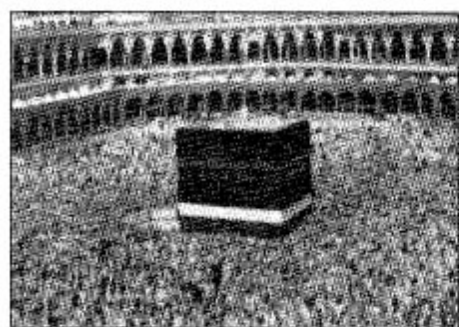


Verify and then accept

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan



Misunderstanding is a common phenomenon of social life. People tend to believe everything that is reported to them without scrutiny. And it is a common experience for reporters always to report things selectively or in a partial manner. It is selective reporting or partial reporting that creates problems. Sometimes people fall into grave misunderstanding and the result is disastrous. Chapter Al-Hujurat (The Apartments) of the Quran deals with this problem. It gives a clear direction in this regard. The translation of the relevant Quranic verse is as follows:

Believers, if an evil-doer brings you news, ascertain the correctness of the report fully, lest you unwittingly harm others, and then regret what you have done. (49:6)

There is a background to this Quranic verse. When

the Prophet of Islam established a state in Arabia making Medina its capital, he sent one of his companions, Walid ibn Uqba, as a collector, to a tribe called the Banu al-Mustaliq. When Walid reached the tribal area, he saw that a crowd had gathered outside the town. He feared, due to some preoccupation, that the tribe wanted to kill him or beat him. After seeing this, Walid returned to Medina, and told the Prophet that the Banu al-Mustaliq had rebelled.

Then the chief of that tribe, Harris bin Zarar, himself came to Medina. He said that they had gathered on the outskirts of their town only to receive the collector, Walid bin Uqba, but that without meeting them he had returned to Medina. The verse was revealed in the Quran after this incident.

By taking this example, the Quran gives the general direction that, before forming an opinion, we should scrutinise any news we receive. That is, before proper scrutiny, we should not accept its veracity.

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