

ANSWER

إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسِبُونَهُ هَيِّئًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ
وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا سُبْحَنَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَنٌ عَظِيمٌ

When you were welcoming it with your tongues and were saying with your mouths something of which you had no knowledge, and were taking it as a trivial matter, while in the sight of Allah it was grave.

And why, when you heard of it, did you not say, 'It is not for us to speak about this. Pure are You (O Allah). This is a terrible calumny.' [24:15-16]

COMMENTARY

When you were welcoming it with your tongues - 24:15. The word تلقى means to make inquiries from each other (to be inquisitive) and repeat before others. Here it means to repeat hearsay without probe and proof.

And were taking it as a trivial matter, while in the sight of Allah it was grave - 24:15. It means that you regarded it a trifle matter that you heard it and passed it on to others. But in the sight of Allah it was a great sin that without probing and finding out any proof you passed on something to others to cause harm to other Muslims and to make their life miserable.

And why, when you heard of it, did you not say, 'It is not for us to speak about this. Pure are You (O Allah). This is a terrible calumny.' - 24:16. In this verse the same advice is repeated which was imparted in an earlier verse, with further elaboration as to what should the Muslims do in such a situation when they hear a rumor. The advice is that they should say in categorical terms that they are not allowed even to mention such a thing for which there is no proof. It is a very grave accusation.

A doubt and its answer

If someone has a doubt that just as the truth of an event cannot be verified without a proof, and hence it is unlawful to mention it and spread it, likewise, the report of that event should not be believed to be a lie and a 'terrible calumny' without a proof of its being a lie. The answer to this doubt is that it is the integral spirit of Islam to consider every Muslim as free from sins, and this is based on reasoning. Anything contrary to this proven reality is a lie if put forward without a proof, and no further proof is required to prove this assertion a lie. This is enough to call it a slander if a believer Muslim is blamed for a crime without proof.

TAFSĪR IBN KATHĪR

(When you were propagating it with your tongues,) Mujahid and Sa'id bin Jubayr said, "Some of you were relating it to others," where one says, 'I heard this from so-and-so, and so-and-so said such and such, and some of them mentioned such and such.' Others recited the Ayah: (إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ) ("When you were inventing a lie



with your tongues...") In Sahih Al-Bukhari, it is recorded that `A'ishah recited it like that. According to her, the meaning refers to lies which a person persists in telling. The first recitation is preferred and more popular, and the majority recite it that way, but the second is reported from `A'ishah, the Mother of the believers.

(and uttering with your mouths that whereof you had no knowledge,) means, you were speaking about something which you knew nothing about. Then Allah says:

(you counted it a little thing, while with Allah it was very great.) In the Two Sahihs it is reported that: *(A man may say a word that angers Allah without realizing how far it will go, and because of that he will be thrown into Hell a distance greater than that between heaven and earth.) According to another report: (And he may not pay any attention to it.)*

End.

