

Will the Fast be Nullified because of Backbiting?

Q: Saum-12: In his lecture before the Jumu'ah salaah, our Imaam quoted a Hadith stating that two men who were fasting had performed the Zuhr or Asr salaah behind Rasulullaah SAW. However, after Rasulullaah SAW. completed the salaah, he said to the two, "Repeat your wudhu and salaah, but continue with your fast, which will have to be repeated another day." When they enquired the reason for this, Rasulullaah SAW. informed that it was on account cost them backbiting about another person.

Although the Imaam intended to highlight evil of backbiting, people have now started to doubt whether salaah and fasting need to be repeated because of backbiting. Is the implication of the Hadith general? Please clarify.

Answer: The command to repeat the salaah and fast applies specifically to people of high spiritual rank, whereas for the common man, it warns him to be cautious so that he may take heed. Backbiting is Haraam and has a negative effect on acts of worship. It therefore needs to be avoided at all costs. However, it does not mean that a person's wudhu, salaah and fast are all nullified through backbiting.

The Ulema have classified fasting into the following three categories:

1. Abstaining from eating, drinking and sexual relations throughout the day, which is the definition of fasting for the general public.
2. Apart from abstaining from eating, drinking and sexual relations throughout the day, a person abstains from all major and minor sins committed by the ears, eyes, tongue and all other limbs of the body. This is the fast that the pious people observe.
3. Apart from abstaining from eating, drinking and sexual relations throughout the day, together with abstaining from sins committed by the limbs of the body, the heart also abstains from swaying towards worldly matters and thinks only of Allaah.

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. reports that when Allaah has no need for the hunger and thirst of a fasting person when he does not abstain from evil talks and evil acts. This makes it evident that for the fast to be accepted by Allaah, a person needs to abstain from sins like backbiting together with abstaining from eating, drinking and sexual relations throughout the day. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

Fatawa Rahimiyyah vol.3