

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

We seek forgiveness from Allah

We stand witness to Allah that there is no God but Him

That Muhammad (saww) is his slave and messenger

Diseases of the soul: Backbiting (Ghibah)

Definitions of ghibah

- The lexicologist Al-Jawhari makes a distinction between *ghibah* and *buhtan*. If someone says anything about an absent person that would have stressed him if he had heard it then this is referred to as *ghibah*, as long as what was said about the absent person was in fact true. However, this is referred to as *buhtan* or slander if what was said about the absent person was in fact false.
- The above definition is consistent with the following hadith of the Prophet (saaw):
Abu Dzar (ra) once asked the Prophet Muhammad (saaw): “*O Messenger of Allah, what is ghibah?*” . He replied: “*It is to mention about your brother that which he detests.*”
Abu Dzar (ra) said: “*O Messenger of Allah, what if that which is mentioned of him should actually be in him?*” . He (saaw) replied: “*Know that when you mention that which is in him, you have committed his ghibah, and when you mention that which is not in him, then you have slandered him.*” [Al-Hurr al-`Amili, *Wasai' al-Shi`ah*, vol. 8, hadith no. 16312]
- The researcher Shaykh Zayn al-Din Ali (also known as al-Shahid al-Thani) in his *Kashf al-Ribah `an Akham al-Ghibah* has given two definitions of ghibah. The first definition is as follows:
“*It is the mention of a person in his absence, ascribing to him something whose ascription he rinds detestable and which is generally considered as harmful (to one’s reputation), with the intention of impairing (his reputation) and disparaging him.*”
The second definition is:
“*(Ghibah involves) informing about something whose ascription to one is regarded as detestable by him.*”

Note that the second definition is more general than the first one. In the first definition the Arabic word *dzikr* is used which is taken to mean *oral mention*. However, in the second definition the Arabic word *tanbih* is used which has a wider meaning and includes *speech, writing, narration, and other forms of communication*.
- The general character of ghibah is also understandable from a hadith narrated by A'isha herself. A'isha says: “*A woman came to visit us, and when she turned to go away I made a gesture by my hand that she is short of height. Thereupon, he (Prophet Mohammad – saaw) said: ‘You have committed her ghibah.’*”
Hence it is clear from the hadith that ghibah is not limited to linguistic expression but applies to all kind of communication.

Surah Humaza

- In Surah Humaza 104:1, Allah swt says:
Woe unto every backbiter, slanderer

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ

The above verse refers to those who sting others with their *speech, behaviour, mimicry, or sarcasm* at their backs or in front of them. They mock them and defame them with evil motives.

The Arabic terms *humazah* and *lumazah*, both, are in 'the intensive amplification form'. The term *humazah* is based on *hamz* which originally means 'to break', and since backbiters and slanderers break the personality of others, the term *humazah* is used for them. The term *lumazah* is derived from *lamz* with the meaning of 'to backbite' and 'defame'. Commentators are divided in saying that these two terms refer to one meaning, 'backbiters', and therefore, these two are mentioned for emphasis; or there may be a difference between them. But, some have said that the term *humazah* means 'backbiter' and *lumazah* means 'fault-finder'. Further, some others believe that the term *humazah* means 'those who make innuendos with their hands and face when trying to find faults in others', and *lumazah* is meant for 'those who do this action with their tongues'. [The Light of Holy Qur'an]

Surah Hujuraat 49:12

- In Surah Hujuraat 49:12 Allah swt says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْنَاهُ وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

○ believers eschew much suspicion; some suspicion is a sin;
And do not spy, neither backbite one another;
Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his brother dead?
You would abominate it. And fear you God;
Assuredly God turns, and He is All-compassionate.

- In the above verse, Allah has likened *ghibah* to being tantamount to eating the flesh of one's own brother. Thus by perpetrating *ghibah* one does not only break the reputation of the other person, but at the same time one commits a crime which is as bad as eating the flesh of one's dead brother. This verse gives us an indication of how low the disease of *ghibah* is in the eyes of the Almighty.
- When *ghibah* is done, the person in question is not present to defend himself, and hence the victim is analogous to a dead person. The perpetrator on the other hand commits an act analogous to eating the flesh of his brother. Hence by perpetrating *ghibah* one breaks his brother's dignity and reputation just as he eats his own brother's flesh.

Surah Noor 24:19

- In Surah Noor 24:19, Allah swt says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Those who love that indecency should be spread abroad concerning them that believe there awaits them a painful chastisement in the present world and the world to come and God knows, and you know not.

- According to Imam Ja'far Shadiq (as), this verse refers to those who say wrong about mukmin merely on the basis of what they saw or heard. Hence any sort of gossiping, which involves backbiting has been severely rebuked by Allah.

Consequences of Backbiting

- The Prophet (saaw) once gave counsel to Abu Dzar (ra), saying: “O Abu Dzar! Beware of backbiting, for backbiting is graver than adultery (zina’).” Abu Dzar (ra) said: “Why is that so, O Messenger of Allah?” . He (saaw) 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.”
[Al-Hurr al-`Amili, *Wasai'ul al-Shi'ah*, vol. 8, hadith no. 18312]
- In a tradition it is narrated that once the Messenger of Allah stoned a man for commission of adultery. One of the persons present remarked to his companion: “This one was finished where he stood, like a dog.” Thereafter, the Prophet, accompanied by the two men, passed by a carcass and he said to them, “Now take a bite of it, you two.” They said, “O Messenger of Allah, should we take a bite of a carcass?” The Prophet replied, “That which you have taken of your brothers was more putrid than this.” [Al-Mahajjat al-bayda', v, 263]
- Nawf al-Bakali narrated the following advice given to him by Imam Ali:
Nawf al-Bakli says: “I said, ‘Tell me something (more).’ The Imam said: ‘Abstain from ghibah, for it is the food of the dogs of hellfire.’ Then he added: ‘O Nawf, untrue is the one who claims to be of legitimate birth and yet devours the flesh of people through backbiting.’” [Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, viii, hadith no. 16319]
- The Messenger of Allah said: ‘The havoc wrought by ghibah on the believer’s faith is swifter than the one wrought by the disease of aklah (a disease that consumes the flesh) in the side of his body.’ [Al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab al-ghibah wa al buht", hadith no.1]
- Imam Ali said: “The Messenger of Allah - upon whom and whose Progeny be God's benedictions - said: ‘To sit in the mosque waiting for the (time of) prayer is worship, so long as one does not commit a misdeed.’ He (saaw) was asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah, what misdeed?’ He replied, ‘Backbiting.’” [Al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, ii, "kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr", "bab al-ghibah wa al buht", hadith no.1]

Tafseer Class on Akhlaq - Summary
Session 07 - Friday, 23 Sep 2005

- The Noble Messenger (saaw) said: “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.”
[Al-Hurr al-`Amili, **Wasa'il al-Shi`ah**, vol. 8, hadith no. 16316]
- It is said that whoever dies repenting from *ghibah* will be the last to enter *Jannah*. On the other hand, whoever dies persistently perpetrating *ghibah* will be the first to enter hellfire.
[**Al Amsal** Juz 16 page 510]
- Another tradition has been narrated by Anas ibn Malik regarding the state of a person who does *ghibah* in Barzakh:
The Messenger of Allah said, ‘On the night of my celestial journey (miraj) I passed by a people scratching their faces with their finger nails. I said: “O Gabriel, who are these?” He replied: “These are those who perpetrated the people’s *ghibah* and slandered their reputation.”’ [Al-Mahajjat al-bayda; v, 261]
- Imam ash Shadiq (aa) narrated from the Prophet (saaw) who said: “O you who have embraced Islam with your tongues but in whose hearts faith has not yet entered, do not disparage Muslims and do not seek their defects. Verily, God will seek out the defects of he who is after their defects; and one who has God after his defects will be humiliated, even in his own abode.” [Al-Kulayni, **al-Kafi**, vol. 2, "Kitab al-Iman wa al-Kufr", "Bab man talaba 'atharat al-Mu'minin", hadith no. 2]
- Shaykh al-Saduq reports that Imam Ja'far Shadiq said: “Whoever perpetrates the *ghibah* of such a person (i.e. of one who conceals his defects and is just in outward conduct, though he should be a sinner in his own eyes) will go out of the *wilayah* of Allah, the Most Exalted, and enter the *wilayah* of Satan.” [Al-Majlisi, **Bihar al-'anwar**, lxxv, "bab al-ghibah", hadith no.12, from al Saduq's al-'Amali']
It is obvious that one who leaves the *wilayah* of God and enters the *wilayah* of Satan, will not be characterized with faith and salvation.
- In a sermon the Prophet spoke about usury and its evils. The he said: “Verily, a single dirham earned by a man through usury is greater (in sinfulness) than thirty-six counts of adultery. And verily, more heinous than usury is (violating) the honour of a Muslim.”
[Al-Mahajjat al-bayda', v, 263]
- The Prophet said: "A person shall be made to halt in front of the Glorious and Exalted Lord on the Day of Resurrection and handed over his book. On not seeing his good deeds therein he shall say, 'My God, this is not my book, for I don't see my virtues in it.' He shall be told, 'Verily, your Lord neither errs nor forgets. Your deeds are gone for your backbiting of the people.' Then another person shall be brought and handed over his book. He will see in it many deeds of obedience (*ta'at*) and he will say: 'My God, this is not my book, for I have not performed these deeds of obedience.' He shall be told: 'So and so committed your *ghibah* and so his good deeds have been awarded to you.' " [Jami' al-'Akhbar, 171]

Tafseer Class on Akhlaq - Summary
Session 07 - Friday, 23 Sep 2005

- When *ghibah* ingresses into our conduct, it leaves adverse effects on the soul. One of these is cultivation of enmity and hatred towards the victim, which gradually increases. At the time of death, when the veils of the angelic realm (*al-malakut*) are lifted, the backbiter may be brought to witness the high station of his victims before God, and the honour and blessings bestowed on them by the Almighty Lord. *The backbiter's hatred and enmity towards the person may then lead him to hate God Almighty!* Thus, he will leave this world with enmity of God in his heart, and enter everlasting wretchedness.

Prohibition of Listening to Backbiting

- In the same manner as backbiting is prohibited, so also is listening to it. Indeed, as some traditions indicate, the listener is like the backbiter in all the evil aspects—so much so that his act is a grave sin carrying an obligation to seek forgiveness from the victim.
- The Prophet (saaw) said: “*The listener is one of the two backbiters.*” [Al-Fayd al-Kashani, *Al-Mahajjat al-Bayda'*, vol. 5, p. 260]
- Regarding prohibition of listening to backbiting, Imam Ali in one his sermons made the following remarks:
‘O’ people! If a person knows his brother to be steadfast in faith and of correct ways he should not lend ear to what people may say about him. Sometimes the bowman shoots arrows but the arrow goes astray; similarly talk can be off the point. Its wrong perishes, while Allah is the Hearer and the Witness. There is nothing between truth and falsehood except four fingers.
Amirul Mukminin was asked the meaning of this whereupon he closed his fingers together and put them between his ear and eye and said:
It is falsehood when you say, “I have heard so,” while it is truth when you say, “I have seen.”
[This sermon can be found in *Nahjul Balagah* selected and compiled by: as- Sayyid Abu ‘l-Hassan Muhammad ibn al- Hussayn ar-Radi al- Musawi sermon 141].
- If someone proceeds to backbite against a fellow being then before lending an ear to his words, we should ask him three questions:
 - (1) “**Is, what we are about to listen to, anything but the absolute truth?**”
The answer might be, “*Not sure.*” In that case we should avoid listening to that person. If the answer is ‘yes’ then we should ask the second question:
 - (2) “**Does your talk about the fellow being concern me somehow?**”
The answer might be, “*No*”, in which case we should not listen to him. If the answer is ‘yes’, then we should finally ask the third question:
 - (3) “**Is it going to be beneficial to my welfare if I hear what you have to say?**”
A likely answer is, “*No*” in which case the test fails and we should reply back and say: “First of all what you are about to tell me, may or may not be true. Second, it does not concern me in any case. Third, it is not beneficial to me. Then, why tell me in the first place?”

Tafseer Class on Akhlaq - Summary
Session 07 - Friday, 23 Sep 2005

- Imam Ja'far Shadiq once narrated the following tradition of the Prophet:
“Lo, whoever does a favour to his brother by refuting his ghibah on hearing it in a gathering, God shall save him from a thousand kinds of evils in this world and there Hereafter. And if he doesn't do so in spite of his ability to refute it, on him shall be a burden of one who commits his ghibah seventy times.” [*Wasa'il al-Shi'ah*, viii, hadith no. 16316]
- The Prophet is reported to have said to Imam Ali in the course of a counsel that he gave him:
“O Ali! When someone hears the ghibah of his Muslim brother and it is committed in his presence, yet he does not rally to his assistance despite being capable of doing so, God shall humiliate him in the world and there Hereafter.” [*Wasa'il al-Shi'ah*, viii, hadith no. 16336]
- At times, the listener, besides, abstaining from absolving the absent person from the *ghibah*, induces the backbiter to commit *ghibah*, or he may encourage the backbiter by going along willingly and uttering words like *“Strange!”* or if is one of the pious ones, he might utter some sacred formula like *“Astagfirullah”* or *“Mashallah”*. These are acts which are in fact the Devil's artifices. Hence any actions or words that encourage the backbiter or make him more enthusiastic should be avoided.

Imam Ali's sermon on 'backbiting'

Imam Ali in one his sermons strongly rebuked backbiting. The sermon can be found in *Nahjul Balagah*. sermon 140 compiled by: as- Sayyid Abu 'l-Hassan Muhammad ibn al- Hussayn ar-Radi al- Musawi. The Imam's sermon is as follows:

Those who do not commit sins and have been gifted with safety (from sins) should take pity on sinners and other disobedient people. Gratefulness should be mostly their indulgence and it should prevent them from (finding faults with) others.

What about the backbiter who blames his brother and finds fault with him? Does he not remember that Allah has concealed the sins which he committed while they were bigger than his brother's sins pointed out by him? How can he vilify him about his sins when he has himself committed one like it?

Even if he has not committed a similar sin he must have committed bigger ones. By Allah, even if he did not commit big sins but committed only small sins, his exposing the sins of people is itself a big sin.

O' creature of Allah, do not be quick in exposition anyone's sin for he may be forgiven for it, and do not feel yourself safe even for a small sin because you may be punished for it.

Therefore, every one of you who comes to know the faults of others should not expose them in view of what he knows about his own faults, and he should remain busy in thanks that he has been saved from what others have been indulging in.

- In Dua Kumayl Imam Ali also teaches us that we should thank the Almighty for all our sins that he has concealed and all the praise for which we were not worthy that he spread about us. Indeed all praise belongs to Allah. Thus if Allah as a mercy can conceal our sins, then who are we to make public the sins of others. Thus the practice of backbiting should always be reprimanded and avoided.

Situations where backbiting is permissible

In some cases fault finding or criticising does not fall under backbiting. However, one must be very careful not to let the existence of these exceptions allow transgression into sin. Some of these situations are:

1. If the oppressed complains of the oppressor in order to seek redress, it is not backbiting. Allah says about it: *Loveth not Allah open utterance of evil in speech except by one who hath been wronged.* (Quran, 4:148)
2. To relate anyone's fault while giving advice is not backbiting because dishonesty and duplicity is not permissible in counselling.
3. If in connection with seeking the requirements of a religious commandment the naming of a particular individual cannot be avoided, then to state the fault of such person to the extent necessary would not be backbiting.
4. To relate the misappropriation or dishonesty committed by someone with a view to saving a Muslim brother from harm would not be backbiting.
5. To relate the fault of someone before one who can prevent him from committing it is not backbiting.
6. Criticism and expression of opinion about a relater of traditions is not backbiting.
7. If a person is well acquainted with someone's shortcoming, then to relate such a fault in order to define his personality, for example, describing a deaf, dumb, lame or handless person as thus, is not backbiting.
8. To describe any fault of a patient before a physician for purposes of treatment is not backbiting.
9. If someone claims wrong lineage then to expose his correct lineage is not backbiting. Thus for example if someone wrongly claims to be a Syed in order to get khums then his lineage should be exposed.
10. If the life, property or honour of someone can be protected only by informing him of some fault, it would not be backbiting.
11. If two persons discuss a fault of another which is already known to both it would not be backbiting, although to avoid discussing it is better, since it is possible one of the two might have forgotten it.
12. To expose the evils of one who openly commits evils is not back-biting as the tradition runs: *"There is no backbiting in the case of he who has torn away the veil of shamefulness."*
[Source: Footnote of sermon 140 of *Nahjul Balagah* as compiled by ar Radi al – Musawi.]

The Cure for this Disease

- If someone, God forbid, has been guilty of this ugly act, he or she must purge this vice and nourish the roots of sincerity, unity, and solidarity in his or her heart by following these steps:
 - Meditate for a while about the effects of this sin in this world and in the Hereafter. Reflect on the fearsome, frightful forms that will beset you in the grave, in the Barzakh, and on the Day of Resurrection. Heed the words of the Holy Prophet (s) and his household ('a) for their pearls of wisdom in this regard will overwhelm you. Then weigh a quarter of an hour's pleasantries, gossip, and satisfaction of the imaginative lust against thousands upon thousands of years of adversity or eternal damnation in hell and everlasting painful chastisement!
 - Consider this: even if you have enmity toward a person whom you backbite, that animosity requires that you should not resort to backbiting. It is stated in the traditions

Tafseer Class on Akhlaq - Summary Session 07 - Friday, 23 Sep 2005

- that the good deeds of the backbiter are transferred to the book of deeds of the victim of his backbiting, and the victim's sins are transferred to the record of the backbiter.
- Repent and seek the forgiveness of the victim, if this is possible without any chance of vicious consequences; otherwise, you must implore God's mercy for the victim.
 - Gather all your strength to rid your soul of this sin at all cost, by making a covenant with yourself to abstain from this abominable for a certain time. Bring your tongue under control and be fully watchful of yourself, steadfastly vigilant, calling yourself to account. God willing, it is hoped that after some time you will find yourself reformed and free of its ill traces. Gradually the burden of the task will ease, and you will feel a natural disposition to dislike and detest it. At that point, you will come to possess spiritual peace and delight in achieving freedom from this vice.
 - Backbiting often results from a weakness in the backbiter's own soul, such as an inferiority complex. You should pry into your soul to discover what weakness prompted you to backbite your brother or sister; then set out to remedy the weakness.

Conclusion

- The habit of fault finding and backbiting has become so common that even the feeling of its evilness has disappeared. And at present neither the high avoid it nor the low; neither the high position of the pulpit prevents it nor the sacredness of the mosque. Whenever a few companions sit together their topic of conversation and engaging interest is just to discuss the faults of their opponents with added colourisation, and to listen to them attentively. Although the fault finder is himself involved in the faults which he picks up in others, yet he does not like that his own faults should be exposed. In such a case, he should have consideration for similar feelings in others and should avoid searching for their faults and hurting their feelings. He should act after the proverb: *"Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you."*
- The Prophet said: *"No fire is faster in consuming dry wood than ghibah consuming a devotees' virtue."* [*Al-Mahajjat al-bayda'*, v, 264]

Mind Blowing Story

Bahlul and the Greedy Qazi

Baghdad was the capital of the Muslim Empire in the time of Bani Abbas rulers. It was a beautiful city and many travellers stopped at Baghdad before continuing their journeys. One such traveler was Jabir, a traveler who had packed his belongings and was moving to Syria.

When Jabir was in Bahddad, a local resident Qasim came to him to greet him. Qasim said: *"Salaamun Alaykum, brother. You look lost. My name is Qasim. Can I help you at all?"*

Jabir replied: *"Alaykum Salaam wa Rahmatullah. My name is Jabir. I have just arrived in Baghdad, but I am not staying very long. I have a long way to go before I reach Syria."*

Upon hearing this Qasim warned Jabir that were a lot of thieves on the way to Syria and that it was not safe to carry his life savings along with him. Jabir got worried and asked for a suggestion.

Tafseer Class on Akhlaq - Summary
Session 07 - Friday, 23 Sep 2005

After thinking for a while, Qasim suggested that Jabir deposit his belongings with the Qazi as he heard that he was very honest.

The Qazi of Baghdad was famous for answering people's questions and solving their problems. Although he had some knowledge, the truth was that he was not really a man of God and was hired by Harroon Rashid to keep an eye on the people and to inform him of anything suspicious. The truth was that the Qazi was a crafty man and had a tendency for greed.

When Qasim and Jabir reached Qazi's place, Qasim said to the Qazi: "*Salamun Alaykum, respected Qazi. I would like to introduce you to Jabir, a traveller who has a small problem.*"

The Qazi replied: "*Alaykum Salaam, Qasim. Small problems, big problems, we will solve them all. Tell me what troubles you Jabir.*"

Jabir then related to Qazi about his predicament and told him that he was carrying two pots of gold which were his life savings but did not want to take the risk of the gold being looted on the way to Syria. After hearing this, the Qazi said: "*I have no interest in worldly goods. You can leave your valuables there with everybody else's things. Whenever you return you only have to come back and take it.*"

After hearing this Jabir was delighted and said: "*Thank you very much for your kindness. You have taken a weight off my mind!*"

With this, Jabir deposited his gold with Qazi and made his way to Syria.

Two years passed and finally Jabir returned from Syria as he had decided that he may want to start his new life in Baghdad. When he arrived in Baghdad, he decided to first collect his gold from the Qazi.

When Jabir reached Qazi's home, Qazi refused to recognise him. Jabir then explained to him that two years back he had deposited two pots of gold with him and he was back to collect his belongings. On hearing this, the Qazi said that Jabir could try and find his gold among the people's belongings that were kept aside.

Jabir got a bit worried but was relieved when he saw his two pots in the corner. However, when Jabir opened one of his pots, his face turned white.

The Qazi said: "*Are you alright Jabir? You look like you have seen a ghost!*" Jabir replied: "*But, but... Where are my gold coins? This pot has honey!*" And so has the other one!"

The crafty Qazi responded: "*Mashallah! Subhanallah! Golden coins have been transformed into golden honey! It is a miracle! We must glorify the power of Allah swt and thank Him for allowing us to witness such a wonder!*"

On hearing this Jabir got very angry and accused Qazi of being a cheat and thief. The greedy Qazi responded: "*Get a grip on yourself, Jabir! Are you denying that Allah swt has the power to change your gold into fresh honey? Think yourself lucky to be involved in this great miracle.*"

Jabir retorted: "*It will be a miracle if you can still walk when I have finished with you!*"

Tafseer Class on Akhlaq - Summary
Session 07 - Friday, 23 Sep 2005

After hearing this, the Qazi warned Jabir that he had contacts with Harun Rashid and if he ever saw him again near his house he would get him imprisoned.

Jabir got very upset and was sitting helplessly on the streets when Bahlul came along. Bahlul asked Jabir what his problem was and Jabir related to him the whole story. After hearing the story, Bahlul gave him some money and told him to stay in an inn for a month and by that time he will try to resolve the matter.

Later Bahlul met the Qazi on the streets. Now the Qazi knew that Bahlul acted insane and was in reality a wise scholar. Qazi for some time had been requesting Bahlul to teach his two sons Muhammad and Ibrahim as he knew that Bahlul was a student of the learned scholar Imam Jafar Sadiq. When Bahlul met Qazi he told him that after some deliberation he had finally decided to teach his two sons but the condition was that the Qazi will not be allowed to see his sons for a month. The Qazi happily agreed to this condition and sent his sons to Bahlul.

After a month, Qazi knocked at the door of Bahlul's house and was eager to see his sons. Qazi asked the witty scholar: *"What is the progress of my children? Have you noticed any difference any them?"*

Bahlul said: *"Oh yes, there has been quite a difference. In fact you may have difficulty recognising them as the same boys you left with me a month ago."* And then Bahlul shouted: *"Muhammad! Ibrahim! Come in and greet your father. He is eager to see you."*

On Bahlul's shout two monkeys scampered in the room and proceeded towards the Qazi to kiss his hand. The shocked Qazi jumped up and said: *"Allahu Akbar! What madness is this Bahlul? Where did these animals come from?"* Bahlul told him that the monkeys were indeed his two sons.

The Qazi retorted: *"You are truly mad and you want to make me insane too! Where are my boys? What has happened to them?"*

Bahlul said: *"Ah! You are referring to the miracle. Mashallah! Subhanallah! You have been blessed by Allah swt by a miracle. Your sons have been converted into monkeys! Alhamdulillah!"*

Qazi got angry and said: *"Bahlul you are trying to make a monkey out of me! My wife will kill me! You are lying!"*

And then Bahlul explained to the Qazi that he had also termed the conversion of two pots of gold into honey as a 'miracle'. After this the Qazi realised his error and promised Bahlul that he will return the gold back to Jabir. Bahlul then called the real sons of the Qazi to meet their father.

Hence, because of the wisdom of the witty scholar Bahlul, the gold was returned back to Jabir, its rightful owner. The Qazi became a wiser and more honest man. As for Bahlul, he continued to act as a mad man and few people realised the unique ingenuity behind his actions.

Disclaimer:

In this tafseer class, there might be shortcomings in imparting the knowledge of the tafseer. If there is any information that requires correction, please do not hesitate to let us know via e-mail: jaafari_tafseer_committee@yahoo.com.sg. Allah knows best.