

Currency to Slanders – Grave Matter before God

Surah-24, An Nur Medina 102

The Quran's Text & Yusuf Ali's Translation:

لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا... ^{up}

24: 12. Why did not Believers -- men and women -- when ye heard of the affair -- put the best construction on it in their own minds

2965. Both men and women were involved in spreading the scandal. Their obvious duty was to put the best, not the worst, construction on the acts of one of the "mothers of the Believers".

...وَقَالُوا هَذَا إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٢﴾

and say, "This (charge) is an obvious lie"?

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ... ^{up}

24: 14. Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah on you, in this world and the Hereafter

لَمَسَّكُمْ فِي مَا أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

a grievous penalty would have seized you in that ye rushed glibly into this affair.

[2967. Cf. 24:10 above. It was Allah's mercy that saved them from many evil consequences, both in this life and in the Hereafter, - in this life, because the Prophet's wise measures nipped in the bud any incipient estrangement between those nearest and dearest to him, and - from a spiritual aspect in that the minor agents in spreading the scandal repented and were forgiven. No doubts and divisions, no mutual distrust, were allowed to remain in their hearts after the whole matter had been cleared up.

إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِالسِّنِّتِ كُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكُم بِهِ عِلْمٌ... up

24: 15. Behold, ye received it on your tongues, and said out of your mouths things of which ye had no knowledge;

وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾

and ye thought it to be a light matter, while it was most serious in the sight of Allah.

[2968. There are three things here reprobated by way of moral teaching:

1. if others speak an evil word, that is no reason why you should allow it to defile your tongue;
2. if you get a thought or suspicion which is not based on your certain knowledge, do not give it currency by giving it expression; and
3. others may think it is a small matter to speak lightly of something which blasts a person's character or reputation: in the eyes of Allah it is a most serious matter in any case, but specially when it involves the honour and reputation of pious women.]

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا... ^{up}

24: 16. And why did ye not, when ye heard it, say
-- "It is not right of us to speak of this:

..سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾

Glory to Allah! this is a most serious slander!"

[2969. The right course would have been to stop any further currency of false slanders by ignoring them and at least refusing to help in their circulation. The exclamation "**Subhanaka**", "Praise to Thee (O Allah)", or "Glory to Allah!" is an exclamation of surprise and disavowal as much as to say, "We do not believe it! And we shall have nothing to do with you, O false slanderers!"]

Muhammad Asad's Translation

24:12 Why do not the believing men and women, whenever such [a rumour] is heard, 15 think the best of one another and say, "This is an obvious falsehood"? (24:13) Why do they not [demand of the accusers 16 that they] produce four witnesses to prove their allegation? 17 - for, if they do not produce such witnesses, it is those [accusers] who, in the sight of God, are liars indeed!

24:14 And were it not for God's favour upon you, [O men,] and His grace in this world and in the life to come, awesome suffering would indeed have afflicted you 18 in result of all [the calumny] in which you indulge

24:15 when you take it up with your tongues, uttering with your mouths something of which you have no knowledge, and deeming it a light matter, whereas in the sight of God it is an awful thing.

24:16 And [once again]: Why do you not say, whenever you hear such [a rumour], "It does not behoove us to speak of this, O Thou who art limitless in Thy glory: this is an awesome calumny"? 18 '

(24: 17) God admonishes you [hereby] lest you ever revert to the like of this [sin], if you are [truly] believers;

(24: 18) for God makes [His] messages clear unto you - and God is all-knowing, wise!

[Asad's comments: 1 5 Lit.; "whenever you hear it" - the pronoun "you" indicating here the community as a whole.

1 6 This interpolation is necessary in view of the fact that the believers spoken of in the preceding verse are blamed, not for making the false accusation, but for not giving it the lie.

17 Lit., "in support thereof" ('alayhi).

18 Sc, "yourselves and your whole society" . With this and the next verse the discourse returns to, and elaborates, the idea touched upon in verse 10 and explained in note 1 1 .]