

Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān on the Dangers of Spreading Rumors

The Noble Shaykh al-‘Allāmah Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān was asked,

[Q]: What is the dangers of rumors and spreading speech and narrations without deliberation and verification?

[A]: It is not permissible to transmit rumors and to spread fear amongst the Muslims and weaken their spirits; this action is from the actions of the hypocrites who spread rumors amongst the Muslims in order to impede them and set them back, and to bring about fear in their hearts. So this is from the actions of the hypocrites, and Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) says,

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن جَاءَكَ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنْهُ﴾

“O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with a news, verify it.”

Meaning: verify (its accuracy).

﴿أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصِحُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ﴾

“Lest you harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful to what you have done.” [Sūrah al-Hujurāt 49:6]

And Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) says:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأَلَلَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١١﴾﴾

“Verily, those who like that al-Fāḥishah (the crime of illegal sexual intercourse) should be propagated among those who believe, they will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter. And Allāh knows and you know not.” [Sūrah al-Nūr 24:19]

And Allah (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) says:

﴿ وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوْ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ ﴾

“When there comes to them some matter touching (public) safety or fear, they make it known (among the people),” meaning they spread it amongst the people.

﴿ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ ﴾

“If only they had referred it to the Messenger,” meaning in his lifetime (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and back to his *Sunnah* after his death.

﴿ وَإِلَىٰ أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ ﴾

“Or to those charged with authority among them.”

Meaning, the rulers (in a Muslim land) or the people who possess good reasoning and sound insight and know how to bring solutions to problems and they can distinguish what is sound from what is false; the matter should be returned to them so they can resolve it.

Further, it shouldn't be a discussion and debate amongst the common folk in their sittings. And whoever hears anything from that they should conceal it and not spread it, and should not be one who seeks to impede and set back the Muslims and spark fear within them. And today, as you all know, we are in the era of rumors, and the means of spreading rumors are widespread due to these new inventions and tools of social communication and everything that is spread on them. So it is upon us to be cautious of that and not to spark fear amongst the Muslims, and that we do not spread except what is good and what causes stabilization of the Muslims. And we know that Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) is with those who are patient, and that He is with the Believers.

﴿ بَلَىٰ إِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُم مِّن فَوْرِهِمْ هَذَا يُمْدِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آلَافٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ ﴾

﴿ مُسَوِّمِينَ ﴾ ١٢٥

“Yes, if you hold on to patience and piety, and the enemy comes rushing at you; your Lord will help you with five thousand angels having marks (of distinction).” [Sūrah Āl-Imrān 3:125]

Allah (بَارِكُ وَتَعَالَى) is with His servants, and He won't forsake them if they maintain truthfulness with Him and turn towards Him. However, it is upon us not to spread these rumors and that we bury them in their tracks, and we save the Muslims from having to hear them. This is because they cause disturbances amongst the Muslims and spark fear amongst those who are in a state of safety, and in that is aiding the people of evil. So it is incumbent to bury them and not to circulate them.

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Translated by Anwar Wright