

# **The Importance of Verifying Information**

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فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

**"So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord,  
let him work righteousness and associate none  
as a partner in the worship of his Lord."**

The Noble Qur.aan - Soorah al-Kahf, Aayah 110

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بِسْمِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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*From the important characteristics that a student of knowledge must adorn himself with is: verifying the information that he narrates and also to ascertain the [correctness of the] judgments he passes.*

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<sup>1</sup>From the important characteristics that a student of knowledge must adorn himself with is: verifying the information that he narrates and also to ascertain the [correctness of the] judgements he passes.

When information is narrated, it must be first verified whether the statement has been correctly attributed to that person. If the ascription is correct, then the ruling must also be scrutinised. It is possible that this ruling that you have heard is actually due to a principle that you are ignorant of; so you hold it to be an error and in reality it is not an error.

### How do we solve this problem in such instances?

The solution is that you contact the person to whom this information has been attributed and say to him: certain information has been narrated from you...is it correct? After this, you discuss and debate it with him.

Maybe the fact that you censured him and distanced yourself from him is due to merely hearing his statement and not knowing the reason behind which this statement was made.

It is said, 'if the reason is known, astonishment [at the statement is removed].'

So you must first verify with regards to the information and the ruling, and then after this you should contact the one to whom the statement has been attributed and ask him: is it correct what has been narrated? Then you discuss and debate with him; either he is upon the truth and therefore you agree with him, or the truth is with you and he agrees with you.

Also, verifying is a very important matter. This is because those who narrate may have evil intentions whereby they deliberately distort the statement they have heard.

Sometimes however, they may not have evil intentions but they have misunderstood something which was not intended [by the one who said it]. Therefore it is obligatory to verify.

When the transmission of information has been verified, then the next stage is to discuss and debate the one from whom the statement has

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<sup>1</sup> Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-Uthaymeen - Kitaab al-'Ilm, p50-p52

been narrated. This is before you pass a judgement on the statement; whether it is a mistake or not.

After discussing and debating, maybe you will realise that the truth is with the one from whom the statement has been narrated.

In conclusion: if something is narrated regarding a particular individual and you see it to be an error then you should deal with it in three stages:

**Firstly:** to verify whether this information is correct

**Secondly:** to investigate the correctness of the ruling. If it is correct then help him and defend him. If, however you see it to be incorrect then:

**Thirdly:** to contact the one to whom this statement has been attributed and then to discuss and debate with him. This should be done calmly and with respect.



<sup>2</sup>**Question:** How do we reconcile between accepting the information of a 'thiqah' (trustworthy person), and when the accused swears an oath to falsify the statement of this trustworthy person?

**Response:** There is no contradiction; the information of a trustworthy person is accepted by default, except if it is disputed.

If there exists some type of disputation [with regards to his information], then the narration of the trustworthy person is not to be accepted. This applies especially to worldly disputes wherein one's desires may deceive him into oppressing another person. [In such instances his information is not accepted by default] even if he is trustworthy. This is in order to close the avenues of oppression between people.

You should accept the information of a trustworthy person except in cases of dispute and argumentation – [the burden] of proof is upon the

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<sup>2</sup> Shaykh 'Uthmaan ibn 'Abdillah as-Saalimee - Refer to audio file here published here: <http://www.madeenah.com/article.cfm?id=1377>

claimant and the one who denies the allegation takes an oath.<sup>3</sup> [This holds true even if the claimant] is from the most pious of people.

The Companions (may Allaah be pleased with them) refused [to bear witness] when the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) said to the Bedouin, **'you sold me your horse.'** This Bedouin man had sold his horse to the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam), but he then said to the Prophet, **'who is a witness for you?'** The Companions withheld [from bearing witness], even though one should not withhold in such situations with regards to the rights of the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam).

However the Companions knew that the one who makes a claim must bring evidences. So the companions refrained themselves, until Khuzaimah bin Thaabit came and bore witness that the Prophet has indeed bought the horse from the Bedouin.

The Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) said [to Khuzaimah]: **'How? Where you present?'** He replied: 'No, however we hold you to be truthful with regards to the revelations from the sky; how can we not hold you to be truthful regarding a horse?!

So the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) considered him bearing witness like the witness that is given by two people.

Also, disputes would occur amongst the Companions and they were all just and trustworthy; however the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) did not make a judgement except due to evidences.



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3 This is the wording of a longer hadeeth which has been narrated by Ibn Abbaas and collected by al-Bayhaqi. A section of this hadeeth is also mentioned in both Saheeh al-Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim. The Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, **((if people were to be given that which they merely claim, a man would claim the people's wealth and blood (life). Due to this, the onus of proof is upon the claimant and the one who denies the allegations takes an oath.))**

This hadeeth, as well as the consensus of the scholars, shows that the claim of any person is not to be accepted nor considered if he demands something until he brings evidences and witnesses verifying this claim.

For further clarification, please refer to the explanation of the Forty Hadeeth of Imaam an-Nawawi by Shaykh Saalih Aal ash-Shaykh and others scholars.

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<sup>4</sup>Question: Is the narration of the trustworthy person accepted without any exceptions and without verification? For example, if one of the scholars said: so and so insulted and reviled the companions; in this case is it obligatory upon me to accept this statement and pass a ruling upon it, or is it necessary to verify?

Response: It is absolutely necessary to verify, even if the one who narrated this statement is from the people of knowledge. [This applies] except if he referenced this statement to his book, and the book is present and therefore it is possible for the people to refer back to this book.

As for mere statements without mentioning any basis to them, especially if the person [being spoken about] is present...

If this person was from the early generations and he is known for innovations, or from the heads of the people of innovation and every person knows about him such as Jahm bin Safwaan...if it is said: he is an innovator, then this statement is correct.

As for what occurs due to an error or a mistake, and the people [being criticised] have great efforts in serving the religion, then you find some people passing judgements upon them due to this mere error. This is a mistake and it is incorrect.<sup>5</sup>



<sup>6</sup>Question: Some of the Callers accuse another Caller; if they are then asked regarding this, they will say: 'a man who is known for his knowledge and trustworthiness narrated it to us.' If you then say to them: '[Let us] verify,' they respond: 'verification only applies when the narrator is a Faasiq (disobedient).'

What is your opinion with regards to this?

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4 Shaykh Abdul-Muhsin al-'Abbaad - Explanation of Sunan Abi Dawood, Cassette 512, 18mins 45secs

5 The audio transcription can be found at:  
<http://audio.islamweb.net/audio/index.php?page=FullContent&audioid=173360>

6 Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-Uthaymeen - Refer to audio file here:  
<http://www.madeenah.com/article.cfm?id=1389>

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Response: This is correct, this speech is correct in its apparent sense. If a trustworthy person informs you of something, then there is no need to verify it. This is because Allaah said:

**{O you who believe, if a disobedient person comes to you with a information, then verify it...}**<sup>7</sup>

However it is possible that a trustworthy person may have some personal desires and due to this possibility his trustworthiness is deficient. Yes.



<sup>8</sup>I advise all of my brothers to verify whatever is spread by the people regarding the scholars and other than them. This is because many people broadcast regarding the scholars and students of knowledge that which has no basis. So if the believer does not verify these affairs that are spoken about, then the people will fall into error – and this is not considered as advising sincerely for the sake of the religion.

Indeed Allaah (the most Glorified) denounced the one who does not verify information and refer back to its people. He said:

**{When there comes to them some news regarding safety or fear, they make it known (amongst the people), if only they had referred it to the Messenger or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have understood it from them (directly). Had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allaah upon you, you would have followed Shaytaan, except a few of you.}**<sup>9</sup>

He also said:

**{O you who believe, if a disobedient person comes to you with news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful to what you have done.}**<sup>10</sup>

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*I advise all of my brothers to verify whatever is spread by the people regarding the scholars and other than them. This is because many people broadcast regarding the scholars and students of knowledge that which has no basis.*

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7 The Noble Qur.aan - Soorah al-Hujuraat, Aayah 6.

8 Shaykh Abdul-Azeez ibn Baaz - Majmoo' al-Fataawa wal-Maqaalaat 8/247

9 The Noble Qur.aan - Soorah an-Nisaa, Aayah 83.

10 The Noble Qur.aan - Soorah al-Hujuraat, Aayah 6.



The Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

**((Whoever believes in Allaah and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent.))**

He (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) also said:

**((It is sufficient for a person to be a liar that he narrates everything he hears.))**

Each person is responsible for every statement and action; Allaah (the most Exalted) said:

**{Not a word does he (or she) utter, but there is a watcher by him ready (to record it)}<sup>11</sup>**

He also said:

**{So, by your Lord (O Muhammad), We shall certainly call all of them to account for everything they used to do.}<sup>12</sup>**

So beware O believer that Shaytaan makes you err and deceives you due to you not verifying such affairs and information. Due to this, you then fall into actions which lead to regrettable conclusions and you are apologetic when an apology is no longer of benefit.

You should know O my brother, that Shaytaan always strives to cause problems, hatred and jealousy between the believers. He strives to lead the believer into actions which decrease his good deeds, if he is unable to fall into innovations and sinning.

Allaah (the Glorified) said:

**{Surely, Shaytaan is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy. He only invites his followers that they may become the dwellers of the blazing Fire.}<sup>13</sup>**

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11 The Noble Qur.aan - Soorah Qaaf, Aayah 18.

12 The Noble Qur.aan - Soorah al-Hijr, Aayahs 92-93.

13 The Noble Qur.aan - Soorah Faatir, Aayah 6.

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