

'7 Tips to Guard Your Tongue'

How to Safeguard the Tongue

We often speak without thinking, and that can make us forget how serious our words can be. Many people think they don't gossip or speak badly about others, but these habits can be more harmful than we realize.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ said:

"Do you know who is truly poor?" The Companions responded, "A poor man among us is one who has neither dirham nor wealth."

The Prophet ﷺ replied, *"The poor of my Ummah will be those who come on the Day of Resurrection with prayers, fasts, and Zakat but find themselves bankrupt because they insulted others, spread falsehoods, consumed others' wealth unlawfully, shed blood, and beat others. Their virtues will be credited to those they wronged, and if their good deeds fall short, the sins of those they wronged will be transferred to them, resulting in their being thrown into the Hell-Fire."* (Sahih Muslim)

Using our tongues to harm others can leave us with nothing on the Day of Judgment.

Prevention is better than cure. Here are some effective tips to save ourselves from these sins:

1. Control Your Anger

The Prophet ﷺ said, *"Do not treat people but in the way you would love to be treated by them."* (Musnad Ahmad, sahih).

The number one reason of people getting into the sins of the tongue is their anger. Anger is one of the evil whispers of Shaytaan, which leads to so many evils and tragedies, of which only Allaah knows their full extent. Abu Hurayrah, may Allaah be pleased with him, reported that a man said to the Prophet ﷺ, "Advise me." He ﷺ said, *"Do not become angry."* The man repeated his request several times, and each time the Prophet ﷺ told him, *"Do not become angry."* (Sahih Bukhari)

According to another report, the man said: "I thought about what the Prophet ﷺ said, and I realized that anger combines all kinds of evil." (Musnad Ahmad, 5/373)

For this reason, Islam has a great deal to say about this bad characteristic, and the Prophet ﷺ prescribed cures for this "disease" and ways to limit its effects, the ways mentioned in the Sunnah are

- *Seeking refuge with Allaah from the Shaytaan : 'A'oodhu Billahi min al-Shaytan ir-rajeem'* (Sahih Bukhari)
- *Keeping silent* (Imaam Ahmad, sahih).

This is because in most cases, the angry person loses self-control and could utter words of kufr/disbelief (from which we seek refuge with Allaah), or curses, or the word of divorce (talaah) which would destroy his home, or words of slander which would bring him the enmity and hatred of others. So, in short, keeping silent is the solution which helps one to avoid all that.

Anger Management

The Prophet ﷺ has taught us how anger is to be managed.

a) Changing position

The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said: *"If any of you becomes angry and he is standing, let him sit down, so his anger will go away; if it does not go away, let him lie down."* Among the benefits of this advice given by the Prophet ﷺ is the fact that it prevents the angry person from going out of control, because he could strike and injure someone, or he could destroy possessions and so on. Sitting down makes it less likely that he will become overexcited, and lying down makes it even less likely that he will do something crazy or harmful that he would later regret.

b) Do not become angry and Paradise will be yours

The Prophet ﷺ said,

"Do not be angry and you will enter Paradise." (al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ, sahih according to Al-Albani)

"Whoever controls his anger at the time when he has the means to act upon it, Allaah will fill his heart with contentment on the Day of Resurrection." (al-Tabaraani, sahih).

"Whoever controls his anger at the time when he has the means to act upon it, Allaah will call him before all of mankind on the Day of Resurrection, and will let him choose of the Hur al-'Iyn whoever he wants." (Abu Dawud, and others, hasan).

Remembering what Allaah has promised to the righteous (muttaqeen) who keep away from the causes of anger and struggle within themselves to control it, is one of the most effective ways of extinguishing the flames of anger.

2. Speak Good or Remain Silent

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or else keep silent ..."*

1. Remember these beautiful words of the Prophet ﷺ and either speak good or keep quiet.
2. Stay away from foul language, cussing, evil words or slander & insulting someone,, because YOU are a Mu'min and a Mumin does not utter filthy words or cuss at anyone or slander.

How not to Argue

The Messenger of Allaah – ﷺ – said; *“I guarantee a house in lowest parts of Jannah for the one who leaves off argument even when he is right, and a house in the middle part of Jannah for the one who leaves off lying even if hes just joking, and a house in the highest part of Jannah for the one with good manners”* (Abu Dawud, classed as Sahih)

Unfortunately, majority of the times the first thing we see our youth do after gaining a little bit of knowledge are GET INTO ARGUMENTS or start with refuting everyone from parents to scholars. The shaitaan tricks them to believe that this act of theirs is an Ibaadah when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned us by saying, *“No people go astray after being guided except that they indulge in arguments.”* Then the Prophet ﷺ recited the verse, *{They strike an example for you only to argue. Rather, they are a quarrelsome people.}* (Qur’an 43:58) [Sunan At-Tirmidhi]

If you want to discuss with someone about Islam who you have a difference of opinion with, then I recommend you establish these three facts before you guys start: -

First and foremost remember that you guys are doing this for the sake of Allah and there is no winner or looser in this. If you keep this in mind you will always have fruitful discussions and as a matter of fact these can be win-win situation by all means.

- Either you will learn something from him/her.
- Or he/she will learn something from you.
- Or you keep quite even if you are right and be amongst those who the Prophet ﷺ guaranteed a house in Jannah to.

3. Eliminate Bad Company

Equally important is to stay away from people who speak bad language, or those who slander and gossip a lot. Because the more you hear it, the more desensitized one becomes to its evil, until a time comes when it's not bad anymore.

Avoid people who instigate gossip. Surround yourself with those who encourage good behavior because, as the saying goes, birds of a feather flock together.

4. Remind Yourself of the Consequences of Backbiting

Many of us are aware that backbiting is likened to eating the flesh of a dead person.

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful.” (Al-Hujurat, 49:12)

Before backbiting, take a moment to consider the revolting nature of this act.

Expiation of Gheebah

Everyone who does any kind of backbiting, slander or malicious gossip has to repent and pray for forgiveness, and that is between him and Allaah. If he knows that any of his words reached the person about whom he was speaking, then he should go to him and ask him to forgive him. But if he does not know, then he should not tell him; rather he should pray for forgiveness for him and make du'a (supplication) for him, and speak well of him in his absence just as he spoke against him. Similarly, if he knows that telling him will provoke more enmity, then it is sufficient to make du'a for him, speak well of him and pray for forgiveness for him.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *“Whoever has wronged his brother with regard to his honour or anything else, let him seek his forgiveness today, before there will be no dinar and no dirham, and if he has any good deeds to his credit they will be taken from him in a manner commensurate with the wrong he did, and if he has no good deeds, then some of his counterpart’s bad deeds will be taken and added to his burden.”* [al-Bukhaari].

5. Dhikr

If a person turns away from the truth, seeking knowledge and does not engage his tongue with remembrance of Allaah, his tongue will be engrossed with matters besides it such as backbiting, slander, mockery, lies and obscene language. This is because the slave cannot but speak. Thus, if he does not speak with the remembrance of Allaah and of His commands, he will speak of these things.

Ibn al-Qayyim says: “For the tongue does not keep quiet at all. It is either a tongue that remembers or a tongue that is frivolous and it has to be one of these two.

It is the (nature of the) soul; if you do not preoccupy it with truth, it will occupy you with falsehood. It is the nature of the heart; if you do not accommodate it with love of Allah, it will dwell with love of creation and this is a certain reality. It is the (nature of the) tongue, if you do not preoccupy it with remembrance, it will most definitely occupy you with frivolity.

Thus, choose for your own self one of the two courses and confer upon it one of the two standings.” [Al-Waabil as-Sayyib, pages 166- 167 and also see page 87]

6. Do Not Assume Things About Others

Assumptions can lead to harmful rumours and societal discord. For example:

“I think she has an affair because she is always online late at night.”

“I’m not sure, but I think they’re going to get divorced.”

“I guess their income is haram.”

7. Verify the News Before Sharing

Whether in real life or online, we often encounter mere rumours. It's crucial for Muslims to filter out spam and verify information.

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.” (Al-Hujurat, 49:6)

BEING PATIENT & FORBEARING

The Prophet ﷺ said: *“...if anyone insults him or wants to fight him, let him say, I am fasting.”* (Bukhari). This is teaching us patience and forbearance while we are fasting but something that we should learn to implement throughout our lives.

The Muslim is the brother of his fellow Muslim; he loves for him of good what he loves for himself, and he hates for him of evil what he hates for himself.

Undoubtedly there is no one among us who does not make mistakes and fall short, and does not wrong other people or transgress their rights to some extent; each of us would like people to forgive him for all the wrongs he has done to them, so that they will not ask for restitution thereof on the Day of Resurrection, which is the time when he will be most in need of his good deeds.

Allah, may He be exalted, urges us in His Book to forgive people and be patient with their annoyance, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

- *“Who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good”* (Aal 'Imraan 3:134)
- *“If [instead] you show [some] good or conceal it or pardon an offense - indeed, Allah is ever Pardoning and Competent”* (an-Nisaa' 4:149)
- *“And if you punish [an enemy, O believers], punish with an equivalent of that with which you were harmed. But if you are patient - it is better for those who are patient”* (an-Nahl 16:126)
- *“And whoever is patient and forgives - indeed, that is of the matters [requiring] determination”* (ash-Shoora 42:43)
- *“But if you pardon and overlook and forgive - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful”* (at-Taghaabun 64:14).

This is something that is also mentioned a great deal in the Sunnah. Muslim (4689) narrated from The Prophet ﷺ said:

- *“...No one forgives, but Allah increases him in honour...”* (Sahih Muslim)
- *“There is no man who suffers an injury to his body, then he forgives [the one who caused it] as an act of charity, but Allah will absolve his sins commensurate with the extent of his charity.”* (Ahmad, classed as saheeh by al-Albaani).
- *“There are three things concerning which, by the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, I would certainly swear an oath: wealth does not decrease because of charity, so*

give charity; no man pardons another for some mistreatment, seeking thereby the pleasure of Allah, but Allah will raise him in status thereby; and no one asks of people but Allah will increase him in poverty." (Ahmad, classed as saheeh by al-Albaani).

- *"Show mercy, and you will be shown mercy; forgive, and Allah will forgive you."* (Ahmd, classed as saheeh by al-Albaani).

When Mistah ibn Uthaathah indulged in gossip during the slander incident, and Allah sent down revelation confirming the innocence of 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), Abu Bakr, who had been spending on Mistah because he was his relative and was poor, said: By Allah, I shall never spend anything on Mistah again after what he said about 'Aa'ishah. Then Allah revealed the words (interpretation of the meaning):

"And let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give [aid] to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of Allah, and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" [an-Noor 24:22].

Abu Bakr said: Yes indeed, by Allah, I would like Allah to forgive me. So he resumed spending on Mistah as he used to do, and he said: By Allah, I shall never deprive him of it. (This hadith was narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim).

Undoubtedly Allah does not bestow such a great characteristic upon anyone except the elite and best of His creation. The Muslim should take the righteous as his example. What could be more difficult than having a poor relative on whom you spend and whom you treat kindly, then he casts aspersions on your honour by speaking ill of it? Yet despite that, Abu Bakr resumed spending on Mistah (may Allah be pleased with them both) and swore that he would never stop doing so. This can only be due to his purity of heart and his love of doing good, pardoning and forgiving, otherwise he would not have sworn to never stop spending on him.

One of the best ways in which a Muslim can help himself to bear with patience whatever befalls him of annoyance and mistreatment from other people is to think of his own shortcomings in his duties towards Allah, and how much he would like Allah to pardon him and conceal his faults. This is how Allah, may He be exalted, encouraged Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq to forgive Mistah, as He said: "and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful". In other words, deal with people on the basis of pardoning and overlooking, as you would like them to treat you in the same manner, for the reward is of the same nature as the deed.

Hence Allah, may He be exalted, promised the one who would behave in this manner (forgiving people) a high status, for his reward is due from Allah. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): *"but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation - his reward is [due] from Allah"* (ash-Shoora 42:40).

One of the greatest means that will help the Muslim to free his heart of grudges and rancour is to be keen to show sincerity towards the Muslims in general, and to do that for the sake of Allah, because he knows that Allah is pleased with that and loves it.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *"The gates of Paradise will be opened on Mondays and on Thursdays, and every servant [of Allah] who associates nothing with Allah will be forgiven, except for the man who*

has a grudge against his brother. [About them] it will be said: Delay these two until they are reconciled; delay these two until they are reconciled". (Sahih Muslim, also by Malik & Abu Dawud).

Also, once a man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: "O Messenger of Allaah, I have relatives with whom I try to keep in touch, but they cut me off; I treat them well, but they treat me badly; I try to be kind to them, but they are cruel to me." He ﷺ said: *"If you are as you say, it is as if you are putting hot ashes in their mouths. You will continue to have support from Allaah against them so long as you continue doing that."* (Sahih Muslim)

How good is the believer's condition, as he has a sound heart and is sincere to the people around him, and he calls them to Allah, bears their annoyance with patience and forgives them, and when he goes to bed he has no resentment or rancour in his heart towards anyone. It is sufficient reward for patience that the patient person will be given his reward without measure on the Day of Resurrection.

“Guard your tongue O mankind

And do not let it bite you, for indeed it is a snake

How many people in the graveyards are there, who were killed by their tongues

Whoever fears meeting Him (on the Day of Judgement) is truly the brave one.”

May Allah give us the Hidayah to get our hearts attached to things that are allowed and stay away from the Haram things.

TIPS FOR THE TEST

- Do not have to memorise the ayahs or hadeeths word for word and their references, but remember their meanings and the msg being given.
- Remember the Sins and their warning.