

Answer to those who ask "Might some of the negative news spread about believers be true?"

In compliance with the verse "**Am I to desire someone other than Allah as a judge, when it is He Who has sent down the Book to you clarifying everything?**" (Qur'an, 6:114) believers resort to Allah's judgment for every issue. This also holds true for how they judge the news they gather from unbelievers. The Qur'an sets the related criteria, as follows:

O you who believe, if a deviator brings you a report, scrutinize it carefully in case you attack people in ignorance and so come to greatly regret what you have done. (Qur'an, 49:6)

In the Qur'an, Allah states that only believers are reliable and trustworthy people, and that everybody else is a "deviator," someone who disregards Allah's commands, has gone astray in belief, and has rebelled against Allah. As we learn from the above verse, Allah commands believers to scrutinize the news brought by such people. This being the case, believers must not believe immediately in such news and must be cautious, especially if such news seems to be built upon lies or slander.

A more important aspect of this issue is that throughout history, all believers have been subjected to slanderous accusations. The Qur'an relates, when discussing the lives of the Prophets, how many members of the society's elite class resorted to lowly forms of slander against them. All communities of believers have experienced such reactions from unbelievers. In this sense, we can say that these reactions are indicative of the person involved being a true believer.

There is another interesting feature of such assaults against believers. The leading unbelievers never say openly: "We do not believe in Allah and are against believers who summon to Allah's way." On the contrary, they proclaim their belief in Allah and consider themselves to be on the right path. Meanwhile, they claim that believers lie in Allah's name and abuse His religion to gain mundane interests. The Qur'an provides a detailed account of such slanders, as follows: Prophet Musa (pbuh) and his brother Prophet Harun (Aaron) (pbuh) were said to "**gain greatness in the land;**" (Qur'an, 10:78) Prophet Nuh (pbuh) was accused of "**wanting to gain ascendancy,**" (Qur'an, 23:24) and was said to be "**possessed;**" (Qur'an, 23:25) Prophet Salih (pbuh) sent to the Thamud was accused of being a "**liar and an insolent person;**" (Qur'an, 54:25) and Prophet Musa (pbuh) and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) were called "**insane**" (Qur'an, 26:27 and Qur'an, 15:6). Many Prophets were called "**sorcerers,**" (Qur'an, 10:2 and Qur'an, 38:4) and Pharaoh called Prophet Musa (pbuh) "**a magician or a madman.**" (Qur'an, 51:38-39) Being a "**liar**" is another slander made up against believers throughout history. (Qur'an, 7:66 and Qur'an, 11:27)

History shows that such slander has always been hurled against believers in an attempt to blacken their names and to cause people to doubt their words. For this reason, upon hearing such slander, lies, or negative news about those who have faith in Allah, people who are unaware of the truth at least have to think positively.

By providing an event as an example, Allah warns Muslims not to be deceived when faced with such situations. The Qur'an clarifies the correct attitude that believers should assume when confronted with a slander made up against one of the Prophet's (pbuh) wives in the following verse:

Why, when you heard it, did you not, as believing men and women, instinctively think good thoughts and say: "This is obviously a lie?" (Qur'an, 24:12)