



The General Presidency for the Affairs of
the Grand Holy Mosque and the Prophet's Holy Mosque

Translation of the Two Holy Mosques Khutbahs
A Joint Project



Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University
College of Languages and Translation

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The Detrimental Effects of Rumours on the Individual and Society

Khutbah Topic

His Eminence Sheikh Saud Al-Shuraim –May Allah protect him– delivered this Friday's *Khutbah* titled **The Detrimental Effects of Rumours on the Individual and Society**. In his *Khutbah*, Sheikh Al-Shuraim addressed the adverse effects of rumours on the individual and society, warned against relaying unverified news, and explained that the onus is on the Muslims in general and on journalists and media corps in particular who have to corroborate the news before broadcasting them.

Part One

Praise is due to Allah. We thank Him, seek His help and forgiveness, and to Him we return in repentance. We seek refuge in Almighty Allah from the evils of our souls and from our sinful deeds. He whom Allah guides is the rightly guided; he whom He leaves astray will find none to guide him. I bear witness that there is no deity worth worshipping except Almighty Allah with no associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger.

[O you who believe! Fear Allâh (by doing all that He has ordered and by abstaining from all that He has forbidden) as He should be feared. [Obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always], and die not except in a state of Islâm (as Muslims) with complete submission to Allâh..] [Āl-Imrân: 102]

[O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife [Hawwa (Eve)], and from them both He created many men and women and fear Allâh through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allâh is Ever an All-Watcher over] [Al-Nisā': 1]



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[O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth. He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allâh and His Messenger (SAW) he has indeed achieved a great achievement (i.e. he will be saved from the Hell-fire and made to enter Paradise)][Al-Aḥzāb: 70-71]

Nowthen, O people!

Man is naturally predisposed to follow up news and to believe rumours and fish for them before they actually happen. At the same time, people are normally too impatient to verify these rumours meticulously, prudently and discerningly. This is the nature of the majority, except those very few whom Allah has blessed with His Mercy.

[Man is created of haste...] [Al-Anbiyā': 37]

[And man invokes (Allâh) for evil as he invokes (Allâh) for good and man is ever hasty [i.e., if he is angry with somebody, he invokes (saying): "O Allâh! Curse him, etc." and that one should not do, but one should be patient]] [Al-Iṣrā': 11]

It is stipulated rationally and in accordance with *shari'ah* that impending events and public news relative to the fundamentals of the *Ummah* must be carefully and prudently scrutinised. One must not hasten to believe any piece of news until proven true, and until its stipulations met and impediments dissipated, through a cautious and noble soul that is well-behaved when it comes to managing crises, clear from any ridicule or contempt with respect to the personal rights, reputation and honour of others.

Some take haste and impatience to grab and act upon rumours as a screen to conceal their ignominious failure and narrow-mindedness. This is nothing but an aberration that ties the heart to suspicion, and induces irrational judgment in times of crises. This kind of behaviour will bring nothing but shame and pain in lieu of safety and security.

Man's mind and discretion are couched in the prudence and authenticity inspired by his mind and intellect vis-à-vis the rights, honour, property and religion of others. Suffice it to remember that



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Allah has set remorse and regret as a consequence of succumbing to rumours, but alas! It would only be too late to roll back those hasty actions! ***[O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with a news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful to what you have done.]***[Al-Hujurat: 6]

Most rumours and news are motivated by curiosity. People are inquisitive by nature; for no apparent reason they are eager to know any piece of news and its implications. Some would even pay money to get that piece of news although they might get it gratis if only they waited for a few moments. This prudent wait might make a difference that only Allah knows. It is said, (Here, the Sheikh recites two lines of poetry from Tarafa's Poem):

*The days will reveal to you the things that you knew not
And the news will be brought to you effortlessly
The news will be conveyed to you by someone to whom you sold nothing
And to whom you have never given appointment willingly.*

However, not all random rumour reception and haphazard news circulation are motivated by curiosity. They might be geared up to create unrest and instability in order to realize dubious religious, economic, social, political, or intellectual purposes. They might seek to destabilize what is so firmly established and to scatter what is coherent. Such a subversive action may lead to disunity and lack of trust. People might even interject, "How can this be? It has been said ..."

A serious society would not tolerate such media whose curiosity breeds discord rather than concord; one that is harmful rather than useful and that is a wasteful of energy and efforts that may otherwise be exploited in construction and development. A society with such features is a lethargic society spending its leisure in fruitless inaction that breeds nothing but further vacuum. A society that preoccupies itself with gossip is incapable of building knowledge or sailing through tumultuous misfortunes.

The Prophet (May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him) said, "***Allah has disliked three things for you: chatter and prattle, wasting money and inquisitiveness.***" [Narrated by Bukhari]

Behold –May Allah protect you– how the *hadith* has aligned gossip, chatter and prattle, with inquisitiveness and squandering one's money. This seems to imply that money squandering leads to bankruptcy; similarly inquisitiveness may lead to adversity and calamity; gossip leads to wasting time. This only creates an atmosphere of uneasiness and anxiety. May Allah bless Ibn Al-Jawzi's soul who said, "*I have seen many people who do not know the meaning of life. Some kill their time speaking about Sultans and prices going up or down, and the like. I knew then that*



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Allah (May He be extolled) has not disclosed the honour of life and the value of vital times except to those whom He has guided to exploit them.”

[But none is granted it (the above quality) except those who are patient, and none is granted it except the owner of the great portion (of the happiness in the Hereafter i.e. Paradise and in this world of a high moral character)][Fuṣṣilat: 35]

Servants of Allah!

Allah (Sublime be He) has taught us prudence and patience and not to take whatever we hear for granted without verification. If we do, calamitous outcomes may ensue that we might later regret such as confusion, groundless accusation, reversal of truth, incriminating the innocent, attributing false statements to people or misinterpreting their statements.

Having heard that the Prophet (May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him) had divorced his wives, Al-Fārūq (Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, May Allah be pleased with him) went to the mosque and found that people were discussing the story. He could not wait to ask the Prophet (May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him) about what happened. “Did you divorce your wives?” Omar enquired of the Prophet. “No! I did not” the Prophet (May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him) answered. Omar then stood at the door of the mosque and announced, “The Messenger of Allah (May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him) did not divorce his wives!” The following verse from of the Qur’ān was revealed on that occasion, *[When there comes to them some matter touching (public) safety or fear, they make it known (among the people), if only they had referred it to the Messenger or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have understood it from them (directly). Had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allāh upon you, you would have followed Shaitān (Satan), save a few of you.]*[Al-Nisā’: 83]

Our Lord (Sublime be He) and our Prophet (May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him) have taught us not to funnel what we hear into our ears without corroborating it first, and not to relay it randomly and freely. The first thing we need to do when we hear a piece of news is to verify it and to know if it is true or false.



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We need to look into the meaning of the news so that we do not take it out of context or assign to it additional value; needless to say that receiving unconfirmed news without proper evidence stigmatizes one with falsehood which may, in turn, lead to deprecation. The Prophet (*May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him*) said, “*Suffice it for a person to report all he hears to be counted as a liar!*”

It is all the more crucial and serious when the news concerns matters related to religion such as reporting what the Chosen One (*May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him*) has said or done; an example of this is sending news about the *best deeds* through communication sites and groups without confirming the authenticity of the news. The Prophet (*May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him*) has said: “*Whoever tells lies about me intentionally, then (surely) let him take his seat in the Hell-fire.*”

That is what our religion –O servants of Allah–has taught us in this regard. So do rational people realize this, especially those who work in the media? This concerns media people in the first place since the media is a source of news, incidents, and rumours through which rational men judge the truthfulness and falseness (honesty and dishonesty) of these media sources. Also, on the individual level, man will be held accountable for whatever he says or writes; his straightforward utterances that may not otherwise be interpreted; he should not accuse anybody until enough evidence is presented. Allah (*May He be extolled*) said: [*Not a word does he (or she) utter, but there is a watcher by him ready (to record it).*] [Qāf: 18]. He also said: [*But verily, over you (are appointed angels in charge of mankind) to watch you (10) Kirāman (honourable) Kâtibîn writing down (your deeds) (11) They know all that you do*]. [Al-Infīṭār: 10-12]

May Allah bless you and me by the Glorious *Qur'ān* and make its verses and wise sayings beneficial to you and me! This is what I have said. If it is correct, it is so thanks to Allah, but if it is wrong, it is my own fault and Satan's. I ask Allah to forgive my sins, yours, and those of all Muslims, so ask Him for forgiveness, for He is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful!

Part Two

Praise be to Allah for His blessings, and thanks are due to Him for His guidance and bounty.

Now then,



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Observe *taqwa* (fear of Allah's punishment), O servants of Allah, and you should know that when Allah (**May He be extolled**) ordered us to verify the authenticity of the news before conveying it or issuing judgments based on it. This is because otherwise the consequences might be so serious especially with respect to the well-known necessities that concern people's religion, minds, honours, properties, and blood. This is not to mention the value and effect of the news on the legal system, judgment and sentencing, *fatwa*, and the media. How many times has false news killed a soul? How many times has false news caused an innocent person to be jailed? How many times has false news caused a man to divorce his wife and an entire family to be divided? How many times has false news scared some people and rendered others bankrupt? How many times has false news caused suspicion, led to disgrace and aggression vis-à-vis people, possessions, and religion?

In most cases dealing incorrectly with the news is related either to the issue of its authenticity or the way it is interpreted. This entails that the news receiver must possess two major features: knowledge and justice. Knowledge is important because judging a thing is an aspect (branch) of conceiving it. Justice, on the other hand, requires one to deal with the news justly and fairly. He must not take sides with those whom he likes and accept their news unconditionally, nor reject unjustly the news of those whom he dislikes.

If people were patient then they would be able to spare themselves and the others much pain and disaster for much news is false in the first place. Therefore, confirming news truthfulness enables one to avoid its bad consequences. Indeed, many a silent person has often been reported to have said something that reached the four directions and travelled far away!

One of the poets put it nicely thus:

*They have reported what I have never said;
Indeed, the blight of news lies in the reporters.*

There is an incident in the *Sunnah* of the Chosen One (Prophet Muhammad) (**May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him**) from which one may draw a lesson, especially in matters related to religion. It is reported in the Sahih books of Bukhari and Muslim that the Prophet (**May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him**) lead his companions in a four-*rakats* prayer, but performed two *rakats* instead of four. Some people quickly went out and said that the prayer has been shortened. A man called *Thu Alyadein* said to the Prophet: "*Have you forgotten or has the prayer been shortened?*" He (**May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him**) said: "***I have not forgotten, nor has the prayer been shortened***". The man said: "*surely, you have forgotten.*" So the Prophet performed two *rakats* and then made *Tasleem* (i.e. said *AsalamuAlaikum* on both sides)...(until the end of the *hadith*.)



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Notice, O you –may Allah protect you– the effect of hastiness in conveying the news. It could have led to a change in the rules of religion. Also, notice the effect of confirming the news; how it transformed the misunderstanding and suspicion that the prayer was shortened into the fact that it was forgetfulness and not a new legislation.

O servants of Allah! Observe *taqwa* and make *Salat* on whom Allah has called out to you to ask Him to send His *Salat* (Graces, Honours and Mercy) and Peace on. Allah, the Almighty, says: [*O you who believe! Send your Salât (ask Allâh to bless) on him (Muhammad peace be upon him), and (you should) greet (salute) him with the Islâmic way of greeting (salutation i.e. As-Salâmu 'Alaikum).*][Al-Aḥzâb: 56]

O Allah! Send Your *Salat* (Graces, Honours, Mercy) and Peace on Your Servant and Messenger Muhammad, on his four Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman and Ali, on all the Companions of Your Prophet Muhammad (*May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him*), and the *tabi'în* and on those who righteously followed them till the Day of Judgment! O Allah! Be also pleased with us all, along with them, by Your Pardon and Generosity, O You, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate of all!

O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Fail polytheism and polytheists (who associate partners with You)! O Allah! Grant victory to Your Religion, Your Holy Book, Your Prophet's *Sunnah*, and Your true servants!

O Allah! Bring an end to the suffering of Muslims! Rescue those in distress, and help those indebted pay back their debts! Cure those of us and those of the Muslims who are ill, O You, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate!

O Allah! Set right the conditions of Muslims everywhere! O Allah! Set right the conditions of Muslims everywhere! O Allah! Set right the conditions of Muslims everywhere! O Allah! Be with our oppressed brothers and sisters in their religion everywhere, O You, the Lord of Majesty and Bounty!

O Allah! Grant us security in our homelands! Set right our leaders and those responsible for our affairs, and make our leadership from among those who are fearful of You, who observe *taqwā*, and seek your satisfaction! O You, Lord of *al-'ālamîn* (the worlds)!

O Allah! Guide our Imam (leader) to do and say whatever you please and accept. O You the Ever-Living, the Eternal Guardian! O Allah! Make his retinue righteous, O You, the Lord of Majesty and Bounty!

O Allah! We seek refuge in You of latent and manifest afflictions, and if You will an affliction to befall Your servants, O Allah! Take us to Your side (let us die) without being



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negligent or afflicted, O You the Lord of Majesty and Bounty! O Allah! Grant our selves their *taqwa*, purify them for You are the best Who purifies them; You are their owner and Lord.

[... Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire!][Al-Baqarah: 201]

Glorified be You, our Lord, the Lord of Honour and Power! You are free from what they attribute unto You! May Allah's *Salat* (Graces, Honours, Mercy) and Peace be upon the Messengers! And the last of our supplications is all praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!