

Character assassination is crime

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

During the Prophet's time, there were certain people in Madinah who wanted to defame a member of the Prophet's family. It was a case of character assassination. At that juncture the following verses were revealed: "Those who desire that indecencies should spread among the believers will have a painful chastisement in this world and the Hereafter. God knows, and you do not know" (24:19).

According to Islamic teachings, character assassination is a heinous crime. An act of this kind is against humanity, against ethical values, and against Quranic teachings. Those guilty of any ethical crime of this nature will be severely punished by God Almighty. If you criticise someone on the basis of undeniable facts which will stand up to objective scrutiny, you are acting lawfully and are exercising your moral rights as set forth in the divine book. If your intention is good, your action will be treated as pro-

moting reform. Moreover, you will receive some reward from God Almighty.

But if you are abusing someone, or using unethical language or immoral language without any evidence to support what you say, then you are committing a crime. The use of abusive language against anyone, which has no factual base, is an act of character assassination. No one has the right to use such language. Criticism based on facts is constructive, but making allegations without any basis in fact is the worst kind of crime. In this regard, two courses are open to all: if an individual has an accusation to make against anyone and he has undeniable proof in support of what he has to say, then he is allowed to express his views. If, on the other hand, he has an adverse opinion about anyone, but has no evidence to support his negative remarks, then he has to remain silent.

www.cpsglobal.org