THE PROPHET'S SIRAH

SERIES 14

THE SLANDER AFFAIR

The Campaign of Banu al-Mustaliq and the Innocence of 'A'ishah, According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith



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AK (KELANTAN)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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لَّوْلَآ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتُ بِأَنفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا وَقَالُوا۟ هَٰذَآ إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ

"Why, when you heard it, did not the believing men and believing women think good of one another and say, "This is an obvious falsehood."."

SURAH AN-NUR 24:12

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who cleared the name of His pure servant from above the seven heavens, and taught us to guard our tongues. Blessings and peace be upon our master, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and upon his family and his Companions.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This fourteenth book of The Prophet's Sirah tells of the campaign of Banu al-Mustaliq and the Slander Affair: a lost necklace, a rumour that spread, a month of grief in the Prophet's ﷺ home, and the verses of Surah An-Nur that cleared 'A'ishah. May this knowledge be 'ilmun yuntafa'u bih, knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

This eBook's cover does not depict any human being or animal. It shows **a vast, silent desert valley** at **dawn**, with **a single acacia tree** standing alone on the sand. In a sky of **soft pink and lavender**, **a morning star** still shines, and **faint travel tracks** across the sand fade away towards distant hills.

The silent valley and the vanishing tracks recall the moment 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها returned to the camp to find the caravan gone, and sat waiting in her place (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141). The acacia standing alone symbolises her patience — "beautiful patience" — when the slander struck. The dawn light and the morning star symbolise the truth that finally rose when Allah revealed the verses of Surah An-Nur.

The **dark blue band** at the bottom, framed by **fine gold lines**, is where the author's name appears.

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Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = sirah note (report from the books of sirah); blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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THE SLANDER AFFAIR

Earlier books told of battles with swords and arrows. The fourteenth book of The Prophet's Sirah tells of a different kind of battle — one whose weapon was ***the tongue***. It began with a necklace lost in the desert, and ended with ***ten verses of Surah An-Nur*** that will be recited until the Day of Resurrection.

This event is known as ***al-Ifk*** — "the great lie". After the campaign against ***Banu al-Mustaliq***, the hypocrites spread a false accusation against ***'A'ishah*** رضى الله عنها, the wife of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. For a month the Prophet's ﷺ home was shrouded in grief, until Allah Himself sent down 'A'ishah's vindication from above the heavens.

The story is narrated by 'A'ishah herself in one of the longest Hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141). This eBook follows that account step by step, and ends with a lesson much needed in the age of ***social media***: how to guard the tongue from slander.

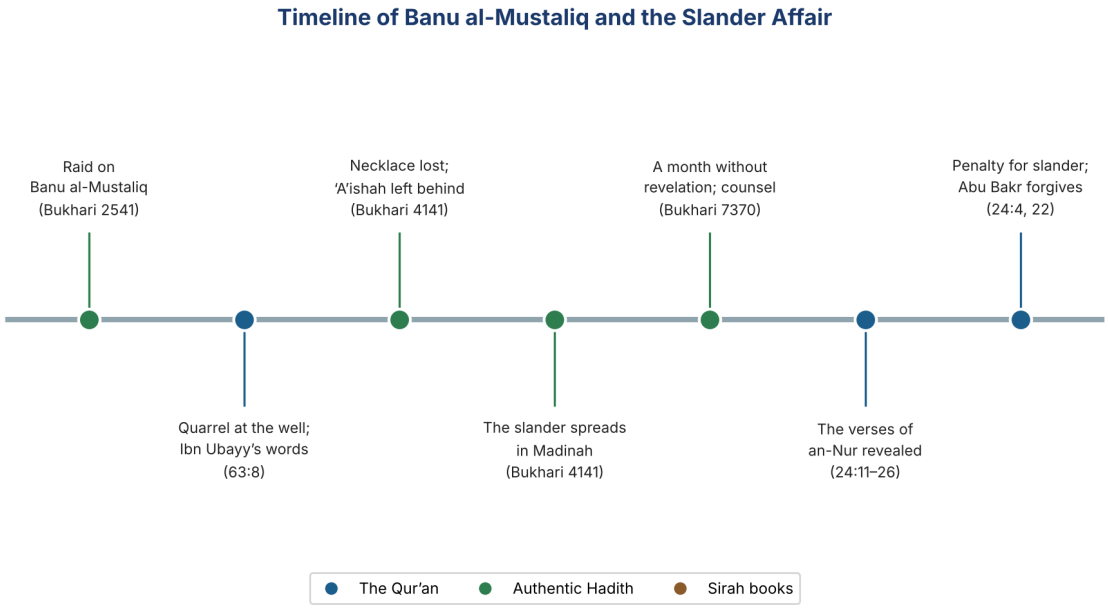
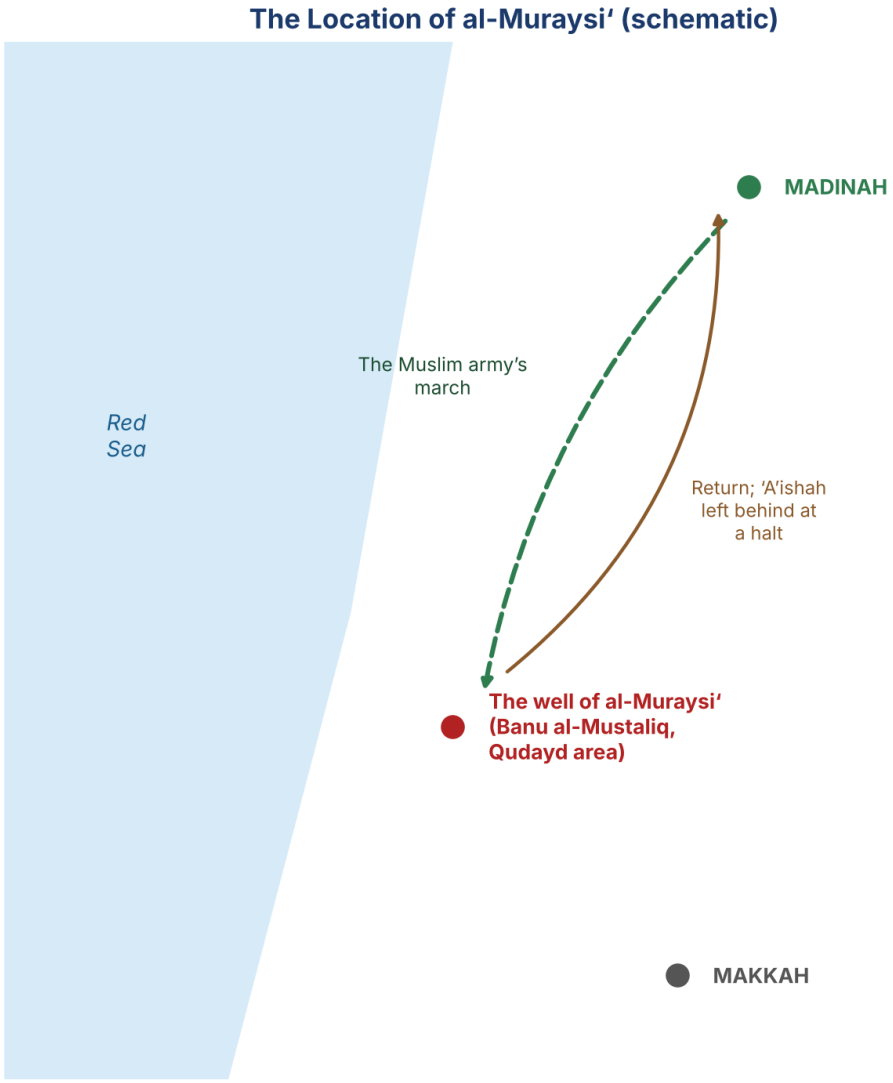


Figure 1: Timeline of Banu al-Mustaliq and the Slander Affair.

Note: The Qur'anic translation in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in its box. Information from the books of sirah is placed in brown "Sirah Note" boxes, and historical facts come with source links.

BANU AL-MUSTALIQ AND THE WELL OF AL-MURAYSI'

Banu al-Mustaliq were a branch of the tribe of ***Khuza'ah*** living in the coastal area between Makkah and Madinah. Their water source was called ***al-Muraysi'***, so this campaign is also known as ***the Campaign of al-Muraysi'***. The sirah books say their chief, ***al-Harith ibn Abi Dirar***, was gathering an army to attack Madinah.



Schematic only. Al-Muraysi' was the water source of Banu al-Mustaliq of Khuza'ah, in the coastal area between Makkah and Madinah.

Figure 2: The location of al-Muraysi' between Makkah and Madinah (schematic).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ moved first, before they could attack. 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما, who was in that army, relates:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2541

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْحَسَنِ، أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، أَخْبَرَنَا ابْنُ عَوْنٍ، قَالَ كَتَبْتُ إِلَى نَافِعٍ فَكَتَبَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَغَارَ عَلَى بَنِي الْمُصْطَلِقِ وَهُمْ غَارُّونَ وَأَنْعَامُهُمْ تُسْقَى عَلَى الْمَاءِ، فَقَتَلَ مُقَاتِلَتَهُمْ، وَسَبَى ذَرَارِيَّهُمْ، وَأَصَابَ يَوْمَئِذٍ جُوَيْرِيَةَ. حَدَّثَنِي بِهِ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ، وَكَانَ فِي ذَلِكَ الْجَيْشِ.

TRANSLATION:

Ibn 'Awn said: I wrote to Nafi', and he wrote back to me: **The Prophet ﷺ attacked Banu al-Mustaliq while they were unaware and their livestock were being watered at the water. He killed their fighters, took their children (and women) captive, and on that day he obtained Juwayriyah. *'Abdullah ibn 'Umar told me this, and he was in that army.***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Ali ibn al-Hasan, from 'Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak, from Ibn 'Awn, from Nafi', from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Manumission, Chapter on Whoever Owned Arab Slaves, Hadith No. 2541; and Sahih Muslim No. 1730.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2541

Scholars take this Hadith as evidence that ***the call to Islam had already reached*** Banu al-Mustaliq, so it did not have to be repeated before the attack. Imam an-Nawawi and Ibn Hajar explain that the call to Islam is obligatory for a people who have never heard it.

SIRAH NOTE: A SHORT CAMPAIGN

The sirah books say the fighting was brief. Banu al-Mustaliq were defeated, and many of them were captured with their property. The size of the Muslim army is not given in the authentic Hadith; the sirah books say many hypocrites joined this campaign hoping for booty, since the journey was short.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah; Wikipedia, "Invasion of Banu Mustaliq".
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasion_of_Banu_Mustaliq

The lesson: the hypocrites' presence was the ***background*** to the two trials that followed.

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WHEN DID THESE EVENTS HAPPEN?

This book is placed after Book 13 (Banu Qurayzah) by theme. But the exact date of the campaign of Banu al-Mustaliq is ***disputed*** by the scholars. Imam al-Bukhari himself writes at the head of the chapter on this campaign:

"Chapter on the campaign of Banu al-Mustaliq of Khuza'ah, which is the campaign of al-Muraysi'. Ibn Ishaq said: it was in the year six. Musa ibn 'Uqbah said: the year four." (Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of al-Maghazi).

SCHOLAR	DATE GIVEN
Musa ibn 'Uqbah	4 AH
Ibn Sa'd and al-Waqidi	Sha'ban 5 AH
Ibn Ishaq	Sha'ban 6 AH
Ibn Hajar (Fath al-Bari)	Favours 5 AH based on clues in the Hadith

One important clue is that ***Sa'd ibn Mu'adh*** رضى الله عنه is mentioned in the Hadith of al-Ifk (Chapter 12).

Sa'd died after the events of Banu Qurayzah in Dhu al-Qa'dah 5 AH (Book 13). So many scholars, including Ibn Hajar, hold that the campaign of Banu al-Mustaliq took place in ***Sha'ban 5 AH***, that is, ***before*** the Battle of the Trench. Other scholars offer different explanations, and the discussion in Fath al-Bari is lengthy.

The lesson: the hadith scholars were ***meticulous and honest***. They did not hide differences of opinion, but gathered and weighed them with evidence. What matters for us is the ***lesson*** of these events, which does not change whatever the date.

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JUWAYRIYAH: THE BRIDE WHO FREED HER PEOPLE

Among the captives of Banu al-Mustaliq was ***Juwayriyah bint al-Harith***, the daughter of their chief. The Hadith of 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar in Chapter 1 says he "obtained Juwayriyah" that day. 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها relates what happened next:

Juwayriyah fell to the share of Thabit ibn Qays ibn Shammas رضى الله عنه, and she made an agreement to buy her freedom. She came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asking for help with her ransom. He said: ***"Would you like something better than that? I will pay your ransom and marry you."*** She agreed. When people heard that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had married her, they freed the captives in their hands, saying: ***"They are the in-laws of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ."*** 'A'ishah said: ***"I know of no woman who was a greater blessing to her people than she. A hundred households of Banu al-Mustaliq were freed because of her."*** (Sunan Abi Dawud 3931, graded hasan by al-Albani).

Imam Muslim also narrates that her original name was ***Barrah***, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ changed it to ***Juwayriyah*** (Sahih Muslim 2140). She became one of the ***Mothers of the Believers***, known for her abundant remembrance of Allah.

EFFECT OF THE MARRIAGE	EXPLANATION
Captives freed	About a hundred households gained their freedom
Enmity ended	Banu al-Mustaliq became in-laws, not enemies
Juwayriyah honoured	From captive to Mother of the Believers
Wisdom in da'wah	Her tribe later embraced Islam (sirah books)

The lesson: the Messenger of Allah ﷺ turned ***defeat into mercy***. One wise decision ended enmity and freed a whole people.

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JUWAYRIYAH'S REMEMBRANCE

Juwayriyah رضى الله عنها was known for her worship. She narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ left her at dawn while she was in her place of prayer, then returned in the forenoon and she was still sitting there. He said: ***"After leaving you I said four phrases three times; if they were weighed against all you have said since morning, they would outweigh it: Subhanallahi wa bihamdihi, 'adada khalqihi, wa rida nafsihi, wa zinata 'arshihi, wa midada kalimatihi."*** (Sahih Muslim 2726).

Its meaning: ***"Glory be to Allah and praise be to Him, as many times as the number of His creation, as much as pleases Him, as heavy as His Throne, and as much as the ink of His words."*** This remembrance was taught to a woman who had once been a war captive — and through her it became a lesson for the whole ummah.

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THE CALL OF JAHILIYYAH AT THE WELL

After the victory, while the Muslim army rested at the well of al-Muraysi', a small scuffle nearly sparked a great split. Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما relates:

HADITH — JAMI' AL-TIRMIDHI, NO. 3315

حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ أَبِي عُمَرَ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ دِينَارٍ، سَمِعَ جَابِرَ بْنَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، يَقُولُ كُنَّا فِي غَزَاةٍ قَالَ سُفْيَانُ يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهَا غَزْوَةُ بَنِي الْمُصْطَلِقِ فَكَسَعَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ رَجُلاً مِنَ الأَنْصَارِ فَقَالَ الْمُهَاجِرِيُّ يَا لَلْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَقَالَ الأَنْصَارِيُّ يَا لَلأَنْصَارِ فَسَمِعَ ذَلِكَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ مَا بَالُ دَعْوَى الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ. قَالُوا رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ كَسَعَ رَجُلاً مِنَ الأَنْصَارِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم دَعُوهَا فَإِنَّهَا مُنْتِنَةٌ. فَسَمِعَ ذَلِكَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أُبَيٍّ ابْنُ سَلُولَ فَقَالَ أَوَقَدْ فَعَلُوهَا وَاللَّهِ (لَئِنْ رَجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الأَذَلَّ) فَقَالَ عُمَرُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ دَعْنِي أَضْرِبْ عُنُقَ هَذَا الْمُنَافِقِ. فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم دَعْهُ لاَ يَتَحَدَّثُ النَّاسُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا يَقْتُلُ أَصْحَابَهُ. وَقَالَ غَيْرُ عَمْرٍو فَقَالَ لَهُ ابْنُهُ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهِ لاَ تَنْقَلِبُ حَتَّى تُقِرَّ أَنَّكَ الذَّلِيلُ وَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم الْعَزِيزُ. فَفَعَلَ. قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ.

TRANSLATION:

Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما said: We were on a campaign — Sufyan said: they held it was ***the campaign of Banu al-Mustaliq*** — and **a man of the Muhajirun struck a man of the Ansar on the back. The Muhajir cried: "O Muhajirun!" and the Ansari cried: "O Ansar!" The Prophet ﷺ heard it and said: "What is this call of the Jahiliyyah?"** They said: "A man of the Muhajirun struck a man of the Ansar." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"Leave it, for it is foul."*** 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul heard of it and said: "Have they done it? By Allah, if we return to Madinah, ***the more honoured will surely expel the more humble from it.***" 'Umar said: "O Messenger of Allah, let me strike the neck of this hypocrite." The Prophet ﷺ said: ***"Leave him, lest people say that Muhammad kills his companions."*** Someone other than 'Amr narrated: His son, ***'Abdullah ibn 'Abdullah***, said to him: "By Allah, you will not go back until you admit that you are the humble one and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is the honoured one." And he did so. Abu 'Isa said: This hadith is hasan sahih.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam at-Tirmidhi: from Ibn Abi 'Umar, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from 'Amr ibn Dinar, from Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما.

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REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam at-Tirmidhi in Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Chapters on Tafsir, Chapter on Surat al-Munafiqun, Hadith No. 3315; its origin is in Sahih al-Bukhari No. 4905 and Sahih Muslim No. 2584.

GRADE: HASAN SAHIH — Imam at-Tirmidhi graded it hasan sahih; graded hasan by Darussalam. The story of the quarrel is also in Sahih al-Bukhari 4905.

Source: https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:3315

"LEAVE IT — IT IS FOUL!"

The cries ***"O Muhajirun!"*** and ***"O Ansar!"*** seem harmless — both are honoured names in the Qur'an. But when they become a call to ***faction and hostility***, they become a call of the Jahiliyyah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ described it as something ***foul***.

The same Hadith is narrated by al-Bukhari (Sahih al-Bukhari 4905). Note too his reply to 'Umar: ***"Leave him, lest people say that Muhammad kills his companions."*** He guarded ***the good name of the call to Islam***, since outsiders could not tell hypocrite from believer.

The lesson: ***'asabiyyah*** — blind loyalty to clan, race or group — can split the ummah even after victory. Islam unites us on faith, not on lineage or group.

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ZAYD IBN ARQAM VINDICATED BY ALLAH

The words of 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy — ***"the more honoured will expel the more humble"*** — were heard by a young man of the Ansar, ***Zayd ibn Arqam*** رضى الله عنه. He reported them, and what happened to him became a lesson in ***truth put to the test***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4900

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ رَجَاءٍ، حَدَّثَنَا إِسْرَائِيلُ، عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ، عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَرْقَمَ، قَالَ كُنْتُ فِي غَزَاةٍ فَسَمِعْتُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ أُبَيٍّ، يَقُولُ لاَ تُنْفِقُوا عَلَى مَنْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَنْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِهِ وَلَوْ رَجَعْنَا مِنْ عِنْدِهِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الأَذَلَّ فَذَكَرْتُ ذَلِكَ لِعَمِّي أَوْ لِعُمَرَ فَذَكَرَهُ لِلنَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَدَعَانِي فَحَدَّثْتُهُ فَأَرْسَلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم إِلَى عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أُبَيٍّ وَأَصْحَابِهِ فَحَلَفُوا مَا قَالُوا فَكَذَّبَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَصَدَّقَهُ فَأَصَابَنِي هَمٌّ لَمْ يُصِبْنِي مِثْلُهُ قَطُّ، فَجَلَسْتُ فِي الْبَيْتِ فَقَالَ لِي عَمِّي مَا أَرَدْتَ إِلَى أَنْ كَذَّبَكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَمَقَتَكَ. فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى {إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ} فَبَعَثَ إِلَىَّ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَرَأَ فَقَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ صَدَّقَكَ يَا زَيْدُ.

TRANSLATION:

Zayd ibn Arqam رضى الله عنه said: **I was on a campaign and heard 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy say: "Do not spend on those who are with the Messenger of Allah until they disperse from around him. And if we return (to Madinah), the more honoured will surely expel the more humble from it."** I told my uncle — or 'Umar — and he told the Prophet ﷺ. He called me and I told him. Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent for 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy and his companions, and they swore they had not said it. So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ disbelieved me and believed him. ***I was struck by a grief such as had never struck me before.*** I sat at home… Then Allah revealed: "When the hypocrites come to you…" The Prophet ﷺ sent for me, recited it, and said: ***"Allah has confirmed your truthfulness, O Zayd."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Raja', from Isra'il, from Abu Ishaq, from Zayd ibn Arqam رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Surat al-Munafiqun, Hadith No. 4900; also Nos. 4901–4904; and Sahih Muslim No. 2772.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4900

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Allah exposed Ibn Ubayy's words in Surah Al-Munafiqun: ***"And to Allah belongs [all] honor, and to His Messenger, and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not know"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 63:8.

Imagine Zayd's feelings: a young man who told the truth but was disbelieved because grown men swore to deny it. He ***did not lie to defend himself***, nor take revenge. He only sat at home in grief — and then Allah Himself confirmed him by revelation.

The lesson: one who tells the truth may ***be disbelieved for a while***, but Allah does not let the truth be lost. Zayd's story is a prelude to 'A'ishah's: both were wronged, both were patient, and both were vindicated by the Qur'an.

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A SON WHO CHOSE THE TRUTH

Jabir's Hadith in Chapter 4 ends with a moving detail: Ibn Ubayy's own son, also named ***'Abdullah*** رضى الله عنه, stopped his father and said: ***"By Allah, you will not go back until you admit that you are the humble one and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is the honoured one."***

SIRAH NOTE: AT THE GATE OF MADINAH

The sirah books say 'Abdullah stood at the entrance of Madinah blocking his father, and would not let him in until the Messenger of Allah ﷺ permitted it. Ibn Ishaq also relates that 'Abdullah came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said: if he wanted his father punished, let 'Abdullah himself do it, for he feared his heart could not hold back from avenging himself on anyone else who killed his father.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: ***"Rather, we will be gentle with him and treat him well as long as he remains with us."*** This story is well known in the sirah books; the detail at the gate of Madinah is not in Sahih al-Bukhari or Muslim.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah (from Ibn Ishaq); Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3315. https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:3315

The lesson: faith can make a son stand with ***the truth*** even against his own father — yet with courtesy, leaving the decision to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ chose ***gentleness***, not punishment.

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THE LOST NECKLACE

Now we reach the heart of this story. 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها relates it herself in detail (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141). When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ wished to travel, he would ***draw lots*** among his wives; whoever's lot came out accompanied him. On this campaign, 'A'ishah's lot came out.

By then the verse of hijab had been revealed, so 'A'ishah travelled in a ***howdah*** — a covered seat on a camel's back. On the way home, near Madinah, the caravan halted at night. When departure was announced, 'A'ishah went some distance away to relieve herself.

On returning, she felt her chest and found that ***her necklace of Zafar beads*** (onyx from Yemen) had broken and was lost. ***She went back to look for it***, and the search took time.

DETAIL	ITS MEANING
Lots among the wives	The Prophet's ﷺ justice towards his wives
The howdah	Guarding the privacy and honour of the Prophet's wife
An inexpensive necklace	Zafar beads, not costly jewellery
Going back for it	Care for one's belongings, however small

The lesson: events that change history sometimes begin with ***something very small***. An inexpensive necklace became the reason for the great rulings of Surah An-Nur.

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LEFT BEHIND IN THE DESERT

While 'A'ishah searched for her necklace, the men in charge of her howdah came and lifted it onto the camel. They ***thought 'A'ishah was inside***. 'A'ishah explains: "Women in those days were light, not heavy, for they ate little… and I was then young." They did not notice the difference in the howdah's weight.

When 'A'ishah found her necklace and returned, ***the camp was empty***. No one was there. What she did shows her calm and wisdom: she ***did not run after*** the caravan in the dark, but ***sat in her place***, thinking they would notice her absence and come back for her. Then she fell asleep.

SITUATION	'A'ISHAH'S ACTION
Necklace lost	Went back to look for it
Camp empty	Did not panic; did not wander in the dark
No one there	Sat in the original place so she could be found
Waiting	Trusted in Allah until she fell asleep

The lesson: in an emergency, ***staying in a safe place*** and waiting for help is wise. Safety experts today still give the same advice to people who are lost: ***"Stop and stay where you are"***.

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SAFWAN IBN AL-MU'ATTAL

A Companion named ***Safwan ibn al-Mu'attal as-Sulami*** رضى الله عنه had the task of following behind the army to check for anything left behind. He reached the spot in the morning and saw someone asleep. He recognised 'A'ishah, having seen her before the verse of hijab was revealed.

'A'ishah said: ***"I woke when I heard him say the istirja' (Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un) on recognising me, and I covered my face with my jilbab. By Allah, he did not say a single word to me, and I heard not a word from him except his istirja'."*** Safwan made his camel kneel, 'A'ishah mounted it, and Safwan walked leading the camel until they reached the army resting at midday (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141).

See Safwan's perfect conduct: he ***did not speak***, did not ride with her, and brought 'A'ishah openly to the caravan in front of everyone. Yet what should have been proof of honour was ***twisted*** by those with diseased hearts.

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THE SLANDER BEGINS TO SPREAD

When people saw 'A'ishah arrive on Safwan's camel, those with diseased hearts began to ***whisper***. 'A'ishah said: ***"Then whoever was ruined (by it) was ruined."*** The one who took the greatest part in spreading the slander was ***'Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul***, the chief of the hypocrites (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141).

The Qur'an names them as a small group: ***"Indeed, those who came with falsehood are a group among you"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 24:11.

The word ***"'usbah"*** (a group) shows that the slanderers were ***few***, but their voice echoed because others repeated it without thinking. Sadly, some good believers were swept along — among them ***Mistah ibn Uthathah***, ***Hassan ibn Thabit*** and ***Hamnah bint Jahsh***.

GROUP	ROLE IN THE SLANDER
'Abdullah ibn Ubayy	Originator and chief spreader ("who took the greater part")
A few believers	Swept along and repeated it (Mistah, Hassan, Hamnah)
Most Companions	Silent or rejecting it
'A'ishah	Knew nothing for weeks

The lesson: slander does not need many people to begin — it only needs ***one originator and many repeaters***. Everyone who repeats news without checking becomes part of the chain.

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BACKBITING, SLANDER AND CALUMNY

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained the difference between two sins of the tongue: ***"Do you know what backbiting is?"*** They said: "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said: ***"Your mentioning of your brother what he dislikes."*** He was asked: "What if what I say is true of him?" He said: ***"If it is true of him, you have backbitten him; and if it is not, you have slandered him (buhtan)."*** (Sahih Muslim 2589).

Al-Ifk falls in the gravest category: ***buhtan*** — inventing evil that does not exist. The Qur'an itself calls it ***"buhtanun 'azim"*** (a great slander, 24:16). The lesson: even if something is true, spreading it without need is still a sin; how much more so if it is a lie.

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A MONTH OF ILLNESS

On reaching Madinah, 'A'ishah fell ill for ***a month***. Throughout that time people were talking about the slander, but 'A'ishah ***knew nothing***. Yet she sensed something strange:

"What troubled me during my illness was that I did not see from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ the tenderness I used to see when I was ill. He would only come in, greet, then ask: 'How is that one?' (kayfa tikum), and leave." (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was also a man who was hurt. He did not believe the slander, but ***revelation had not yet come***, and he would not condemn or clear anyone without certainty from Allah. His grief and perplexity showed in his manner.

SIRAH NOTE: WHY WAS REVELATION DELAYED?

Scholars explain several wisdoms behind the month-long delay in revelation. Among them: to ***test*** the believers as to who would think well; to ***prove*** that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ could not bring revelation at will — had the Qur'an been his own composition, he would have defended his wife at once; and to ***raise the rank*** of 'A'ishah through her patience.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari — commentary on Hadith 4141; Tafsir Ibn Kathir (An-Nur 24:11). https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/24/11

The lesson: the delay of revelation is itself ***proof of prophethood***. A liar would not wait a month in grief when he could invent verses to solve his problem.

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THE NEWS REACHES 'A'ISHAH

'A'ishah finally learned of the slander by chance. One night, going out to relieve herself with ***Umm Mistah***, the woman tripped on her garment and said: "May Mistah perish!" 'A'ishah rebuked her: "What an evil thing to say! You curse a man who fought at Badr?" Umm Mistah then told her what people were saying (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141).

Notice that ***Mistah's own mother*** cursed her son for spreading the slander — and 'A'ishah, the victim, still ***defended*** Mistah because he was a man of Badr. 'A'ishah's mother, ***Umm Ruman*** رضى الله عنها, also related the same moment from her side:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4143

حَدَّثَنَا مُوسَى بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عَوَانَةَ، عَنْ حُصَيْنٍ، عَنْ أَبِي وَائِلٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي مَسْرُوقُ بْنُ الأَجْدَعِ، قَالَ حَدَّثَتْنِي أُمُّ رُومَانَ ـ وَهْىَ أُمُّ عَائِشَةَ رضى الله عنها ـ قَالَتْ بَيْنَا أَنَا قَاعِدَةٌ أَنَا وَعَائِشَةُ إِذْ وَلَجَتِ امْرَأَةٌ مِنَ الأَنْصَارِ فَقَالَتْ فَعَلَ اللَّهُ بِفُلاَنٍ وَفَعَلَ. فَقَالَتْ أُمُّ رُومَانَ وَمَا ذَاكَ قَالَتِ ابْنِي فِيمَنْ حَدَّثَ الْحَدِيثَ. قَالَتْ وَمَا ذَاكَ قَالَتْ كَذَا وَكَذَا. قَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ سَمِعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَتْ نَعَمْ. قَالَتْ وَأَبُو بَكْرٍ قَالَتْ نَعَمْ. فَخَرَّتْ مَغْشِيًّا عَلَيْهَا، فَمَا أَفَاقَتْ إِلاَّ وَعَلَيْهَا حُمَّى بِنَافِضٍ، فَطَرَحْتُ عَلَيْهَا ثِيَابَهَا فَغَطَّيْتُهَا. فَجَاءَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ مَا شَأْنُ هَذِهِ. قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَخَذَتْهَا الْحُمَّى بِنَافِضٍ. قَالَ فَلَعَلَّ فِي حَدِيثٍ تُحُدِّثَ بِهِ. قَالَتْ نَعَمْ. فَقَعَدَتْ عَائِشَةُ فَقَالَتْ وَاللَّهِ لَئِنْ حَلَفْتُ لاَ تُصَدِّقُونِي، وَلَئِنْ قُلْتُ لاَ تَعْذِرُونِي، مَثَلِي وَمَثَلُكُمْ كَيَعْقُوبَ وَبَنِيهِ، وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا تَصِفُونَ، قَالَتْ وَانْصَرَفَ وَلَمْ يَقُلْ شَيْئًا، فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عُذْرَهَا ـ قَالَتْ ـ بِحَمْدِ اللَّهِ لاَ بِحَمْدِ أَحَدٍ وَلاَ بِحَمْدِكَ.

TRANSLATION:

Umm Ruman رضى الله عنها, the mother of 'A'ishah, said: **While I was sitting with 'A'ishah, a woman of the Ansar came in and said: "May Allah deal with so-and-so!" I asked: "What happened?" She said: "My son is among those who spread the story."** 'A'ishah asked: "Has the Messenger of Allah ﷺ heard it?" She said: "Yes." "And Abu Bakr?" "Yes." ***Then 'A'ishah fell down in a faint, and when she came to she had a shivering fever.*** I covered her with her clothes. The Prophet ﷺ came and asked: "What is wrong with her?" I said: "O Messenger of Allah, a shivering fever has seized her." He said: "Perhaps because of the story being told?" I said: "Yes." 'A'ishah sat up and said: **"By Allah, if I swear, you will not believe me; if I give an**

excuse, you will not accept it. My case and yours is like that of Ya'qub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and his sons: 'And Allah is the one whose help is sought against what you describe.'" He left without saying anything. Then Allah revealed her innocence. 'A'ishah said: ***"With praise to Allah — not to anyone, and not to you."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Musa ibn Isma'il, from Abu 'Awanah, from Husayn ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from Abu Wa'il, from Masruq ibn al-Ajda', from Umm Ruman رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Military Expeditions (al-Maghazi), Chapter on the Narration of al-Ifk, Hadith No. 4143; also Nos. 3388 and 4691.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4143

'A'ishah asked permission to go to her parents' home to confirm the news. Her mother tried to calm her: "My daughter, take it lightly. Rarely is there a beautiful woman, loved by her husband and with co-wives, but people talk much about her." 'A'ishah said: ***"I wept that whole night; my tears would not stop and I could not sleep."*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141).

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THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ SEEKS COUNSEL

While revelation had not come, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***sought counsel*** — as was his way in grave matters. He addressed the people asking for advice, and also called those closest to him to ask in private:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 7370

حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَبِي زَكَرِيَّاءَ الْغَسَّانِيُّ، عَنْ هِشَامٍ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم خَطَبَ النَّاسَ فَحَمِدَ اللَّهَ وَأَثْنَى عَلَيْهِ وَقَالَ مَا تُشِيرُونَ عَلَيَّ فِي قَوْمٍ يَسُبُّونَ أَهْلِي مَا عَلِمْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سُوءٍ قَطُّ. وَعَنْ عُرْوَةَ قَالَ لَمَّا أُخْبِرَتْ عَائِشَةُ بِالأَمْرِ قَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَتَأْذَنُ لِي أَنْ أَنْطَلِقَ إِلَى أَهْلِي. فَأَذِنَ لَهَا وَأَرْسَلَ مَعَهَا الْغُلاَمَ. وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الأَنْصَارِ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا، سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها narrated that **the Messenger of Allah ﷺ addressed the people. He praised and extolled Allah, then said: "What do you advise me concerning people who revile my family, when I have never known any evil of them?"** And from 'Urwah: When 'A'ishah was told of the matter, she said: "O Messenger of Allah, will you permit me to go to my family?" He permitted her and sent a servant with her. And a man of the Ansar said: ***"Glory be to You! It is not for us to speak of this. Glory be to You, this is a great slander."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Harb, from Yahya ibn Abi Zakariyya al-Ghassani, from Hisham ibn 'Urwah, from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Holding Fast to the Qur'an and Sunnah, Chapter "…who conduct their affairs by consultation", Hadith No. 7370.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7370

The Ansari man mentioned in this narration spoke words that ***were later revealed in the Qur'an*** (An-Nur 24:16). The sirah books name among those who took this stance ***Abu Ayyub al-Ansari*** رضى الله عنه and his wife (Chapter 15).

ASKED	ANSWER (SAHIH AL-BUKHARI 4141)
Usamah ibn Zayd	"They are your family; we know nothing but good."

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ASKED	ANSWER (SAHIH AL-BUKHARI 4141)
'Ali ibn Abi Talib	"Allah has not restricted you… ask the maid; she will tell the truth."
Barirah (the maid)	"I have seen nothing in her, except that she is a young girl who falls asleep leaving the dough for the goat to eat."
Zaynab bint Jahsh	"I guard my hearing and sight; by Allah, I know nothing but good."

The testimony of ***Zaynab bint Jahsh*** رضى الله عنها is deeply moving. 'A'ishah said: "She was the one who rivalled me (in the Prophet's ﷺ affection), but Allah protected her with piety." The co-wife with the most to gain from 'A'ishah's fall instead ***spoke the truth***. The lesson: piety guards the tongue even towards a rival.

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TENSION IN THE MOSQUE

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then stood on the pulpit and said: ***"O Muslims, who will excuse me from a man who has hurt me concerning my family? By Allah, I know nothing of my family but good. And they have named a man of whom I know nothing but good."*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141).

Sa'd ibn Mu'adh, chief of the Aws, rose and said: "I will excuse you, O Messenger of Allah. If he is from the Aws, we will strike his neck; if from our brothers the Khazraj, command us." Then ***Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah***, chief of the Khazraj — 'A'ishah describes him as a righteous man whom ***tribal zeal*** overcame at that moment — objected. ***Usayd ibn al-Hudayr*** retorted, and ***the two tribes of Aws and Khazraj nearly came to blows*** in the mosque while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was still on the pulpit. He kept calming them until they fell silent.

See how dangerous slander is: it began with an accusation against one woman, but nearly sparked ***civil war*** between the Aws and Khazraj, whom Islam had reconciled after decades of enmity. This was the hypocrites' aim: to ***split*** the Muslim community from within.

The lesson: in tense moments, ***tribal zeal*** easily takes over even among the righteous. A leader must stay calm and calm others, as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ kept calming them.

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"BEAUTIFUL PATIENCE"

'A'ishah wept for two nights and a day, until she thought the weeping would break her heart. Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came and ***sat beside her*** — for the first time in a month. He said the testimony of faith, then said: ***"O 'A'ishah, I have been told such-and-such about you. If you are innocent, Allah will clear you. If you have committed a sin, seek Allah's forgiveness and repent to Him, for when a servant admits his sin and repents, Allah accepts his repentance."*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141).

'A'ishah's tears stopped. She asked her father, then her mother, to answer on her behalf — but both said: "By Allah, I do not know what to say to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ." So 'A'ishah, a young woman, answered herself with words full of faith:

"By Allah, if I say I am innocent — and Allah knows I am innocent — you will not believe me. If I confess to something Allah knows I did not do, you will believe me. By Allah, I find no example for me and you except the words of the father of Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام:"

"so patience is most fitting. And Allah is the one sought for help against that which you describe" Tafsir Ibn Kathir 12:18.

'A'ishah said she forgot the name of the Prophet Ya'qub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام in her grief, so she said "the father of Yusuf". Then she lay down, ***certain that Allah would clear her***, though she never imagined Allah would reveal verses of the Qur'an about her — she only hoped the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would see a dream.

The lesson: ***beautiful patience*** (sabrun jamil) is patience without complaint to people, while entrusting the matter to Allah. This is the weapon of the wronged when no one believes them.

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HOW WONDERFUL IS THE AFFAIR OF THE BELIEVER

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"How wonderful is the affair of the believer; all of it is good for him, and that is so for no one but the believer. If good befalls him, he is grateful, and that is good for him. If harm befalls him, he is patient, and that is good for him."*** (Sahih Muslim 2999).

'A'ishah lived this Hadith throughout the ordeal: she was patient when slandered, and when the vindication came, ***she thanked Allah alone***. This is the secret of Allah's words: "Do not think it bad for you; rather it is good for you" (24:11).

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REVELATION: VINDICATION FROM HEAVEN

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had not yet risen from his seat, and no one had left the house, when ***revelation came***. 'A'ishah describes: he was overcome by the heaviness that came with revelation, until ***drops of sweat like pearls*** ran from him on a cold day.

When the revelation ended, he smiled, and his first words were: ***"O 'A'ishah, Allah has declared you innocent."*** Her mother said: "Get up and go to him (and thank him)." 'A'ishah replied: ***"By Allah, I will not get up to him, and I praise none but Allah."*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141).

Allah revealed ten verses of Surah An-Nur (24:11–20), beginning with: ***"Do not think it bad for you; rather it is good for you"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 24:11.

How could so painful a slander be ***"good for you"***? Ibn Kathir explains: because it brought ***great reward*** to 'A'ishah and her family, ***a lasting vindication*** in the Qur'an recited until the Last Day, and ***rulings*** that protect the honour of the ummah until the end of time.

VERSE	MAIN CONTENT
24:11	The slanderers are a small group; it is good for you
24:12–13	Think well; demand four witnesses
24:14–15	Receiving with tongues; thinking it trivial
24:16–18	"It is not for us to speak of this"; warning never to repeat it
24:19–20	Threat to those who love to spread indecency

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THINKING WELL AND FOUR WITNESSES

The first verse after the vindication rebukes how believers received the news: ***"Why, when you heard it, did not the believing men and believing women think good of one another"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 24:12.

Notice the phrase ***"of one another"*** — literally "of themselves". The Qur'an teaches that a fellow believer is like ***our own self***. As we wish others to think of us, so should we think of them.

> **SIRAH NOTE: ABU AYYUB AND UMM AYYUB**
>
> Ibn Ishaq relates that Umm Ayyub asked her husband, ***Abu Ayyub al-Ansari*** رضى الله عنه: "Have you not heard what people are saying about 'A'ishah?" He said: "Yes, and it is a lie. Would you yourself do such a thing, O Umm Ayyub?" She said: "No, by Allah." Abu Ayyub said: ***"Then 'A'ishah, by Allah, is better than you."***
>
> This is a living example of verse 24:12 — measuring others by oneself, then thinking well. The story is well known in the books of sirah and tafsir, though not found in Sahih al-Bukhari or Muslim.
>
> **REFERENCES:**
> Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah; Tafsir Ibn Kathir (An-Nur 24:12). https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/24/12

The next verse (24:13) asks: why did they not bring ***four witnesses***? An accusation of adultery is the gravest attack on honour, so Islam set the strictest standard of proof. Without it, the accuser himself ***is a liar*** in the sight of Allah.

The lesson: ***thinking well*** is the first step to stopping slander, and ***proof*** is the second. Whoever accuses without proof is himself the guilty one.

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TONGUES THAT RECEIVE THE NEWS

The Qur'an describes how the slander spread with a strikingly precise image: ***"When you received it with your tongues and said with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge and thought it was insignificant while it was, in the sight of Allah, tremendous"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 24:15.

Notice: the news was ***received with tongues***, not with ears. It is as if it passed from tongue to tongue ***without passing through the mind***. 'A'ishah herself recited this verse with the reading ***"taliqunahu"***, saying it means ***"you were lying"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4144).

"And why, when you heard it, did you not say, "It is not for us to speak of this."Tafsir Ibn Kathir 24:16.

MISTAKE	ACCORDING TO VERSE 24:15
Receiving with the tongue	Repeating without thinking
Speaking without knowledge	Spreading what one does not know to be true
Thinking it trivial	"I only repeated what people said"
Tremendous with Allah	A very grave sin

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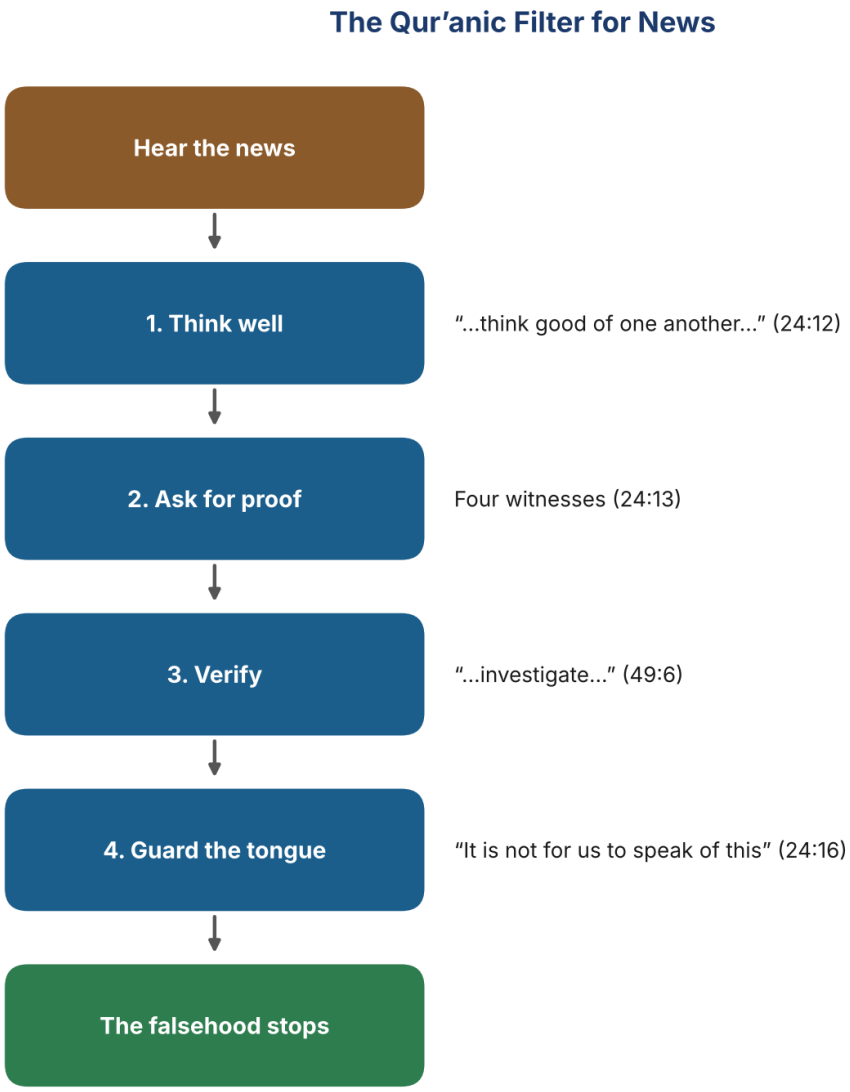


Figure 3: The Qur'anic filter for news.

The lesson: when we hear something bad about a brother or sister without proof, the stance the Qur'an teaches is ***to stop it with ourselves*** — not to spread it, even to one friend.

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THE PENALTY FOR SLANDER (QADHF)

The Slander Affair also became the occasion for applying ***the penalty of qadhf*** — the penalty for accusing a chaste woman (or man) of adultery without sufficient proof. Allah says early in Surah An-Nur:

"And those who accuse chaste women and then do not produce four witnesses - lash them with eighty lashes and do not accept from them testimony ever after"Tafsir Ibn Kathir 24:4.

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: ***"When my vindication came down, the Prophet ﷺ mounted the pulpit, mentioned it and recited the Qur'an. When he came down from the pulpit, he ordered that two men and a woman be given the prescribed punishment."*** (Sunan Abi Dawud 4474, graded hasan by al-Albani). The sirah books name them: ***Mistah ibn Uthathah, Hassan ibn Thabit and Hamnah bint Jahsh***.

SIRAH NOTE: WHAT ABOUT IBN UBAYY?

Scholars differ on whether 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy was also given the prescribed punishment. Some reports say he was lashed, others say not. Ibn Kathir and other scholars mention that the ***great punishment*** (24:11) promised to him is in the Hereafter, for he was the one who ***"took the greater part"*** in the slander.

REFERENCES:

Tafsir Ibn Kathir (An-Nur 24:4, 11); Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari. https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/24/4

THE PENALTY OF QADHF	ITS WISDOM
Eighty lashes	Protects human honour from wild accusations
Testimony rejected	The accuser loses public trust
Deemed defiantly disobedient	Accusing without proof is a grave sin
Repentance accepted (24:5)	The door back to Allah stays open

The lesson: Islam regards human ***honour*** as highly as life and property. The penalty of qadhf shuts the door on anyone who would casually ruin another's reputation.

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ABU BAKR AND MISTAH: FORGIVENESS

Mistah ibn Uthathah was a poor relative of Abu Bakr رضى الله عنه, and Abu Bakr always ***provided for him***. When Mistah joined in slandering Abu Bakr's own daughter, Abu Bakr swore: "By Allah, I will never again spend on Mistah." Then Allah revealed (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141):

"and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" Tafsir Ibn Kathir 24:22.

Abu Bakr answered at once: ***"Yes, by Allah, I would love that Allah forgive me."*** And he resumed spending on Mistah as before, saying: "By Allah, I will never stop it." (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141).

Imagine: a father whose daughter was slandered with the vilest accusation, by a relative he himself supported. Yet when Allah asked ***"would you not like Allah to forgive you?"***, he did not hesitate. This is why Abu Bakr is called ***as-Siddiq***.

LESSON	FROM VERSE 24:22
Kindness not stopped by a wrong	Keep helping a relative even when he has erred
Pardon and overlook	"Let them pardon and overlook"
Like for like	Whoever forgives people is forgiven by Allah
Mistah, a man of Badr	One mistake does not erase all good

The lesson: ***forgiving those who hurt us*** is the road to Allah's forgiveness. Scholars often cite this verse as among the most hope-giving verses in the Qur'an.

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HASSAN IBN THABIT AND 'A'ISHAH

Hassan ibn Thabit رضى الله عنه was the Prophet's ﷺ poet who defended Islam with his verse (Book 13).

Sadly, he was among those swept up in the Slander Affair. How did 'A'ishah treat him afterwards? Masruq relates:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4146

حَدَّثَنِي بِشْرُ بْنُ خَالِدٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ، عَنْ شُعْبَةَ، عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ، عَنْ أَبِي الضُّحَى، عَنْ مَسْرُوقٍ، قَالَ دَخَلْنَا عَلَى عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ وَعِنْدَهَا حَسَّانُ بْنُ ثَابِتٍ يُنْشِدُهَا شِعْرًا، يُشَبِّبُ بِأَبْيَاتٍ لَهُ وَقَالَ: حَصَانٌ رَزَانٌ مَا تُزَنُّ بِرِيبَةٍ وَتُصْبِحُ غَرْثَى مِنْ لُحُومِ الْغَوَافِلِ فَقَالَتْ لَهُ عَائِشَةُ لَكِنَّكَ لَسْتَ كَذَلِكَ. قَالَ مَسْرُوقٌ فَقُلْتُ لَهَا لِمَ تَأْذَنِينَ لَهُ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ عَلَيْكِ. وَقَدْ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى {وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّى كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ}. فَقَالَتْ وَأَىُّ عَذَابٍ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْعَمَى. قَالَتْ لَهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ يُنَافِحُ ـ أَوْ يُهَاجِي ـ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم.

TRANSLATION:

Masruq said: **We went in to 'A'ishah** رضى الله عنها**, and Hassan ibn Thabit was with her, reciting poetry to her, praising her with his verses: "Chaste and composed, never suspected of any doubt; she rises hungry from the flesh of heedless women (never backbiting)."** 'A'ishah said to him: ***"But you are not so."*** Masruq said: I asked her: "Why do you allow him to come in to you, when Allah has said: 'And he who took upon himself the greater part of it — for him is a great punishment'?" She said: "What punishment is harsher than blindness?" And she said: ***"He used to defend the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (with his poetry)."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Bishr ibn Khalid, from Muhammad ibn Ja'far (Ghundar), from Shu'bah, from Sulayman al-A'mash, from Abu ad-Duha, from Masruq, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Military Expeditions (al-Maghazi), Chapter on the Narration of al-Ifk, Hadith No. 4146; also Nos. 4755–4756; and Sahih Muslim No. 2488.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4146

Hassan praised 'A'ishah as a woman who ***does not eat the flesh*** of heedless women — that is, who does not backbite. 'A'ishah replied gently: ***"But you are not so"*** — reminding him of his past mistake. Yet she still ***received him*** and defended him, for Hassan's service in defending the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

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In another narration, 'Urwah said: "I began to revile Hassan in front of 'A'ishah, and she said: ***'Do not revile him, for he used to defend the Messenger of Allah ﷺ."*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4145).

The lesson: 'A'ishah was the victim of slander, yet she ***bore no grudge***. She judged Hassan fairly — acknowledging his mistake, but not forgetting his service. This is the character of a pure heart.

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THE SECOND NECKLACE AND THE VERSE OF TAYAMMUM

'A'ishah's necklace once again became the reason for a ruling from Allah, this time on another journey. Scholars differ on whether this happened on the same journey or a different one, but both show ***the blessing of Abu Bakr's family***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 334

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا مَالِكٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ الْقَاسِمِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَتْ خَرَجْنَا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فِي بَعْضِ أَسْفَارِهِ، حَتَّى إِذَا كُنَّا بِالْبَيْدَاءِ ـ أَوْ بِذَاتِ الْجَيْشِ ـ انْقَطَعَ عِقْدٌ لِي، فَأَقَامَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَلَى الْتِمَاسِهِ، وَأَقَامَ النَّاسُ مَعَهُ، وَلَيْسُوا عَلَى مَاءٍ، فَأَتَى النَّاسُ إِلَى أَبِي بَكْرٍ الصِّدِّيقِ فَقَالُوا أَلاَ تَرَى مَا صَنَعَتْ عَائِشَةُ أَقَامَتْ بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَالنَّاسِ، وَلَيْسُوا عَلَى مَاءٍ، وَلَيْسَ مَعَهُمْ مَاءٌ. فَجَاءَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَاضِعٌ رَأْسَهُ عَلَى فَخِذِي قَدْ نَامَ فَقَالَ حَبَسْتِ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَالنَّاسَ، وَلَيْسُوا عَلَى مَاءٍ، وَلَيْسَ مَعَهُمْ مَاءٌ. فَقَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ فَعَاتَبَنِي أَبُو بَكْرٍ، وَقَالَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَقُولَ، وَجَعَلَ يَطْعُنُنِي بِيَدِهِ فِي خَاصِرَتِي، فَلاَ يَمْنَعُنِي مِنَ التَّحَرُّكِ إِلاَّ مَكَانُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَلَى فَخِذِي، فَقَامَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم حِينَ أَصْبَحَ عَلَى غَيْرِ مَاءٍ، فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ آيَةَ التَّيَمُّمِ فَتَيَمَّمُوا. فَقَالَ أُسَيْدُ بْنُ الْحُضَيْرِ مَا هِيَ بِأَوَّلِ بَرَكَتِكُمْ يَا آلَ أَبِي بَكْرٍ. قَالَتْ فَبَعَثْنَا الْبَعِيرَ الَّذِي كُنْتُ عَلَيْهِ، فَأَصَبْنَا الْعِقْدَ تَحْتَهُ.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ, said: **We went out with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on one of his journeys, until when we were at al-Bayda' — or Dhat al-Jaysh — a necklace of mine broke. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ stopped to search for it, and the people stopped with him, though they were not at a water source.** The people came to Abu Bakr as-Siddiq and said: "Do you not see what 'A'ishah has done?…" Abu Bakr came while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was asleep with his head on my thigh, and he rebuked me and poked my side with his hand; nothing stopped me from moving except the Messenger of Allah's ﷺ head on my thigh. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ rose in the morning without water, ***and Allah revealed the verse of tayammum***, so they performed tayammum. Usayd ibn al-Hudayr said: ***"This is not the first of your blessings, O family of Abu Bakr."*** 'A'ishah said: We moved the camel I had been riding, and found the necklace beneath it.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Yusuf, from Malik ibn Anas, from 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn al-Qasim, from his father al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tayammum, Hadith No. 334; also No. 4607; and Sahih Muslim No. 367.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:334

The verse revealed was the verse of tayammum in Surah Al-Ma'idah (and An-Nisa' 4:43): ***"and do not find water, then seek clean earth"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 5:6.

Usayd ibn al-Hudayr's words — ***"This is not the first of your blessings, O family of Abu Bakr"*** — show how the Companions saw 'A'ishah's story: from personal hardship came ***ease for the whole ummah***. To this day, Muslims who are ill or find no water perform tayammum because of 'A'ishah's necklace.

The lesson: Allah makes ***hardship a path to ease***. "Do not think it bad for you; rather it is good for you" (24:11).

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THE HONOUR OF 'A'ISHAH

After so heavy a slander, Allah and His Messenger ﷺ made ***'A'ishah's honour*** manifest in many ways.

Among them, a greeting from Jibril himself:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3768

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ يُونُسَ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، قَالَ أَبُو سَلَمَةَ إِنَّ عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَوْمًا يَا عَائِشَ، هَذَا جِبْرِيلُ يُقْرِئُكِ السَّلاَمَ. فَقُلْتُ وَعَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ، تَرَى مَا لاَ أَرَى. تُرِيدُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: **One day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "O 'A'ish, this is Jibril conveying salam to you."** I said: ***"Wa 'alayhis-salam wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh."*** You see what I do not see — meaning the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Yahya ibn Bukayr, from al-Layth ibn Sa'd, from Yunus ibn Yazid, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from Abu Salamah, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, Chapter on the Virtue of 'A'ishah, Hadith No. 3768; and Sahih Muslim No. 2447.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3768

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also said: ***"The superiority of 'A'ishah over other women is like the superiority of tharid over other foods"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3770) — tharid being a dish of bread and meat broth, the most prized food of the Arabs then.

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"I WISH I HAD BEEN FORGOTTEN"

Yet 'A'ishah herself remained ***humble***. Decades later, as she neared death, Ibn 'Abbas came to visit her:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4753

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ سَعِيدِ بْنِ أَبِي حُسَيْنٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي ابْنُ أَبِي مُلَيْكَةَ، قَالَ اسْتَأْذَنَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهَا عَلَى عَائِشَةَ، وَهْىَ مَغْلُوبَةٌ قَالَتْ أَخْشَى أَنْ يُثْنِيَ عَلَىَّ. فَقِيلَ ابْنُ عَمِّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَمِنْ وُجُوهِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ. قَالَتِ ائْذَنُوا لَهُ. فَقَالَ كَيْفَ تَجِدِينَكِ قَالَتْ بِخَيْرٍ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُ. قَالَ فَأَنْتِ بِخَيْرٍ ـ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ ـ زَوْجَةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَلَمْ يَنْكِحْ بِكْرًا غَيْرَكِ، وَنَزَلَ عُذْرُكِ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ. وَدَخَلَ ابْنُ الزُّبَيْرِ خِلاَفَهُ فَقَالَتْ دَخَلَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ فَأَثْنَى عَلَىَّ وَوَدِدْتُ أَنِّي كُنْتُ نِسْيًا مَنْسِيًّا.

TRANSLATION:

Ibn Abi Mulaykah said: **Ibn 'Abbas asked permission to visit 'A'ishah before her death, when she was gravely ill. She said: "I fear he will praise me."** She was told: "He is the cousin of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and one of the eminent Muslims." She said: "Let him in." He asked: "How do you find yourself?" She said: "Well, if I have been mindful of Allah." He said: **"You are well, in sha Allah — the wife of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; he married no virgin but you,** *and your vindication came down from heaven*.**"** Then Ibn az-Zubayr came in after him, and she said: "Ibn 'Abbas came in and praised me, and ***I wish I had been a thing forgotten, utterly forgotten***."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna, from Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Qattan, from 'Umar ibn Sa'id ibn Abi Husayn, from Ibn Abi Mulaykah, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Surat an-Nur, Hadith No. 4753; also No. 3771.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4753

Ibn 'Abbas named 'A'ishah's greatest honour: ***"your vindication came down from heaven"***. But 'A'ishah's reply shows her piety: she would rather be ***forgotten*** than praised, fearing praise might spoil sincerity.

'A'ISHAH'S HONOURS	SOURCE
Vindication from heaven	An-Nur 24:11–26
Greetings from Jibril	Sahih al-Bukhari 3768
Like tharid over other food	Sahih al-Bukhari 3770

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'A'ISHAH'S HONOURS	SOURCE
Occasion of the verse of tayammum	Sahih al-Bukhari 334
Among the greatest narrators	Over 2,000 Hadith (books of hadith sciences)

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THE TONGUE IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The Slander Affair spread mouth to mouth in a small town. Today, slander can reach ***millions in minutes*** through WhatsApp, Facebook and TikTok. The lessons of Surah An-Nur matter more than ever. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned how heavy a single word can be:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6478

حَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُنِيرٍ، سَمِعَ أَبَا النَّضْرِ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ دِينَارٍ - عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مِنْ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ لاَ يُلْقِي لَهَا بَالاً، يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ بِهَا دَرَجَاتٍ، وَإِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مِنْ سَخَطِ اللَّهِ لاَ يُلْقِي لَهَا بَالاً يَهْوِي بِهَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"A servant may speak a word pleasing to Allah without giving it a thought, and Allah raises him by degrees because of it. And a servant may speak a word displeasing to Allah without giving it a thought,** *and fall into Hell because of it*.**"**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Munir, from Abu an-Nadr, from 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Abdullah ibn Dinar, from his father 'Abdullah ibn Dinar, from Abu Salih, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Softening the Hearts (ar-Riqaq), Chapter on Guarding the Tongue, Hadith No. 6478; and Sahih Muslim No. 2988.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6478

Allah commands that every report be verified: ***"O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 49:6.

SCIENCE NOTE: FALSE NEWS TRAVELS FASTER

A major study published in the journal ***Science*** in 2018 analysed about ***126,000 news cascades*** on Twitter shared by over three million people. MIT researchers found that ***false news spread farther, faster and more broadly*** than true news. False news was ***70% more likely to be retweeted***, and true news took about ***six times as long*** to reach 1,500 people (Vosoughi, Roy & Aral, "The spread of true and false news online", Science 359, 2018).

The study also found false news more often carried ***surprise and emotion***, which drives people to share without thinking — exactly as the Qur'an describes: ***"you received it with your tongues… and thought***

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it was insignificant" (24:15). The Qur'an gave the remedy 1,400 years ago: ***think well, ask for proof, verify, and stay silent***.

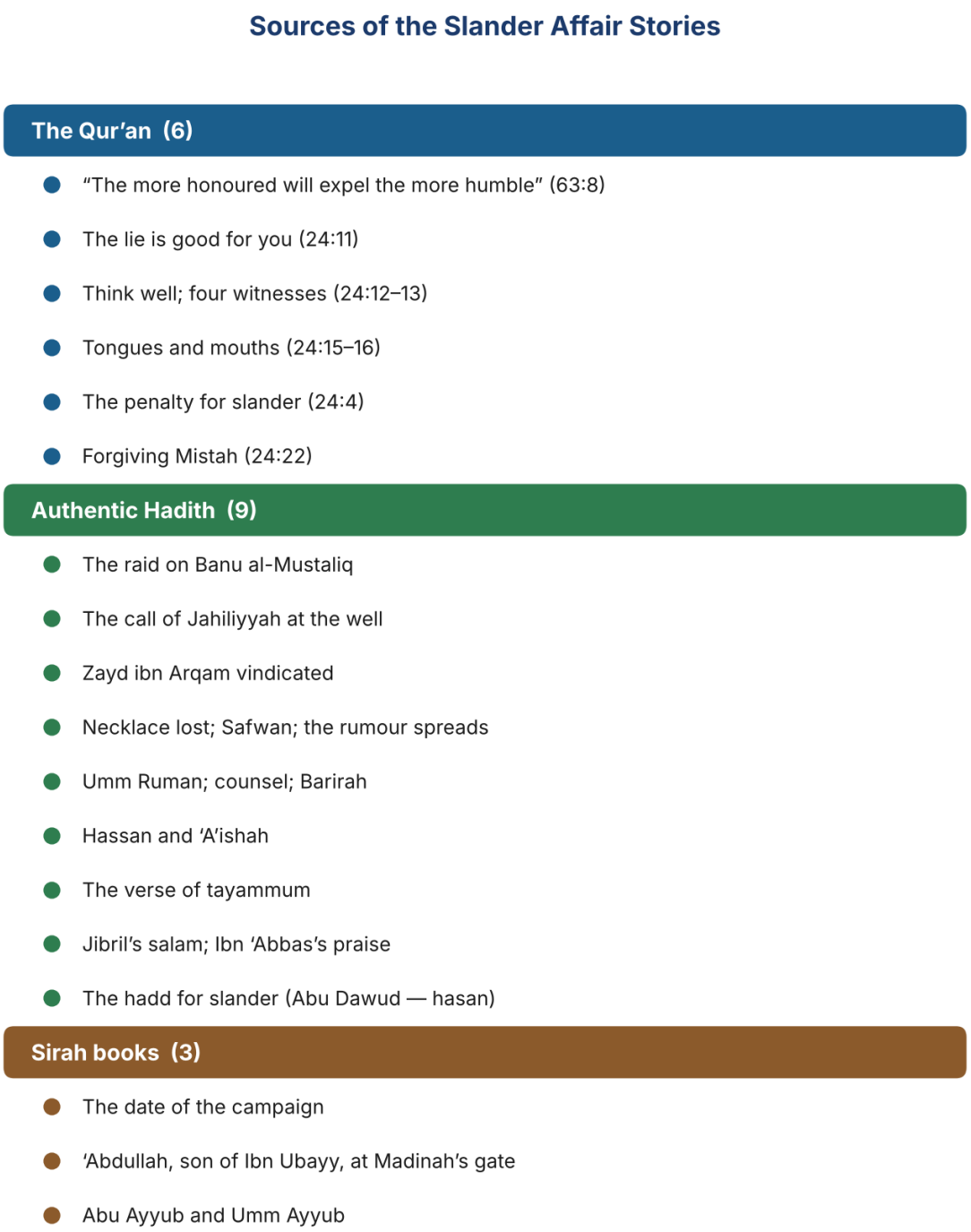
BEFORE SHARING	ASK YOURSELF
Is it true?	Do I have sound proof? (24:13; 49:6)
Is it good?	Does it shame someone? (24:19)
Is it necessary?	"It is not for us to speak of this" (24:16)
What if it were about me?	Think well "of yourselves" (24:12)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also said: ***"It is enough of a lie for a person to relate everything he hears"*** (Sahih Muslim, Introduction 5). The lesson: the "share" button is ***the tongue of the modern age***, and we will be asked about it.

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SOURCES OF THE SLANDER AFFAIR STORIES

The story of the Slander Affair reaches us through three kinds of sources of differing strength. This eBook distinguishes them so the reader knows ***what is certain*** and ***what is well known***:



Sirah-book stories are mentioned with their status explained in the relevant chapters.

Figure 4: The status of sources for the Slander Affair stories in this eBook.

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STORY	SOURCE AND STATUS
Ibn Ubayy's words; 'A'ishah's vindication; qadhf; forgiving Mistah	The Qur'an (63:8; 24:4–26) — certain
The raid; necklace; Safwan; slander; counsel; revelation	Sahih al-Bukhari 2541, 4141, 4143, 7370 — sahih
Zayd ibn Arqam; Hassan; tayammum; 'A'ishah's honour	Sahih al-Bukhari 4900, 4146, 334, 3768, 3770, 4753 — sahih
The call of Jahiliyyah; Ibn Ubayy's son	Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3315 — hasan sahih; Sahih al-Bukhari 4905
Juwayriyah; the hadd on three people	Sunan Abi Dawud 3931, 4474 — hasan
The date; Ibn Ubayy's son at the gate; Abu Ayyub	Sirah books (Ibn Ishaq, al-Waqidi) — well known, chains vary

Stories from the sirah books are not necessarily false; they are transmitted by trusted sirah scholars. Yet they are ***not on the level*** of the Qur'an and sahih hadith. This eBook ***does not include*** Isra'iliyyat or clearly fabricated reports.

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THE VERSES OF VINDICATION: AN-NUR 24:11–26

In the Hadith of the Slander (al-Ifk), 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها mentions that Allah revealed ten verses beginning with "Indeed, those who came with the slander…" (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141). The exegetes discuss verses 11 to 26 of Surah An-Nur as one sequence about this event. Earlier chapters explained some of these verses; the table below gathers all sixteen so the reader can see them as a whole.

VERSE	BRIEF MEANING	IN THIS EBOOK
24:11	Those who spread the lie are only a small group; this is not bad for you, rather it is good for you	Chapters 8, 14
24:12	The believers ought to have thought well	Chapter 15
24:13	Why did they not bring four witnesses?	Chapter 15
24:14	Were it not for Allah's favour, a great punishment would have touched you	This chapter
24:15	Receiving the news with the tongue and thinking it a small matter	Chapter 16
24:16	"It is not for us to speak of this"	Chapter 16
24:17	Allah admonishes you never to repeat it	This chapter
24:18	Allah makes His verses clear	This chapter
24:19	Those who love that indecency spread among the believers are threatened with a painful punishment	Chapter 22, this chapter
24:20	Allah's mercy that held back the punishment	This chapter
24:21	Do not follow the footsteps of Satan; no one is purified without Allah's favour	This chapter
24:22	Pardoning and overlooking	Chapter 18
24:23	Those who accuse chaste, unaware believing women are cursed in this world and the Hereafter	This chapter, Questions 9–10
24:24	Tongues, hands and feet will bear witness	This chapter
24:25	Allah will pay them their due in full and with justice	This chapter
24:26	The good are for the good; they are innocent of what is said	Question 6

THE FOOTSTEPS OF SATAN

Verse 21 warns: "O you who have believed, do not follow the footsteps of Satan" (An-Nur 24:21). Slander rarely begins with a great lie. It begins with small steps: a whisper, a question — "is it true?" — then repeating it to someone else. Each step seems trivial, yet together they lead to a grave sin. The same verse reminds us that no one becomes pure without Allah's favour; so there is no room to feel purer than the one who has slipped.

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THE LIMBS WILL BEAR WITNESS

Verses 23 to 25 close the sequence with the gravest warning. Those who accuse believing women who are chaste — women to whose hearts such indecency has never even occurred — are cursed in this world and the Hereafter. On the Day of Resurrection, the very tongue that accused will bear witness against its owner (An-Nur 24:23–25).

HADITH: THE SEVEN DESTRUCTIVE SINS

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Avoid the seven destructive sins." The Companions asked: "What are they, O Messenger of Allah?" He mentioned shirk, sorcery, killing a soul that Allah has made sacred, consuming usury, consuming the wealth of an orphan, fleeing from the battlefield, "and accusing chaste, unaware believing women (of adultery)."

Grade: SAHIH — Sahih al-Bukhari 2766; also Sahih Muslim 89.

LESSONS

These sixteen verses do more than clear the name of a noble woman. They lay down a law of the tongue for the whole Ummah: think well of others, demand proof, let bad news stop with yourself, do not love to see faults spread, forgive, and always remember that our own tongue will bear witness against us.

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SURAH AN-NUR: A FORTRESS FOR THE HONOUR OF SOCIETY

The verses of the Slander sit in the middle of Surah An-Nur, a surah full of rulings that guard honour. After this event, the Qur'an did not only punish those who spread slander; it also built fences so that slander would be hard to start. The principle is simple: close the door before the thief comes in.

VERSE	RULING	THE FORTRESS BUILT
24:2	The penalty for zina	The indecent act itself is firmly prevented
24:4–5	The penalty for qadhf (chapter 17)	Accusation without proof is punished
24:27–29	Asking permission and giving salam before entering others' houses	Guarding the privacy of the home
24:30	Men lower their gaze	Closing the first door to temptation
24:31	Women lower their gaze and guard their 'awrah	Guarding personal honour
24:32	Encouragement to marry	Channelling natural desire lawfully
24:58–59	Asking permission at the three private times within one's own home	Etiquette within the family

HADITH: PERMISSION IS FOR THE SAKE OF THE GAZE

Sahl ibn Sa'd رضى الله عنه narrated that a man peeped through a hole in the door of the Prophet's ﷺ house.

He said: "Had I known you were looking, I would have poked your eye with it. Asking permission has been prescribed only because of the gaze."

Grade: SAHIH — Sahih al-Bukhari 6241.

HADITH: ASKING PERMISSION THREE TIMES

Abu Musa al-Ash'ari رضى الله عنه came to the house of 'Umar رضى الله عنه, gave salam three times, and went back when there was no answer. When 'Umar asked him why he had left, Abu Musa said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "If one of you asks permission three times and is not given permission, let him go back."

'Umar asked for proof, and another Companion confirmed the Hadith.

Grade: SAHIH — Sahih al-Bukhari 6245; also Sahih Muslim 2153.

Notice 'Umar's attitude: he would not accept a report, even from a senior Companion, until it was confirmed. This is the same spirit as Surah An-Nur — every report must be verified, and every home must be respected.

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LESSONS

Islam does not wait for slander to happen before acting. It builds etiquette from the start: asking permission, lowering the gaze, guarding the 'awrah, and making marriage easy. A society that keeps these manners is far better protected from trials like the Slander.

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THE PEOPLE OF THE SLANDER AFFAIR

The Hadith of the Slander mentions many people, each with a different role. The table below arranges them with their tribe and source. Knowing each key person's tribe matters, because the tension in the mosque (chapter 12) arose between the Aws and the Khazraj.

PERSON	TRIBE / RELATION	ROLE	SOURCE
'A'ishah bint Abi Bakr رضى الله عنها	Quraysh (Banu Taym); wife of the Prophet ﷺ	Victim of the slander; vindicated by the Qur'an	Bukhari 4141; An-Nur 24:11–26
Abu Bakr al-Siddiq رضى الله عنه	Quraysh (Banu Taym); father of 'A'ishah	Patient; later forgave Mistah	Bukhari 4141; An-Nur 24:22
Umm Ruman رضى الله عنها	Mother of 'A'ishah	Comforted her daughter	Bukhari 4143
Safwan ibn al-Mu'attal رضى الله عنه	Banu Sulaym (al-Dhakwani)	Rear guard of the army; brought 'A'ishah back; later fell in Allah's path	Bukhari 4141
'Ali ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه	Quraysh (Banu Hashim)	Consulted; suggested asking the maidservant	Bukhari 4141
Usamah ibn Zayd رضى الله عنهما	Son of Zayd ibn Harithah	Consulted; "we know nothing but good"	Bukhari 4141
Barirah رضى الله عنها	Maidservant of the household	Testified to 'A'ishah's goodness	Bukhari 4141 (her name is discussed by Ibn Hajar)
Zaynab bint Jahsh رضى الله عنها	Mother of the Believers; Banu Asad ibn Khuzaymah; cousin of the Prophet ﷺ	Guarded her tongue even about her co-wife	Bukhari 4141
Hamnah bint Jahsh	Sister of Zaynab	Swayed out of loyalty to her sister	Bukhari 4141
Sa'd ibn Mu'adh رضى الله عنه	Chief of the Aws (Banu 'Abd al-Ashhal)	Offered support in the mosque	Bukhari 4141 (Ibn Ishaq names Usayd; see chapter 2)
Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah رضى الله عنه	Chief of the Khazraj (Banu Sa'idah)	Objected, carried away by tribal feeling	Bukhari 4141
Usayd ibn Hudayr رضى الله عنه	Aws (Banu 'Abd al-Ashhal); cousin of Sa'd ibn Mu'adh	Answered Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah	Bukhari 4141

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PERSON	TRIBE / RELATION	ROLE	SOURCE
Umm Mistah	Quraysh; her mother was the maternal aunt of Abu Bakr	Unintentionally told 'A'ishah; rebuked her son	Bukhari 4141
Mistah ibn Uthathah	Quraysh (Banu al-Muttalib ibn 'Abd Manaf); a veteran of Badr	Swayed; received the hadd; forgiven by Abu Bakr	Bukhari 4141; Abu Dawud 4474
Hassan ibn Thabit رضى الله عنه	Khazraj (Banu al-Najjar); poet of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	Swayed; later praised 'A'ishah	Bukhari 4141, 4146
'Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul	Khazraj (Banu 'Awf); chief of the hypocrites	Instigator and main spreader	Bukhari 4141; An-Nur 24:11

SIRAH NOTE: SA'D IBN MU'ADH OR USAYD IBN HUDAYR?

In al-Bukhari's narration, the first to stand and offer support is Sa'd ibn Mu'adh. In Ibn Ishaq's narration, it is Usayd ibn Hudayr. The difference is closely tied to the debate over the date of the expedition (chapter 2): Sa'd ibn Mu'adh died after the events of Banu Qurayzah. Ibn Hajar discusses this in Fath al-Bari and strengthens al-Bukhari's narration. Both men were of the Aws.

References: Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari (Hadith No. 4141); Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah.

SAFWAN: "I HAVE NEVER UNCOVERED ANY WOMAN"

At the end of the Hadith of the Slander, 'A'ishah mentions that the man who was accused, Safwan, said: "Subhan Allah! By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, I have never uncovered any woman." 'A'ishah said: "Then he was later killed in the path of Allah" (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141). So Safwan, whose name had once been smeared, ended his life as a martyr.

LESSONS

This event involved righteous people, people who slipped, and a hypocrite. The Qur'an and Hadith judge each person by their deeds, not by their tribe or rank. Even a veteran of Badr can err, and the door of repentance is always open.

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'A'ISHAH AFTER THE TRIAL: TEACHER OF THE UMMAH

The slander did not dim the light of 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها. On the contrary, after that trial she lived on for nearly half a century as a teacher of the Ummah. Senior Companions referred to her, and the Successors (tabi'un) learned from her.

HADITH: REVELATION CAME UNDER HER BLANKET

Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها conveyed a request from the Prophet's ﷺ wives to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

He said: "Do not hurt me concerning 'A'ishah, for by Allah, revelation has never come to me while I was under the blanket of any woman among you except her."

Grade: SAHIH — Sahih al-Bukhari 3775.

HADITH: THE PROPHET'S WIFE IN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT

'Ammar ibn Yasir رضى الله عنهما said of 'A'ishah: "She is the wife of your Prophet in this world and in the Hereafter."

Grade: SAHIH — Sahih al-Bukhari 3772.

HADITH: THE COMPANIONS REFERRED TO 'A'ISHAH

Abu Musa al-Ash'ari رضى الله عنه said: "Never was a Hadith unclear to us, the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and we asked 'A'ishah about it, except that we found knowledge of it with her."

Grade: HASAN SAHIH GHARIB according to al-Tirmidhi — Jami' al-Tirmidhi 3883.

FIELD	CONTRIBUTION OF 'A'ISHAH	SOURCE
Hadith	Among the narrators of the most Hadith (chapter 21)	Books of the Hadith sciences
Fiqh	A reference for the Companions in rulings, especially on household and women's matters	Jami' al-Tirmidhi 3883
Tafsir	Explained the meanings of verses, including the reading "tal-iqunahu" (chapter 16)	Sahih al-Bukhari 4144
History and poetry	'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr praised her knowledge of the Qur'an, inheritance, the lawful and unlawful, poetry and Arab history	Biographical works (al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala')
Death	Ramadan of 57 or 58 AH in Madinah; buried in al-Baqi'	Biographical works; the date is disputed

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LESSONS

The bitterest trial need not be the end. 'A'ishah was vindicated by Allah, then spent her life teaching. Anyone who is slandered today can take her example: let Allah defend our name, and carry on with good work.

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TIMELINE OF THE SLANDER AFFAIR

The date of the expedition against Banu al-Mustaliq is disputed (chapter 2): Sha'ban 5 AH according to Ibn Sa'd, strengthened by Ibn Hajar, or Sha'ban 6 AH according to Ibn Ishaq. The order of events below follows the authentic Hadith; lengths of time not mentioned in the Hadith are marked as narrations of the sirah books.

NO.	EVENT	SOURCE
1	The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sets out against Banu al-Mustaliq; 'A'ishah is chosen by lot	Bukhari 4141
2	The attack at al-Muraysi'; Banu al-Mustaliq are defeated	Bukhari 2541
3	Juwayriyah is freed and married; the captives of her people are released	Abu Dawud 3931
4	The quarrel at the well; the call of Jahiliyyah	Bukhari 4905; Tirmidhi 3315
5	Ibn Ubayy's words; Zayd ibn Arqam reports them; Surah Al-Munafiqun is revealed	Bukhari 4900
6	The return journey; a night halt near Madinah; the necklace is lost	Bukhari 4141
7	Safwan finds 'A'ishah in the morning and brings her to the army	Bukhari 4141
8	Arrival in Madinah; the slander begins to spread; 'A'ishah falls ill for a month	Bukhari 4141
9	'A'ishah learns of the slander from Umm Mistah	Bukhari 4141
10	'A'ishah goes to her parents' house with the permission of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	Bukhari 4141
11	The Messenger of Allah ﷺ consults 'Ali and Usamah; Barirah and Zaynab are asked	Bukhari 4141
12	The sermon in the mosque; tension between the Aws and the Khazraj	Bukhari 4141
13	A month without revelation; 'A'ishah weeps for two nights and a day	Bukhari 4141
14	Revelation comes vindicating 'A'ishah (An-Nur 24:11–26)	Bukhari 4141
15	The hadd penalty for qadhf is carried out	Abu Dawud 4474
16	Abu Bakr resumes his support for Mistah	Bukhari 4141; An-Nur 24:22

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LESSONS

The timeline shows that the slander lasted more than a month, and throughout that time the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took no action without proof. He asked, consulted and waited for Allah's decision. Patience in seeking the truth is better than hastening to judge.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SLANDER AFFAIR

1. WHY WAS REVELATION DELAYED FOR A MONTH?

The Hadith does not state the reason explicitly. Scholars, among them Ibn al-Qayyim in Zad al-Ma'ad, mention several wisdoms: to test the believers, to expose the hypocrites, to show that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ does not speak from his own desire, and so that the vindication would come from heaven in full.

This is a view of the scholars, not a text.

2. DID THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ DOUBT 'A'ISHAH?

He said from the pulpit: "By Allah, I know nothing about my family except good" (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141). He was a human being who did not know the unseen except what was revealed to him, so he decided nothing without proof, and waited for Allah's decision.

3. WHY DID 'A'ISHAH SAY, "I WILL PRAISE NONE BUT ALLAH"?

When the revelation came, her mother told her to get up and thank the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. 'A'ishah said she would praise none but Allah, Who had revealed her innocence (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141). This was not a lack of respect but the honesty of tawhid: the vindication came from Allah alone.

4. WHO RECEIVED THE HADD PENALTY?

Sunan Abi Dawud mentions that two men and one woman received the hadd after the verses were revealed (Sunan Abi Dawud 4474); the sirah narrations name them as Mistah, Hassan and Hamnah. Whether Ibn Ubayy was also flogged is disputed (chapter 17).

5. WHAT HAPPENED TO SAFWAN IBN AL-MU'ATTAL?

He swore that he had never uncovered any woman, and 'A'ishah mentions that he was later killed in the path of Allah (Sahih al-Bukhari 4141). The place and year of his martyrdom are disputed in the biographical works.

6. WHAT IS MEANT BY "GOOD WOMEN ARE FOR GOOD MEN" (24:26)?

Ibn Kathir quotes Ibn 'Abbas that evil words befit evil people, and good words befit good people. The verse also shows that Allah would not have made 'A'ishah the wife of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the best of people, unless she were good (Tafsir Ibn Kathir 24:26).

7. WERE THE VERSES OF LI'AN (24:6–9) REVEALED BECAUSE OF THE SLANDER?

No. The verses of li'an were revealed about a husband who accuses his own wife, namely the story of Hilal ibn Umayyah (Sahih al-Bukhari 4747) and the story of 'Uwaymir al-'Ajlani. The verses of the Slander are 24:11–26.

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8. WHY WERE GOOD COMPANIONS LIKE MISTAH AND HASSAN SWAYED?

The Companions were human beings who could err. They were punished, they repented, and the mistake did not erase their virtues. The Prophet ﷺ said that whoever commits a sin and is punished for it in this world, that punishment is an expiation for him (Sahih al-Bukhari 18).

9. WHAT IS THE POSITION OF AHL AL-SUNNAH ON ONE WHO ACCUSES 'A'ISHAH TODAY?

Ibn Kathir states that the scholars agree: whoever accuses 'A'ishah of that charge after these verses were revealed is a disbeliever, because he opposes the Qur'an (Tafsir Ibn Kathir 24:23). This is a scholarly position on denying revelation. Our conduct towards others remains one of da'wah, wisdom and good manners.

10. IS THIS PROHIBITION ON ACCUSATION SPECIFIC TO 'A'ISHAH?

No. Verse 24:23 is general for all chaste believing women, and accusing them is one of the seven destructive sins (Sahih al-Bukhari 2766). Ibn Kathir mentions that 'A'ishah was the occasion of the verse's revelation, and its ruling covers all similar cases.

11. HOW SHOULD WE SPEAK OF THE COMPANIONS WHO WERE INVOLVED?

With respect. Mistah was a veteran of Badr, Hassan was the poet who defended the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and Hamnah was the sister of a Mother of the Believers. 'A'ishah herself forbade people from reviling Hassan (chapter 19). We tell of their mistakes as a lesson, not to belittle them.

12. WHAT SHOULD WE DO IF WE OURSELVES ARE SLANDERED?

Be patient with "beautiful patience" as 'A'ishah was (chapter 13), do not answer slander with slander, explain the truth calmly if needed, and leave the defence to Allah. Allah says: "Do not think it bad for you; rather it is good for you" (An-Nur 24:11).

LESSONS

The Slander Affair raises many questions, and their answers return to the Qur'an, authentic Hadith and the explanations of the scholars. By separating texts from scholarly views, we can understand this event calmly, fairly and with full respect for the family of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

The Slander Affair was the most personal trial of the Prophet's ﷺ life — a trial that touched ***his home***.

Yet from it came verses that guard the honour of the ummah until the Day of Resurrection.

LESSON	FROM THE SLANDER AFFAIR
Mercy in victory	Juwayriyah and a hundred households freed
Reject tribalism	"Leave it — it is foul"
Allah defends the truthful	Zayd ibn Arqam and 'A'ishah vindicated
Conduct in a trial	'A'ishah sat and waited; Safwan kept silent
Think well; demand proof	An-Nur 24:12–13
Guard the tongue	An-Nur 24:15–16; Bukhari 6478
Beautiful patience	"Fasabrun jamil" (12:18)
Forgiveness	Abu Bakr and Mistah (24:22)
Hardship brings good	"Rather it is good for you" (24:11)

THE SLANDER AFFAIR IN OUR LIVES

Every day we receive news about others — at the coffee shop, at the mosque, on our phones. This story teaches us to be like ***Abu Ayyub***, who thought well, ***Zaynab***, who guarded her tongue even towards a rival, ***Abu Bakr***, who forgave, and ***'A'ishah***, who was patient while relying on Allah — not like those who ***received the news with their tongues***.

In sha Allah, the series **The Prophet's Sirah** will continue with ***Book 15*** — the next events in the mission of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. And Allah knows best.

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

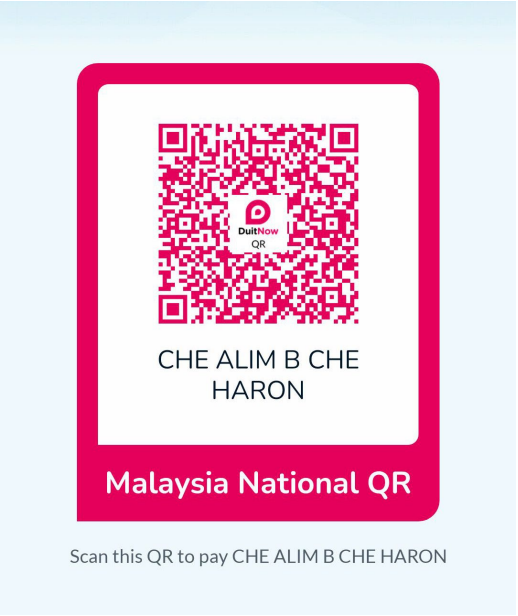
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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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