

Backstabbing, from the Front !!!

By

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I'm from the privileged few who have been sent a copy of the 2015 edition of the Oxford Dictionary for proofreading. Whilst flipping through the pages, I came across some strange words never seen before: "Frenemmy: an enemy who pretends to be a friend;" "Colour Washing: to confuse someone to such an extent that he doesn't know which girlfriend to visit that day;" and "Front Stabbing: to betray a close friend right under his nose." The best entry, however, was "Fiety: using your piety and angelic appearance to commit fraud, spread lies, legalise the prohibited and run others down."

Now I'm sure the authors of the Dictionary must be aware of these sicknesses in society, and seek to find the appropriate words to describe this abnormal behaviour. Is there a person in this world who was not betrayed by his family, friends or colleagues? If robberies are common in our homes from external elements, then for every one robbery, we have hundred internal "thefts" where people are defrauded, cheated and swindled by their own associates. Our sitcoms and movies would not be the same if there isn't a woman triple-dating men from one family, or a bag of cash stolen in a bank robbery and the robbers all trying to take all the loot for themselves! Indeed, being crooked has become fashionable nowadays.

The problem of betrayal is an age-old one. The handsome Prophet Yusuf was thrown into the well by his own brothers in order to get the attention of their father, and then treacherously thrown into prison for refusing to fornicate with his master's wife! Then we had Qabil who killed his own brother Habil, both sons of Prophet Adam, over who to marry. Problems stemming from the evil mind and the plotting hand have only become worse today. We have parents who split their own family by favouring one child over the next, teachers who victimise their students due to their parent's poverty, 'Ulema who give fatwas based on who feeds them prawns daily or who can give them the brightest spotlight, and employers who give promotion to bootlickers who can prostrate to them the longest.

Indeed, the people closest to you are your biggest enemies. Don't even reveal your secrets to your shadow in the night, because it may just be somebody else's!

Lack of Trustworthiness

As Muslims, we should always have good thoughts of people, and never be suspicious. However, in today's times, good-hearted people always feel the bite of their innocence and clean-heartedness. There is hardly a casual function or a formal meeting, even of two people,

after which one's words are not carried to a third person. This also applies to private BBM or WhatsApp chats. One's words are then "munched" and misconstrued, resulting in huge misunderstandings – simply because no one knows what is the meaning of safeguarding a person's secrets, honour or dignity anymore.

We are definitely living in the time in which our Noble Prophet Muhammad (May peace be upon him) predicted that it would be difficult to find even a handful of trustworthy people in an entire nation. Money will become the determining factor in everything, to the extent of even selling one's religion, values, and one's own mother too. Gone are the days when you see a smiling person and say: "He seems like a good guy." Now, it's a time to be cautious and say: "Let's see what his got up his sleeves!"

One of the reasons for betrayal in our society is the way we have structured our friendships and relationships. Given our own behaviour, it's becomes a matter of who betrays who first! People befriend a lawyer to get free legal advice, a doctor to get special rates, a Maulana to get a corrupt fatwa, a neighbour to borrow his car when your car is out of order, a teacher to favour your child in class, a businessman to get a discount on your grocery purchases and policeman or a judge to get you out of prison when you are arrested. So, the day when the teacher gives your child bad marks or you don't get a discount from the supermarket, they suddenly go from "sweet to sour". As no one will be willing to play the subservient role for ever, sooner or later, the friendship will turn into enmity.

Worse still is when you have the wrong friends, for the wrong reasons. People befriend gangsters and thugs, the rich and the influential, politicians and judges, computer hackers and sorcerers, just to bail them out of trouble when they do land into it. Both the friend and the befriended are crooked. Can such friendship result in anything but problems?

Hardly anyone has friends nowadays solely for the sake of the Almighty. It's always: "I scratch your back, you scratch mine!" Our intimate relationships too are sometimes very superficial. We marry for beauty, money or prestige. When these are no more achieved in the marriage, then the cheating starts! And nowadays, betrayal is no more done secretly. It's done openly because people are more inclined towards wrongdoing, rather than justice. Treachery has a tongue, whilst justice lacks one. It's called "Front Stabbing."

The golden rule is: Don't trust anybody, even after ten years of friendship. Rather be alone than be with a bunch of hypocrites who only worship your pocket or your power. Over 950 years ago, Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali told us: "There are no friends anymore, only wolves in sheep's clothing." Never show anybody four things: your wealth, your wife, your weapons and your happiness. The person may seem happy for you, but he will try to deprive you of all these bounties. Betrayal starts when things are revealed, and only ends when they are stolen.

Now, when there are only wolves around, you will find betrayal, cheating, fraud, lying and deception becoming common. All of these are not sins committed by an average person. It takes a cunning and intelligent person to plot and plan. Being sinister and deceptive is the hallmark of the devil himself, of a person with a blackened soul and a deadened heart. The devil knew his eventual destination will be hellfire, so he asked God for permission to mislead the

people by stealth so that those who follow him, will also accompany him in hellfire. Betrayal is his hallmark, and abuse of intelligence is his weapon. The hypocrites of Madinah were the first in this ummat to be guilty of this.

Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, whilst speaking of the various types of sin, has said: "Human beings have numerous qualities and characteristics, but there are four main impulses to commit sin:

- 1) Godly Attributes: Pride, self-praise, and desire for recognition are all the attributes of the Almighty, but are destructive for mankind. These are mostly committed by the saintly and the accomplished;
- 2) Devilish Attributes: Hatred, malice, plotting, deceit, fraud, propaganda, slander and lying all make up the devilish character. These are mostly committed by the intelligent, hypocrites, the selfish and those who do not worry of the Hereafter;
- 3) Animalistic Attributes: Satisfying oneself fully, fornicating, bribery, drinking, gambling and homosexuality. These are mostly committed by the rich and influential;
- 4) Jungle Attributes: Anger, oppression, killing, robbery and genocide, like animals of prey, These are mostly committed by the powerful and the tyrants."

Today, the world is filled with misery, hate and propaganda. It indicates that the devil is at an all-time high. Those who are fulfilling his mission, locally in the form of every type of corruption, or internationally in the form of mass propaganda and murder, will all share his fate in the Hereafter.

Who to be Careful of?

It is narrated that Sayyadina 'Umar said: "Almighty says that He has created such people whose words are sweeter than honey, but whose hearts are more bitter than aloes. I swear by My Honour and Grandeur, I will involve them in such trials which will even perplex the patient amongst them. Are they deceived by my mercy or are they just brazen in challenging Me." (Tirmidhi)

Be very careful of people who are extra sweet on your face. However, don't return betrayal with betrayal, deceit with deceit and lies with more lies. You can never beat the devil at his own game. Rather ask the Almighty for protection and have trust and patience in His plan. The truth has a way of eventually coming out.

Lastly, it may sound strange, but betrayal is actually a positive learning experience. The pain of betrayal makes you wiser and serves as a filter for your happiness. It sifts your good apples from the rotten one's and allows you to have a more authentic living experience. It also forces you to choose your words wisely, your battles prudently and your friends cautiously. It teaches you who you can depend on and on whom you cannot, who will help you without eating your dignity and who will. Most importantly, it teaches you that NO MAN OR SCHEME ON EARTH

can be dependable. You will always be disappointed in man, but never in the Almighty, the All-Powerful, Most-Compassionate.

So make the Almighty your ONLY true friend, and you will never experience a single betrayal in your life again. Guaranteed.

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