

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allāh, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

### The Necessity of Precision and Caution When Narrating Aḥādīth in the Social Media Era

Since the dawn of the Internet and the smartphone, a great amount of information is shared and broadcasted around the world. It is accessible to all people regardless of their piety, education and intelligence. This, undoubtedly, can result in the immediate spread of information without verification of its authenticity or accuracy.

All praise belongs to Allāh Who has legislated for mankind rules and etiquettes for the processing of information, which enables them to avoid contributing to the spread of misinformation and lies, if they implement the divine commandments of their Lord.

Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) said,

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهْلَةٍ فَتُصِحُّوا عَلَى مَا

فَعَلْتُمْ نَدِمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”

Brothers and sisters, in light of the above, we have to be very cautious when we transmit aḥādīth that have reached us from unknown sources, if we have not confirmed their authenticity. To understand the gravity of this matter, I would like to share some beautiful words of the Muḥaddith of this era, Shaykh Albānī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ):

“From the immense calamities that have affected the Muslims from the earliest of ages is the spread of weak and fabricated aḥādīth among them – and I do not exclude anyone from this, even if they were their scholars, except for those whom Allāh willed [to

escape this] from the Imāms and specialists of ḥadīth like al-Bukhārī, Ibn Maʿīn, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and other than them.

The spread of these aḥādīth has led to many evils. From them is that which is connected to matters of creed and the unseen, and from them is that which is connected to the legislative rulings...

Imām Ibn Ḥibbān (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) stated:

‘Chapter: Mention of the consequence of entering the Hellfire for the one who attributes something to al-Muṣṭaphá (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), while he lacks knowledge of its authenticity.’

Then he mentioned with his chain of narration the ḥadīth that was narrated by Abū Hurairah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) [from the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)]:

‘Whoever attributes to me what I did not say, then let him take his seat in the Hellfire.’

The chain of narration of this ḥadīth is sound and its origin is found in Bukhārī and Muslim with a similar wording.

Then he said:

‘Mention of the narration that proves what we alluded to earlier in the previous chapter.’

Then he mentioned with his chain of narration the ḥadīth that was narrated by Samurah b. Jundub (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) who said that the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

‘Whoever narrates a ḥadīth from me knowing that it is a lie, then he is one of the liars.’

This ḥadīth was collected by Imām Muslim (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) in the introduction to his Ṣaḥīḥ from both Samurah and al-Mughīrah b. Shu‘bah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا), and he said: ‘This ḥadīth is Mashhūr.’

Then Ibn Ḥibbān (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) stated:

‘Mention of a second narration that supports [the conclusion] that we have arrived at.’

He then mentioned the first ḥadīth, which was narrated by Abū Hurairah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ).

It has become clear from what we have mentioned that it is not permissible to spread aḥādīth, nor narrate them without verification of their authenticity, and whoever does this then this is his share of lying upon the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). And he (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

‘Verily, to lie about me is not like lying upon anyone else. Whoever deliberately lies about me, then let him take his seat in the Hellfire.’<sup>1</sup>

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“It is sufficient for a person to have lied who narrates everything that he hears.”

Ibn Ḥibbān commented on the above ḥadīth:

“This narration comprises of a rebuke of the person to narrate everything that he hears until he knows its authenticity with certainty.”<sup>2</sup>

People spreading weak aḥādīth can occur “due to their ignorance of the Sunnah or due to them being too lazy to return to the books of the specialists [of ḥadīth],”<sup>3</sup> which stresses the

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<sup>1</sup> Summarized from *Al-Da‘īfah* (1/47-51). Taken from the introduction of his monumental work ‘A Collection of Weak and Fabricated Aḥādīth and Their Evil Effect Upon This Nation’

<sup>2</sup> *Kitāb al-Majrūhīn* (1/17). It is also important to be precise when quoting the words of the scholars to provide an accurate reference in order to allow the reader to refer back to the source of these words, especially translations.

<sup>3</sup> *Tamām al-Minnah*, p. 32. Shaykh Albānī mentions at the beginning of this book a number of important principles in ḥadīth. Principle no. 11: It is not allowed to mention a weak ḥadīth without clarifying its weakness.

importance of striving in our pursuit of beneficial knowledge from the classical works of the scholars of Islam.

No doubt, it is a worrying sign when we find some of our brothers and sisters extremely diligent when it comes to participating in WhatsApp groups and social media forums, but lacking the same diligence when it comes to seeking knowledge.

Our Shaykh, Muqbil b. Hādī (رحمته الله) used to teach his students to get accustomed to enquiring about the original source of a ḥadīth, the companion that narrated it and its authenticity. It was rare for a lesson to pass without the Shaykh asking his students – young and old – questions like: “Who collected the ḥadīth?” “Who narrated it?” “What is its authenticity?”

This is the way of the people of ḥadīth. May Allāh bless us all to walk in their footsteps.

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