

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ
فُتُضَيِّحُوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ
وَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ تَمَامٌ

Again, our Lord states: ***O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful*** (Al-Hujurat, 49:12)

These noble verses teach us: A believer does not act on suspicion. He does not pry into the faults and sins of others, nor does he readily believe everything he hears. A believer investigates, questions, and acts according to the truth.

Respected Believers!

One of the greatest causes leading a person into error is believing every word they hear and passing judgment without investigation. In this time when truth and falsehood are mixed together, the greatest measure for a believer is to base oneself not on hearsay, but on the truth. The topic of today's sermon will be the harms of believing everything that is said without investigation.

The Almighty Lord states: ***"O you who have believed, if a wicked person comes to you with information, investigate it, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become regretful for what you have done."*** (Al-Hujurat, 49:6)

This noble verse clearly shows that not every piece of news is true. The reports of those who carry tales and gossip are not to be trusted, because carrying tales (namimah) is forbidden in Islam. The person who makes this a habit is, in the expression of the noble verse, a wicked person (fasiq).

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: ***"The tale-carrier will not enter Paradise."*** (Bukhari)

However, the main point to be noted here is that one must not readily accept the word of a person who carries tales and believe what they have brought without investigating its truthfulness. The reported word may be incomplete, may be incorrect, or the person bringing it may have ill intent. If a person transmits a word exactly as he heard it, he has committed a sin. If the transmitted word contains deficiency, addition, or falsehood, then that person not only carries tales but also slanders, and sows seeds of discord between two people. If we immediately believe every word we hear and pass judgment based on it, we become partners in these forbidden acts, unknowingly enlarging and fueling discord.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: ***"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent."*** (Bukhari)

Respected Assembly!

Allah ﷻ warns us in a noble verse: ***"And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart – about all those [one] will be questioned."*** (Al-Isra, 17:36)

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Many injustices and resentments occur because of words believed without investigation. A single word, a slander, a piece of gossip can darken a person's life.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: ***"It is sufficient falsehood for a person to speak of everything he hears."*** (Muslim)

This responsibility applies to all of us. However, the responsibility of this noble verse is even greater for: Parents, leaders, and those in positions of authority. Therefore, the responsibility falling upon everyone is: not to pass judgment on everything they hear, not to listen to complaints from only one side, and to investigate the matter patiently without acting impulsively. For judgments made hastily often result in oppression and injustice, and Allah the Exalted does not love the oppressors.

I conclude my sermon with the warning of our Lord, the Almighty and Glorious: ***"Man does not utter any word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record it]."*** (Qaf, 50:18)