

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا  
قَوْمًا بِجَهْلَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

*Al-Hujurat (The Dwellings) 49:6*

**O You Who Believe!**

- If a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth.
- Lest you harm people unwittingly.
- And afterwards become full of repentance for what you have done.

## **Commentary**

Allamah Tabai (AR)

God says, " O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with a News, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance."

The Arabic word " fasiq" has been taken to mean a person who left the life of obedience to adopt a life of sin and news here refers to some important or great news. Now the verse will stand to mean, " O You who believe when a rebellious evil person comes to you with a seemingly important news you should verify it for truth as you fear God and that you may harm some people in ignorance by believing it. This will make you shameful before them.

God through the word news in the chapter has permitted man to do that which is truthful and is proven through intelligence because on such judgments depends the welfare of the society as well as mankind. One must always verify all news brought by an irreligious person or a renegade and should desist from acting upon it unless the truth is known because mostly the news is a decoy and unreliable. The intelligent never regard the news given by such unreliable persons to be reliable and never depend upon and act upon them.

Man's life is a life of action and he studies welfare and loss, the good and the bad and acts accordingly and also applies them for his benefit. There are many unknown spheres of a man's life and he is ignorant about them though his welfare the income depends upon them. He has to rely upon the knowledge that he has about something and applies it accordingly for this is what he has absorbed or experienced. The most import part in it is that of hearing.

The learned believed that his action thus depends upon the knowledge he has gained through teaching or observation and then applies it for upon this depends his total action.

If any news has within it a certainty about the truth it purports to tell, then it will be taken as reliable though it is not repeated or continuous and it is called "Khabar Wahid" if it does not contain absolute truth. To the learned only that news will be reliable which has the characteristic of truth though it may not benefit personally. These are the points that they do not observe excepting when they narrate. It is the truth that can be depended upon with certitude.

In the verse the words, "lest you may harm others," asks us to eradicate ignorance and to certify the truth of the news if we want to act upon it. The verse has proven that which is certified by the learned and wise and has negated that which has been negated by them. This is an advice or a suggestion and not a command.

#### *A Hadith*

Ahmed bin Hatim, Tibrani, Ibn Mandah and Ibn Manzar have through reliable sources quoted Haris bin Zarah Khazai, who said,

I went to the messenger and he invited me to Islam so I accepted Islam. He invited me towards Zakat and I accepted that too. I said, "O Messenger of God! I will be returning to my people and I will invite them to Islam and to pay Zakat by whoever accepts my invitation. You please send your representative to Aban so that he may collect from me whatever Zakat I may have collected and then give it to you."

So he collected Zakat from those who accepted his call to Islam and he sent a message to the Messenger who had already decided to send someone to Aban but cancelled it.

When the representative did not reach, Aban Haris thought that he had disobeyed God and His Messenger. He gathered his people and told them that the Messenger had promised to send someone on a particular time to collect and deliver the Zakat to him and the Messenger never fails his promise, and I do not have any news about him stopping his representative or he may have refused. So, let us go to the Messenger.

In the meanwhile the messenger chose Waleed Ibn A'qba to go to Haris but he returned without finishing his journey and told the Messenger that Haris had refused to handover the Zakat collected and wanted to kill him. The Messenger sent a delegation to Haris. Haris went out with his companions and he met the delegation and they recognized and said, "This is Haris' in the night Haris asked them, "To whom have you been sent?" They said, "To you." Haris asked, "why?" They said, "Waleed bin A'qba was sent to you and he said that you had refused to give him the Zakat collected and threatened to kill him".

Haris said, " By the entity who has sent the Messenger with the truth I have not seen Waleed for he did not come to me." When Haris came to the presence of the Messenger he asked Haris, " You refused to handover the Zakat and wanted to kill my representative?" Haris replied, " By the entity that has sent you with the truth I did not meet him and he did not meet me. I came but for the reason that God's Messenger had postponed sending his representative and I thought that I may have been disobedient to God and His Messenger. " *O you who believe! When you hear any news from a rebellious and evil person, verify it.*"

*The Compiler's word*

The story of Waleed bin A'qba and the revelation of this verse are recorded in both Sunni and Shia books. Ibn Abdul Barr says in his book Isteya'b that there is no difference of opinion among the learned about the argument in the Qur'an and as far as he knew the words, " When you hear any news from a rebellious and evil person, verify it." was revealed then about Waleed bin A'qba. I say that there are other verses with similar meaning.

Mir Ahmed Ali (AR) and Aqa Mahdi Puya (AR)

The Holy Prophet sent Walid bin Aqbah to Bani Mustalaq to collect zakat. Before becoming Muslims the tribe of Mustalaq did not like Walid, so to show their change of heart, as they were all now brothers in faith, they came out in a large gathering to receive him outside the town, but Walid, a man of easy morals, jumped at the conclusion that they wanted to kill him; so turned at once on his heels and came back to the Holy Prophet with a false conjecture that the tribe of Mustalaq had turned apostate.

The truth was found out and this verse was revealed to condemn Walid, a companion of the Holy Prophet, and men like him who are ready to shed innocent blood on mere guesswork.

In the reign of Uthman Walid was appointed as the governor of Kufa. Living up to his reputation, one morning, fully drunk, he came into the masjid and prayed four rak-ats in Fajr salat, and wanted to pray more if the people praying behind allowed him to do so. Yes, he was a sahabi, appropriately described as fasiq (wicked) by the Qur'an.