

Islamic Sharia Teachings and Practices for Preventing Bullying

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Abstract

Bullying is an intentional aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is carried out repeatedly or has the potential to be repeated, over time. It occurs within an interpersonal relationship and can take many forms. In many respects, study on bullying prevention is still in its infancy. Although scholars have documented success of some comprehensive programs in reducing bullying but we still have much to learn about new aspects of preventing bullying. Many professional attempts to reduce the bullying are not so effective; however, religious practices are more likely to succeed. This research will explore the causes of bullying defined by Islam and lay the practices prescribed by Islamic Sharia for preventing bullying.

Key Words: bullying, direct bullying, indirect bullying, bullying in Islam, aggressive behaviour

Introduction

Islam as a complete code of life deals with all aspects of life, individual as well as collective. Islam presents a balanced approach to address the core issues of a society: rights and responsibilities; privileges and obligations etc. Islamic ethics deals with the standards of right and wrong of human conducts and prescribes good human behavior to refrain from immoral attitudes.

Quran and Hadith are primary sources of Islamic law. Islamic Sharia recommends effective teachings and practices to prevent any form of intentional physical or verbal aggression i.e. bullying. We are discussing these in this research. Bullying is of two types; direct and indirect.

1. Direct Bullying

Direct bullying is an open attack that can be physical and verbal (Dan Olweus, 1993). It is often categorized into two types;

1.1 Physical Bullying:

Physical bullying includes physical attacks like hitting, shoving, kicking, stabbing, biting, scratching, pinching, pulling hair, spitting, stepping on someone's toe, locking in a confined space, threatening with a weapon etc. It also includes actions that deprive someone of his personal belongings, such as taking items without permission, stealing, intentionally damaging an item etc. (Sally, 2012). The consequences are physical and emotional injuries and financial loss. It is more often seen in males. Islamic Sharia discourages any practice of oppression, physical attack and threatening.

1.1.1 Oppression

The exercise of authority or power in a cruel or unjust manner is called oppression. Islam does not tolerate any form of bullying as it is a form of oppression. Various kinds of oppressions include insulting, degrading, abusing or imprisoning a person; also accusing a person falsely or hurting a person physically.

The Noble Quran says: “Allah commands justice, good conduct, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids immorality, bad conduct and oppression (Quran: 16:90).” The Prophet said narrating from Allah: “My servants, I have made oppression unlawful for Me and unlawful for you, so do not commit oppression against one another (Muslim, 2007; Bayhaqī, 2003).”

Another form of oppression is to usurp someone’s property or to take out it without the owner’s permission, or not to return the rights of it to its owner etc. Similarly, another way of usurping a right is to forcefully take up a position reserved for someone else. The Prophet PBUH said: “No doubt! Your blood, your properties, and your honor are sacred to one another like the sanctity of this day of yours, in this sacred town (Mecca) of yours, in this month of yours.” The Prophet repeated this statement again and again. After that he raised his head and said, ‘O Allah! Haven’t I conveyed Your Message to them? Haven’t I conveyed Your Message to them?’ (Bukhārī, 1997; Ḥākīm, 1990).”

AbūHurayrah reported Allah's Messenger (May peace be upon him) as saying: “Do you know what bankrupt means? They the Companions of the Holy Prophet said: A bankrupt man amongst us is one who has neither dirham with him nor wealth. The Holy Prophet said: The bankrupt of my *Ummah* would be he who would come on the Day of Resurrection with prayers and fasts and Zakat but he would find himself bankrupt on that day as he would have exhausted his funds of virtues since he hurled abuses upon others, brought calumny against others and unlawfully consumed the wealth of others and shed the blood of others and beat others, and his virtues would be credited to the account of one who suffered at his hand. And if his good deeds fall short to clear the account, then his sins would be entered in his account and he would be thrown in the Hell-Fire (Tirmidhī, 1998; Aḥmad, 2001).”

Helping an oppressor in any way whatsoever is unlawful e.g. to hand over a cane to someone so that he can beat an innocent person, or to help in any way to confine him in a specified space. There is no difference between the actual oppressor and the one who support him. Both are equally responsible for the act of injustice. It is possible that if there is no one to assist the oppressor he may not be able to oppress. The Holy Quran has highlighted the root causes of oppression and tyranny. Allah says: “And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Acquainted and Seeing (Quran: 42:27).” Another verse says; “No! [But] indeed, man transgresses all bounds, because he sees himself self-sufficient. Indeed, to your Lord is the return of all (Quran: 96:6-8).”

Prophet Muhammad PBUH has suggested his followers a specific supplication on leaving home to avoid oppression. When the Prophet [SAW] went out of his house, he said: “In the name of Allah, my Lord, I seek refuge in You from falling into error or going astray, or wrongdoing others or being wronged, and from behaving or being treated in an ignorant manner.” (Nasā’ī, 1986; Abū Dāwūd, 2006; Ibn Mājah, 1952). He also reduced the oppression by warning the penalty on the Day of Judgment. Narrated Abū Hurayrah: Allah's Apostle said, “Whoever has wronged his brother, should ask for his pardon before his death, as in the Hereafter there will be neither a Dinar nor a Dirham. He should secure pardon in this life before some of his good deeds are taken and paid to his brother, or, if he has done no good deeds, some of the bad deeds of his brother are taken to be loaded on him in the Hereafter (Bukhārī, 1997; Bazzār, 1988-2009).”

1.1.2 Fighting

There is a misconception that Islam promotes fighting and killing, especially for reason of difference of religion or in order to establish Muslim rule. The Holy Quran says: “Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loves those who are just (Quran: 60:8).” In Islam the legal reason for fighting is ‘oppression’ and the oppressed is allowed to fight the transgressions made against him. The Holy Quran permits fighting against both Muslims and non-Muslims tyranny. The Holy Quran says: “Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they have been oppressed. And indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory (Quran: 22:39).” Allah has commanded making peace between Muslims that fight each other, Allah says: “If two parties among the Believers fall into a fight, make you peace between them (Quran: 49:9).” But if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other then The Holy Quran says:

“Fight you (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah; but if it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair and just (Quran:49:9).”

As Holy Quran commands to deal with non-combatants disbelievers kindly and justly, similarly it strictly denies fighting among Muslims. Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah said: “The Muslim is the brother to the Muslim, he does not cheat him, lie to him, nor deceive him. All of the Muslim is unlawful to another Muslim: His Honor, his wealth, and his blood. God-fearing is here. It is enough evil for a man that he belittles his brother Muslim (Muslim, 2007; Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1997).” In another hadith the Messenger of Allah said: “Shall I inform you about the people of the Hell fire? They comprise every cruel, violent, proud and conceited person (Bukhārī, 1997; Ṭabrānī, 1994).” Some narrations motivate to avoid quarrelling even if the man is in the right. It was narrated by Abū Umāmah that the Prophet (PBUH) said: “I guarantee a house in the surroundings of Paradise for a man who avoids quarrelling even if he were in the right, a house in the middle of Paradise for a man who avoids lying even if he were joking, and a house in the upper part of Paradise for a man who made his character good (Abū Dāwūd, 2006).”

1.1.3 Threatening With a Weapon

Pointing a piece of iron, such as a dragger, knife, sword, or a gun at a person, even in fun, has the effect of creating distress and fear. It also puts the person in danger so it is forbidden for a Muslim to frighten another person, or put him at risk. This is what we can appreciate from being told that the angels curse him who points a weapon at another person. Abū Hurayrah reported: “Abū l-Qāṣim (Allah's Messenger, may peace be upon him), said: He who pointed a weapon towards his brother the angels invoke curse upon him even if he is his real brother so long as he does not abandon it the pointing of weapon towards one's brother Muslim (Muslim, 2007).”

1.1.4 Intimidation

Intimidation is an act of threatening someone else and frightening that person enough to make him or her do what the bully wants. The Messenger of Allah said: “Whoever points at his brother with a piece of iron, the angels will curse him until he stops it, even if it is his brother through his father and mother (Ṭabrānī, 1995).”

1.2 Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying includes name calling, abusing, dishonoring, cursing, mocking, taunting, teasing and verbal threats etc. (Goodstein, 2013). Verbal aggression is when a bully teases someone. It can also include a bully making verbal threats of violence against someone's personal property. The Muslim Greeting “*Al-Salām Alayqum wa Rahmatullāhi wa Barakātuhū*” (May the peace, mercy and blessing of Allah with you) is made up of three beautiful terms: peace, mercy and blessing. These terms, taken together or separately, reject any association with any form of bullying.

1.2.1 Dishonoring

It is not permissible to disgrace or humiliate anyone even a sinner (Bukhārī, 1997). Narrated Sa‘īd bin Zayd: “The Prophet also said: The most prevalent kind of usury is going to lengths in talking unjustly against a Muslim's honor (Abū Dāwūd, 2006; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, 1403 AH).”

If someone is abused than he is allowed to pay back but should not exceed the limits. Exceeding the limits may be uttering the bad words twice. Narrated Abū Hurayrah: “The Prophet said: “It is a major sin to abuse twice for abusing once (Abū Dāwūd, 2006).” Some the oppressed one becomes oppressor. Abū Hurayrah reported Allah's Messenger (May peace be upon him) as saying: “When two persons indulge in hurling (abuses) upon one another, it would be the first one who would be the sinner so long as the oppressed does not transgress the limits (Muslim, 2007; Baghwī, 1985).” Narrated ‘Ā’ishah: The Prophet said, “The most hated man in the Sight of Allah is the one who is the most quarrelsome of the opponents (Bukhārī, 1997).”

But it is highly appreciated that a person forgives and does not take revenge. Ibn ‘Umar reported that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “The believer, who mixes with people and endures patiently their hurtful words, is better than the person who does not mix with people nor show patience under their abuse (Bukhārī, 1989; Ṭiyālsī, 1999).” Narrated Jābir bin Sālim: I saw a man whose opinion was accepted by the people, and whatever he said they submitted to it.

I asked: Who is he? They said: This is the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). I said: Give me some advice. He said: “Do not abuse anyone”. The companion said that he did not abuse a freeman, or a slave, or a camel or a sheep thenceforth. The prophet said: “When you speak to your brother, show him a cheerful face”.

He also said: “And if a man abuses and shames you for something which he finds in you, then do not shame him for something which you find in him; he will bear the evil consequences for it (Abū Dāwūd, 2006; Kharāṭī, 1993).”

1.2.2 Cursing

The Holy prophets did not allow cursing even an animal (Muslim, 2007). Abū Hurayrah reported it was said to Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him): Invoke curse upon the polytheists, whereupon he said: “I have not been sent as the invoker of curse rather I have been sent as mercy (Muslim, 2007; Abū Ya'lā, 1984).” It was narrated by Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah said: “A true believer should not be an invoker of curse (Muslim 2007).” (Narrated ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Amr: Allah's Apostle said. “It is one of the greatest sins that a man should curse his parents.” It was asked (by the people), “O Allah's Apostle! How does a man curse his parents?” The Prophet said, “The man abuses the father of another man and the latter abuses the father of the former and abuses his mother (Bukhārī, 1997; Ibn al-Ja'd, 1990).”

1.2.3 Mocking

History of Mocking on religious basis is very old. Almost all the Messengers of Allah were laughed and mimicked by the disbelievers. Similarly, Unbelievers of Mecca were used to laugh and scoff at the last Messenger Muhammad PBUH. The Holy Quran says: “When they see you, they treat you no otherwise than in mockery: ‘Is this the one whom Allah has sent as a messenger?’ (Quran: 25:41).” Elsewhere Quran says: “When the Unbelievers see you, they treat you not except with ridicule. ‘Is this, (they say), ‘the one who talks of your gods?’ (Quran: 21:36).”

The followers of Prophet Muhammad PBUH were also victim of religious mockery. “Those in sin used to laugh at those who believed, and whenever they passed by them, used to wink at each other (in mockery); and when they returned to their own people, they would return jesting; And whenever they saw them, they would say, “Behold! These are the people truly astray!” But they had not been sent as keepers over them! But on this Day the Believers will laugh at the Unbelievers.” (Quran: 83:29-34). Allah has mentioned many times in the Quran relating his displeasure of such actions. Thus defaming, laughing at someone, being sarcastic or bullying is not acceptable. The practice of companions in response of such mocking was to ignore it. Allah says: “And it has already been revealed to you in the Book (this Quran) that when you hear the Verses of Allah being denied and mocked at, then sit not with them, until they engage in a talk other than that; (but if you stayed with them) certainly in that case you would be like them (Quran: 4:140).”

It is not permissible in Islamic Sharia to make fun of someone's actions, traits or habits in a way that people find it funny and laugh. Whether it is done verbally or by actions or gestures, there is no doubt that such a behavior is intolerable. Mimicking by actions or gestures is more averse than verbal mocking, because it contains more intense scorn. Aggressive body language is also a medium of mocking. Narrated ‘Ā'ishah R.A.: I said to the Prophet (PBUH): It is enough for you in Ṣafīyyah R.A. that she is such and such meaning that she was short-statured. He replied; “you have said a word which would change the sea if it were mixed in it. She said: I imitated a man before him (out of disgrace).” He said: “I do not like that I imitate anyone even if I should get such and such (Abū Dāwūd, 2006; Tirmidhī, 1998).” Elsewhere narrated ‘Ā'ishah R.A.: A woman came to see us. When she left, I gestured with my hand, hinting she was short. At that the Messenger of Allah said: “You have mocked her (Nawawī, 2003).”

1.2.4 Taunting

Taunting means to provoke someone with insulting remarks or reproach someone in a contemptuous way. To make jokes or taunt the Prophet and Muslims was the act of the unbelievers of Mecca in the Prophet times. Allah has mentioned that in the Holy Quran that the primates of Mecca were used to ridicule Prophet Muhammad by saying: “O you upon whom the message has been sent down, indeed you are mad (or possessed)! (Quran: 15:6).” Another verse says: “So they wonder that a Warner has come to them from among themselves! And the Unbelievers say, "This is a sorcerer telling lies! (Quran: 38:4).”

The last verses of sūrah al-Nahl suggest a spiritual care for the anxiety that results from taunting. Allah says: “Indeed, We are sufficient for you against the mockers, Who make [equal] with Allah another deity: but soon will they come to know. We do indeed know how your heart is distressed at what they say. But celebrate the praises of your Lord, and be of those who prostrate themselves in adoration (Quran: 15:95-98).”

In such condition let him or her get busy in worship, praising or praying before Allah. Allah will himself remove this pain and anxiety. The Holy Quran elsewhere says: “And obey not (the behests) of the Unbelievers and the Hypocrites, and heed not their annoyances, but put thy Trust in Allah. For enough is Allah as a Disposer of affairs (Quran: 33:48).” True believers of Prophet Muhammad PBUH were also oppressed by leaders of the Quraysh. The sublime Quran says: “You shall certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and in your personal selves; and you shall certainly Hear much that will grieve you, from those who received the Book before you and from those who worship many gods. But if you persevere patiently, and guard against evil, then that will be a determining factor in all affairs (Quran: 3:186).”

The Messenger of Allah said: “If somebody accuses another by calling him a wicked person or accuses him of disbelief, such an accusation will revert to the accuser if the accused is innocent (Bukhārī, 2007).” Similarly, it is reported on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) observed: “He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should either utter good words or better keep silence; and he who believes in Allah and the Last Day should treat his neighbor with kindness (Muslim, 2007; Mālik, 2004).” The aforementioned *Ahādīth* teach us that we should avoid speaking ill of others. This is an encouragement to speak what is righteous and beneficial; at the same time it is a warning, beware us to be careful in what we say, lest we say something that is hurtful or annoying. Abū Sa‘īd Khudrī reported Allah's Apostle (May peace be upon Him) as saying: “Avoid sitting on the paths. They (his Companions) said: Allah's Messenger! There is no other help to it (but to sit here as we) hold our meetings and discuss matters there. Thereupon Allah's Messenger (May peace be upon him) said: If you have to sit at all, then fulfill the rights, of the path. They said: What are their rights? Thereupon he said: Keeping the eye downward (so that you may not stare at the people), refraining from doing some harm to the other and exchanging mutual greetings and commanding the good and forbidding the evil (Muslim, 2007, Ma‘mar, 1403 AH).”

1.2.5 Harshness

Allah says in the Glorious Quran: “And by the Mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you (Quran: 3:159).” Coarseness and violence are not qualities of Islam. And gentleness, mercy and kindness are essence of Islam. ‘Ā’ishah reported that some Jews came to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and said, and “Death be on you.” ‘Ā’ishah said, “And upon you and May the curse of Allah and the anger of Allah be upon you!” The Prophet said, “Be calm O ‘Ā’ishah, you must be gentle. Beware of harshness and coarseness (Bukhārī, 1997).” Many *Ahādīth* have been reported on the matter of easiness: The Messenger of Allah said: “Whoever is deprived of gentleness, he is deprived of goodness (Muslim, 2007).” The Holy Prophet used to say that Allah has not sent me to be harsh, or cause harm, but he has sent me to teach and make things easy. It was narrated by Anas that the Holy Prophet also said: “Make things easy for the people, and do not make it difficult for them, and make them calm with glad tidings and do not repel them i.e. to make them hate good deeds and to run away from Islam (Bukhārī, 1997; Abū ‘Awānah, 1998).”

1.2.6 Misconduct

To behave in an improper, immoral or unlawful manner is called misconduct. Allah says: “And verily, you (O Muhammad SAW) are on an exalted standard of character (Quran: 68:4).” The messenger of Allah said: “The most perfect believers are those having the finest character (Abū Dāwūd, 2006).” Narrated the Anas: “I served the Prophet for ten years, and he never said to me: ‘Ugh!’ and he never criticized me by saying: ‘Why did you do so or why did not you do so?’ (Bukhārī, 1997; Ibn al-Mubārak, 2004).” Abū Hurayrah said, “The Prophet, May Allah bless him and grant him peace, was asked, ‘Messenger of Allah! A certain woman prays in the night, fasts in the day, acts and gives charity, but injures her neighbors with her tongue.’ The Messenger of Allah, May Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, ‘There is no good in her. She is one of the people of the Fire.’ They said, ‘Another woman prays the prescribed prayers and gives bits of curd as charity and does not injure anyone.’

The Messenger of Allah, May Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, ‘She is one of the people of the Garden’ (Bukhārī, 1989).”

Narrated ‘Ā’ishah: A man asked permission to enter upon Allah's Apostle. The Prophet said, “Admit him. What an evil brother of his people or a son of his people.”

But when the man entered, the Prophet spoke to him in a very polite manner. (And when that person left) I said, "O Allah's Apostle! You had said what you had said, yet you spoke to him in a very polite manner?" The Prophet said, "O 'Ā'ishah!

The worst people are those whom the people desert or leave in order to save themselves from their dirty language or from their transgression (Bukhārī, 1997; Ḥumaydī, 1996) It was narrated that al-Nawwās bin Sam'ān Said: I asked the Messenger of Allah about righteousness and sin, and he said: "Righteousness is good conduct and sin is that which wavers in your heart and you do not want the people to find out about it (Muslim, 2007)." The Holy Prophet said: "Allah does not look at your outward forms and your wealth; rather He looks at your hearts and your deeds (Muslim, 2007; Ibn Rāhwayh, 1991)." He used to say, "The best among you are the best in character having good manners (Bukhārī, 1997)." Abū Dharr reported: Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him) said to me: "Don't consider anything insignificant out of good things even if it is that you meet your brother with a cheerful countenance (Muslim, 2007; Ibn Ḥibbān, 1993)."

1.2.7 Obscenity

Obscenity originates from viciousness and ignobility. It is either motivated by the intention of hurting others or is a practice acquired from socializing with evil and immoral people, who are accustomed to insulting others. Whatever the case, Allah The Almighty has forbidden crude language in the verse "Say: the things that my Lord hath indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning of partners to Allah, for which He hath given no authority; and saying things about Allah of which ye have no knowledge (Quran: 7:33)." There is also indecency in making comments about defects in people that they may be ashamed of, such as a limp or alopecia. Any such remarks, if necessary, should not be explicitly referred to. The Messenger of Allah said: "One of the basic sayings of the early Prophet-hood which the people have got is: 'If you do not feel ashamed, then do whatever you like' (Bukhārī, 2007; Bayhaqī, 2003)."

1.2.8 To Remind Someone of a Favor

Reminding others of one's favors for them is usually done by a niggard and conceited person. The niggard always feels that what he gives is great, even if it is something meager. Also, the conceited person tends to magnify himself and feels that he is doing others a great mercy by giving to them. If it is usually said in order to confirm and advertise the favors, or to profess of what one gives until it would reach the taker, who would then be hurt to hear this, then it would be a major sin.

The Holy Quran dispraises the act of reminding others of one's favors for them by commanding: "O, you who believe! Do not render in vain your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury, like him who spends his wealth to be seen of men, and he does not believe in Allah, nor in the Last Day. His likeness is the likeness of a smooth rock on which is a little dust; on it falls heavy rain which leaves it bare. They are not able to do anything with what they have earned. And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people (Quran: 2:264)." This makes it clear that any form of favor-flashing or needy-bashing, after an act of charity renders such charity null and void. There is no reward for it. The Holy Prophet said: "Allah will not talk to three types of people on the Day of Judgment: the one who gives people things in order to remind them of his favors upon them (Muslim, 2007)."

2. Indirect Bullying

Indirect bullying is more subtle and involves one or more forms of aggression, social alienation, Gossiping, embarrassing, intentional exclusion, rumor spreading, making faces or obscene gestures behind someone's back, damaging someone's reputation and manipulating social order. It is less obvious and common in females.

2.1 Social Alienation

Social alienation means estrangement, division, or distancing of people from each other. Sometimes it refers to loss or lack of sympathy. Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying:

"It is not permissible for a Muslim to have estranged relations with his brother beyond three nights, the one turning one way and the other turning the other way when they meet; the better of the two is one who is the first to give a greeting (Muslim, 2007; Marwazī, 1403 AH)." This hadith highlights the merit of Salam (salutation), a specific and easy way for resuming the relation, because Salam paves the way for talk and reconciliation.

After three days, one who will take the initiative in giving Salam is more superior to the other. And if the second party does not answer positively and continues malice and enmity, he will be sinful.

When a dispute occurs between two brothers then odiousness and contraction of mind are bound to result from it. In such a case they naturally do not like to talk or communicate with each other. Islamic Sharia acknowledges the validity of this aversion and allows the opponents to cut off speech for three days.

The messenger of Allah said: "There is no forsaking after three days (Muslim, 2007)." Since cut off of relations leads to severe hostility and animosity which increases dissension in society and creates hindrance in contacts, thus, it is not permissible for a Muslim to let this temporary obstruction go beyond a period of three days.

2.2 Character Assassination

One of the social ills is accusation, which means to charge an innocent person. This is also known as character assassination usually done due to hostility, hatred, malice and envy. Character assassination refers to make false and damaging statements for someone. Abū Hurayrah reported Allah's Messenger (May peace be upon him) as saying: Do you know what is backbiting? They (the Companions) said: Allah and His Messenger know best. Thereupon he (the Holy Prophet) said: Backbiting implies yours' talking about your brother in a manner which he does not like. (Muslim, 2007; Ibn Wahab, 1995)."

The one who accuses a person of adultery or vilifies him in such terms has accused him of something abhorrent. Slandering is haram in Islam and is indeed a major sin. The Holy Quran says: "But if any one earns a fault or a sin and throws it on to one that is innocent, He carries (on himself) (Both) a falsehood and a flagrant sin (Quran: 4:112)." The Noble Quran says elsewhere: "And why did you not, when you heard it, say? - "It is not right of us to speak of this: Glory to Allah! This is a most serious slander! (Quran: 24:16)." The Holy Quran explicitly warns that it is obligatory to carry out the punishment on one who slanders an innocent person, and the penalty is eighty lashes. Allah says: "And those who accuse chaste women, and produce not four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes, and reject their testimony forever. They indeed are the liars (Quran: 18:4)."

2.3 Backbiting

Backbiting is to mention about someone what he dislikes if it is conveyed to him. It is the same whether to refer a physical defect, a defect in lineage, a behavioral imperfection, or a religious flaw. The basic motive of backbiting is either to boast about oneself falsely by degrading another or envy of a person whom people praise, love, or dignify. Abū Hurayrah reported Allah's Messenger (May peace be upon him) as saying: Do you know what is backbiting? They (the Companions) said: Allah and His Messenger know best. Thereupon he (the Holy Prophet) said: Backbiting implies yours talking about your brother in a manner which he does not like. It was said to him: What is your opinion about this that if I actually find (that failing) in my brother which I made a mention of? He said: If (that failing) is actually found (in him) what you assert, you in fact backbites him, and if that is not in him it is a slander (Muslim, 2007; Dārmī, 2000)."

Allah has criticized backbiting and likened the backbiter to a person who eats his dead brother's flesh. Allah says: "And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting). And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is the One Who accepts repentance, Most Merciful (Quran: 49:12)." Backbiting is a psychological disposition or even a symptom of a mental illness. Backbiting and slander are so widespread that they have become the topic of people's meetings and an avenue for expressing their anger, misgivings and jealousy. Those who indulge in backbiting are oblivious of the fact that they are only harming themselves. This is because on the Day of Resurrection, both the wrongdoer and the wronged will stand before Allah, the Just Judge. Allah will then give the wronged person from the good deeds of the person who wronged him by backbiting or other injustices.

Some situations allow us to inform others of what someone has done. We are permitted to inform the authorities when someone does injustice to us or others.

We are permitted to inform someone who can prevent a perpetrator from committing further vice. It is also permissible for us to tell whoever seeks our advice about a person for business dealings or marriage. In this case we are allowed reveal only as much as necessary about the person so that the enquirer will not feel deceived. All these forms of speaking about others are lawful.

2.4 Tale Bearing

It is called in Arabic *Namimah*. Tale bearing usually stands for the act of carrying tales from one person to another. However, *Namimah* is not limited only to that.

It refers to informing others of the ill wording that is said about them and comprises disclosing of any kept secret affair for separation among fellows and proponent. The Holy Quran says: “Heed not the type of despicable men,- ready with oaths, A slanderer, going about with malicious gossip, (Habitually) hindering (all) good, transgressing beyond bounds, deep in sin, Violent (and cruel),-with all that, base-born (Quran: 68:10-13).”

It is reported from Ḥudhayfah that news reached him (the Holy Prophet) that a certain man carried tales. Upon this Ḥudhayfah remarked: I heard Allah's Messenger (May peace be upon him) saying: “The tale-bearer shall not enter Paradise (Muslim, 2007; Ibn Khuzaymah, 1994).” Tale bearing is a means of destroying and corruption relations that is possessed only by the unthankful.

2.5 Anger

Anger is displeasure, inflammation, rage fierce, hot tempered, choleric, passion excited by a sense of wrong, a violent passion excited by real or supposed injury. Anger is the root of all evils as Abū Hurayrah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: A man asked the Prophet (PBUH) to give him advice, and he (PBUH) said, “Do not get angry.” The man repeated that several times and he (PBUH) replied (every time), “Do not get angry (Bukhārī, 1997; Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, 1991).”

Anger is unlawful in Islam because it creates bitterness, quarrels, criticism and obscene speech. ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Amr said: “The Messenger of Allah said: ‘There are four characteristics, whoever has them all is a pure hypocrite, and whoever has one of its characteristics, he has one of the characteristics of hypocrisy, until he gives it up: when he speaks he lies, when he makes a covenant he betrays it, when he makes a promise he breaks it, and when he disputes he resorts to obscene speech (Muslim, 2007; Ibn al-Khallāl, 1989; Ibn Baṭṭah, 1996).” When a person is under stress he tends to become angry. It is undesirable for a man to lose his temper, due to jokes, playful talks, quarrels or criticism. The real strength of a man lies in controlling his wrath. The Prophet said elsewhere: “The strong man is not the one who wrestles others; rather the strong man is the one who controls himself at times of anger (Muslim, 2007; Nasā’ī, 1406 AH).” When someone is angry, outraged, and attains a state of having wrath against any person, he should seek refuge in Allah by making supplication.

2.6 Spying

Spying on people is one of the results of thinking ill because the heart is not convinced by conjecture; it strives to confirm the ill thought, even though spying on people. For this reason, Allah has forbidden spying by saying: “And don’t spy each other (Quran: 49:12).” One may take into account what is presented in evidence, but it is not allowed to search for defects that are not obvious. Narrated Mu‘āwiyah: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) say: If you search for the faults of the people, you will corrupt them, or will nearly corrupt them (Abū Dāwūd, 2006).” The Prophet (PBUH) also said: “O community of people, who believed by their tongue, and belief did not enter their hearts, do not back-bite Muslims, and do not search for their faults, for if anyone searches for their faults, Allah will search for his fault, and if Allah searches for the fault of anyone, He disgraces him in his house (Quran: 58:8).”

2.7 Secret Conversation

Social alienation is a form of indirect bullying. It occurs when a bully excludes someone from a group on purpose. It also includes a bully spreading rumors and holding secret councils to make fun of someone by pointing out his differences. The Noble Quran says: “Have you not seen those who were forbidden to hold secret counsels, and afterwards returned to that which they had been forbidden, and conspired together for sin and wrong doing and disobedience to the Messenger (Muhammad PBUH)? (Quran: 58:8).” The Noble Quran says elsewhere: “O, you who believe!

When you hold secret counsel, do it not for sin and wrong-doing, and disobedience towards the Messenger (Muhammad PBUH) but do it for righteousness and piety; and fear Allah unto Whom you shall be gathered (Quran: 58:9).” From ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar that the Messenger of Allah, May Allah bless him and grant

him peace, said: "Two must not converse secretly to the exclusion of another person (Muslim, 2007; Ṭabrānī, 1985)."

2.8 Envy

In Islamic Sharia the term used for envy is *Ḥasad*. It refers to the feeling that a person desires for the destruction or removal of a blessing that another person has, a destruction which the bearer of this feeling would himself carry out if he had the power to.

This is quite different to wishing such blessings for one while not desiring for them to be removed from others, for that is, indeed, a positive and commendable wish that leads to contest. It was narrated from Abū Hurayrah that The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "And two will never be gathered in the heart of a slave: Faith and envy (Nasā'ī, 1986)."

Ḥasad is the most destructive emotion which a man may have towards his fellow human being. It causes him to wish evil for others and to be happy when calamity befalls them. Abū Hurayrah reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: "Avoid suspicion, for suspicion is the gravest lie in talk and do not be inquisitive about one another and do not spy upon one another and do not feel envy with the other, and nurse no malice, and nurse no aversion and hostility against one another. And be fellow-brothers and servants of Allah (Muslim 2007; Bayhaqī, 1988)."

2.9 Grudge

A persistent feeling of ill will or resentment resulting from a past insult or injury is called grudge. It was narrated from Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah said: "The people's deeds are presented before Allah twice every week; on Mondays and Thursdays, and every believing slave of Allah is forgiven, except the slave between whom and his brother there is some grudge. It is said: 'Leave these two'-or: 'delay these two-until they reconcile (Muslim 2007)."

Usually the grudge is the result of the anger that someone feels when he thinks that the opponent has annoyed him. It will go if we explain to the person that at some point, his behavior had annoyed us. As human beings we deserve to know our mistakes and we worth it to be told if our actions have annoyed someone, likewise.

2.10 Arrogance

Arrogance is the son of delusion. The Messenger of Allah has defined it as saying: "It is contempt of people and a degrading of the truth (Muslim, 2007; Ibn Mandah, 1406 AH)." Delusion is the deep root of arrogance. When each one looked at other people in scorn, what then would be the situation? There will be no respect for any one. And when every human being has rejected the truth that was shown to him, then oppression and falsehood would prevail. As long as people do not unite on the way of truth, they will not unite on falsehood, and at that time the strongest one will enforce his will. The results of this would be oppression, terrorism, hostility, and sanctity of people's honors and rights.

This is the psychological illness that has side effects. Allah Almighty says: "And swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth; for Allah loveth not any arrogant boaster (Quran: 31:18)." Arrogance is divided into two divisions, an internal and an external. Arrogance is classified under the first one, and the acts are the results of that characteristic. Originally, arrogance is implanted in the soul. It is represented by seeing oneself as superior to others.

The Messenger of Allah said: "No one in whose heart is arrogance the weight of mustered-seed will enter Paradise (Muslim, 2007; Aḥmad, 2001)." Treating people haughtily differs proportionally with the degree of arrogance. Thus, one disdains others and likes that they should stand before him as a servant stands before his master. When his arrogance gets more intense, he views that such a person is not qualified to serve him. If he has a lower degree of arrogance, he disdains being seen as equal to others. If he teaches or argues, he does this in a rough manner, and if he is preached to, he does not accept the preaching. He deals with common people as donkeys, out of disdain and contempt.

2.11 Hate

Hate is feeling of intense or passionate dislike for someone. Hatred is an emotion of intense abhorrence, antipathy and enmity for a person, thing, or phenomenon, generally subjected to a desire to avoid, restrict, remove, or

destroy the hated object. Hatred is also among the most common feelings that human's experience. It can be based on fear of something or past negative consequences of dealing with that thing.

It is often described as the opposite of love. The Messenger of Allah said: "Do not hate one another; do not turn away one another and be, O slaves of Allah, brothers (Muslim, 2007)."

Islam has been accused unfairly of being a religion of hate by those people who never made a sincere effort to understand even the basic teachings of Islam. It was narrated from Abū Hurayrah from the Prophet: A man visited a brother of his in another town, and Allah sent an angel to wait for him on the road.

When he came to him, he said: 'Where are you headed?' He said: 'I am headed to a brother of mine in this town.' He said: 'Have you done him any favor for which you hope to be recompensed?' He said: 'No, but I love him for the sake of Allah (the Mighty and Sublime).' He said: 'I am a messenger from Allah to you, to tell you that Allah loves you as you love him for His sake (Muslim, 2007)."

2.12 Suspicion:

Thinking ill of people is like uttering ill about them. As it is prohibited for us to talk to others about people's defects, it is not lawful to us to think ill of them. The believer should think well of others, presume the best and keep away from doubt and suspicion that have no base, because Allah says: "O, you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin (Quran: 49:12)." Avoiding suspicion is one of the means of peace of mind, happiness and tranquillity, because suspicion encourages one to search and try to find out, and it may lead to spying, and that is usually accompanied by depression, anxiety and distress. Abū Hurayrah (May Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales (Muslim, 2007; Abū Dāwūd, 2006)."

3. How to Respond Bullying?

Islamic Sharia suggests some strategies to reduce the negative consequences and frequency of bullying.

3.1 Prompting the Concept of believing in the hereafter

The concept of believing in the hereafter in Semitic religions can play a significant role for preventing bullying. According to this belief Allah will resurrect all human beings after their death, and He will gather them from their graves to hold them answerable for their deeds which they did in this world. On the Day of Judgment, the Creator will issue verdicts on His slaves. He will reward the maltreated for his sufferings; punish the oppressor for his injustice. The Prophet said: "No pain, hardship, sickness or grief befalls a believer, not even worry that befalls him, but some of his bad deeds will be expiated (Muslim, 2007; Mālik, 2004)."

The Holy Quran has informed us that we are responsible for what we do, for what we say. We will be asked in the Day of Judgment about all these activities. We will be rewarded if we use our organs and faculties in the best way and for the peace. And we will be penalized if we use them in the wrong way. The Holy Quran says: "Not a word does he utter but there is a sentinel by him, ready to note it (Quran: 50:18)." The Noble Quran says elsewhere: "And pursue not that of which thou hast no knowledge; for every act of hearing, or of seeing or of (feeling in) the heart will be enquired into on the Day of Reckoning (Quran: 17:36)."

Narrated Sahl bin Sa'd: Allah's Messenger said, "Whoever can guarantee the chastity of what is between his two jaw-bones and what is between his two legs (i.e., his mouth, his tongue and his private parts), I guarantee paradise for him (Bukhārī, 1997)." 'Iyād bin Ḥimār reported that the Messenger of Allah, May Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Allah has revealed to me that you should be humble so that none of you will oppress anyone else and none of you will disdain another.' I said, 'Messenger of Allah, what do you think I should do when a man reviles me in a low assembly and then I answer him back? Do I incur any wrong action in doing that?' He replied, 'Two men who revile one another are two devils who accuse one another and deny one another' (Bukhārī, 1989)."

3.2 Reporting to Concerned Authority

Telling someone of being bullied or harassed is also a best way for reducing its frequency. This may include parents, a teacher, authority, an organization, police or anyone who can play an influential role for preventing it. Narrated Anas: Allah's Apostle said, "Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or he is an oppressed one." People asked, "O Allah's Apostle! It is all right to help him if he is oppressed, but how should we help him if he is an oppressor?" The Prophet said, "By preventing him from oppressing others (Bukhārī, 1997; Dārmī, 2000)."

3.3 Transcendent Decency and Forgiveness

Releasing the desire to punish someone for an offense is a state of grace. The Holy Quran says: “The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel (the evil) with one which is better (i.e. Allah ordered the faithful believers to be patient at the time of anger, and to excuse those who treat them badly), then verily! He, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend (Quran: 41:34).” That’s why Allah has ordered the Muslims to respond kindly and gently, because sometimes this principle, gentleness and kindness can change your peer into the closest friend.

The Noble Quran says elsewhere: “The recompense for an evil is an evil like thereof, but whoever forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah (Quran: 42:40).” The Messenger of Allah said: “Charity does not decrease wealth. No one forgives, but Allah increases him in honor, and no one humbles himself before Allah but Allah raises him in status (Muslim, 2007; Ibn Ḥibbān, 1993).”

Narrated Jābir bin Sālim: “I saw a man whose opinion was accepted by the people, and whatever he said they submitted to it. I asked: Who is he? They said: This is the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). I said: Give me some advice. He said: Do not abuse anyone. He said that he did not abuse a freeman, or a slave, or a camel or a sheep thenceforth. He said: And if a man abuses and shames you for something which he finds in you, then do not shame him for something which you find in him; he will bear the evil consequences for it (Abū Dāwūd, 2006).” Abū Hurayrah reported that a person said: Allah's Messenger, I have relatives with whom I try, to have close relationship, but they sever (this relation). I treat them well, but they treat me ill. I am sweet to them but they are harsh towards me. Upon this he (the Holy Prophet) said: “If it is so as you say, then you in fact throw hot ashes (upon their faces) and there would always remain with you on behalf of Allah (an Angel to support you) who would keep you dominant over them so long as you adhere to this path of righteousness (Muslim, 2007; Baghwī, 1983).”

3.4 Reconciling:

Allah commands making peace between Muslims that fight each other, The Noble Quran says: “If two parties among the Believers fall into a fight, make you peace between them.” The Messenger of Allah said: “He is not a liar who reconciles between people, saying good things and conveying good things (Muslim, 2007; Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, 1991).” It was narrated from Anas bin Malik that the Messenger of Allah said: “Do not hate one another, do not envy one another, and do not turn away from one another. Be, O slaves of Allah, brothers. It is not permissible for a Muslim to forsake his brother for more than three days (Muslim, 2007).”

4. Conclusion

Islam doesn't tolerate any form of bullying. All Muslim believe that all forms of bullying are invalid due to the immorality of the deed. And all followers of Islam trust that they have a duty to modify all forms of evil. In addition, they believe the same to non-believers in that bullying is always wrong, regardless, of place or time. We should try to stop it by our hands. If we have not enough strength to do that then we should try to prevent it by our mouth. And if we can't even do that then we should think of it as bad in our heart and it is the lowest level of faith. The Prophet (SAW) said: “He who amongst you sees something evil should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he does not have enough strength to do it then he should do it with his tongue, and if he doesn't have enough strength to do it then he should (abhor it) from his heart and that is the least of faith (Muslim, 2007; Aḥmad, 2001).”

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