں۔ بے ثبات اس زمانے میں اک تغیر کو۔ موجودہ دور میں ہماری فکر میں کیا تبدیلیاں وقوع پذیر ہو رہی ہیں۔ ان تبدیلیوں کے اثرات ہمارے معاشروں پر رونما ہو رہے ہیں۔ مصنف نے ان تبدیلیوں کا اسلام کے نقطہ نظر سے جائزہ لیا ہے۔

Quran firstly asked, “Avoid immoderate suspicion”. Then it described the reason that “in some cases, suspicion is a sin.” It means that every suspicion is not a sin. Therefore, it is essential for those, who hear this commandment, to investigate that which kind of suspicion is a sin in order to avoid it. They should keep away from all types of suspicion unless it is confirmed that any specific kind of suspicion is not a sin.... Qurtabi (a famous commentator of Quran) said that suspicion means false blame i.e. blaming a person for a weakness or sin without having solid evidence.

Prophet (صلی اللہ علیہ وآلہ وسلم) said, “Be aware of suspicion because it is the most misleading thing.” By consensus, suspicion means thinking negatively about any other person without having solid evidence....

It is one of the greatest sins that a man should curse his parents. The man abuses the father of another man and the latter abuses the father of the former. Prophet Muhammad (صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم)

It is famous that “Suspicion is care”. It means that a person should be careful in his / her dealings. Without having a trustworthy relationship, (s)he should not give his / her belongings to another person. It does not mean that one should consider the other person a thief and start humiliating him. We conclude that we should be careful without considering the other person a thief or a dishonest one.

The second forbidden behavior in this verse is spying on others. The term ‘spying’ means trying to find other’s weaknesses.... This verse tells us that we can evaluate a person on his / her apparent personality. It is unlawful to search for hidden weaknesses of a person. Prophet (صلی اللہ علیہ وآلہ وسلم) said:

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لا تغتابوا المسلمين ولا تتبعوا عوراتهم. فان من اتبع عوراتهم يتبع الله عورته و من يتبع الله عورته يفضحه في بيته.
(قرطبي)

Do not conduct backbiting of other Muslims and do not try to find their hidden weaknesses, because the person who tries to find other's weaknesses, the God finds his / her weaknesses. The person, whose weaknesses are evaluated by the God, will lose respect inside his / her own home.

Listening others' talk secretly or while listening others' talk by creating an impression of sleeping is included in 'spying'. [Similarly looking at other's documents, emails etc. is also included in it.]

If a person expects that someone will harm him or others, and (s)he tries to get information about his hidden plans, then it is lawful.

(Excerpts from "Maarif-ul-Quran" of Mufti Muhammad Shafi. Selection & Translation: Mubashir Nazir)

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Think about it!

- Identify three reasons for the attitude of examining others with suspicion.
- Ask yourself whether you examine others with suspicion. No need to submit the answer. If you like, please share a bitter experience from your life when someone had examined you with suspicion and you felt it bad.

Please send your answers through email to post your comments on this web page.