

SLANDERS ON MUSLIMS IN HISTORY

**And those who abuse believing men and women,
when they have not merited it,
bear the weight of slander and clear wrongdoing.
(Surat al-Ahzab, 58)**

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INTRODUCTION

Slander is one of the ugly methods used by dishonest and immoral people whose interests have been damaged, and thus are hostile, angry, and full of ill-feeling toward the people with whom they are in competition or whom they desire to hurt. There are many forms of slander, from organized and systematic schemes to a few words squeezed in between the lines. In societies that are far removed from religious morality and so do not live by Allah's will, slander is frequently used to put others in a bad light. Most of the people who will read this book have probably been slandered to one degree or another or have witnessed others being slandered.

However, this book is not concerned with the little slanders that individuals hurl at each other. Rather, it deals with an altogether different type of slander: that used by those who do not believe in religion to harm believers, whether physically or spiritually.

The Qur'an reveals that all of Allah's messengers and other devout people who called their societies to abide by the Qur'an's morality stood accused of avarice, madness, arrogance, theft, and fornication. Yusuf's (as) life was full of such examples of slander, as were those of Musa (as), Sulayman (as), and even Prophet Muhammad (saas). Likewise Maryam, the mother of 'Isa (as); A'isha, the wife of our Prophet (saas); and his Companions were all exposed to slander. These people always displayed exemplary patience and reliance upon Allah when confronted with slander, disregarded the unbelievers' such efforts, and continued to live by the morality ordained by Allah and invite people to the righteous path.

No doubt, such determination is exemplary. Allah reveals: **"Or did you suppose that you would enter the Garden without facing the same as those who came before you?"** (Surat al-Baqara, 214). In other words, it is one of Allah's laws that all Muslims, regardless of when and where they live, will be slandered and pressured to abandon the Qur'an's morality. In another verse, Allah reveals that all believers will hear hurtful words from the unbelievers and will be tested in their possessions and in themselves:

You will be tested in your wealth and in yourselves, and you will hear many abusive words from those given the Book before you and from those who associate [others with Me]. But if you are steadfast and guard against evil, that is the most resolute course to take. (Surah Al 'Imran, 186)

Every righteous and devout believer who encounters such a situation desires to display the same patience, trust in Allah, sincerity, and determination as those earlier believers. Therefore, they are not shocked or saddened, nor do they give way to despair, when the tests mentioned in the Qur'an are sent to them. Instead, to the surprise of the slanderers, they show even greater zeal and joy.

Likewise, when another believer is slandered, his or her fellow believers receive it with patience and zeal, and they rely upon Allah. They believe that, provided that he or she shows patience, their

slandered brother or sister will earn Allah's mercy and bounty in this world, as well as our Lord's good pleasure and Paradise in the Hereafter.

There is a great benefit in revealing another aspect of slander: Unlike other slanders, the logic of "If you throw enough dirt, some of it will stick" does not work on believers. Regardless of its apparent severity, in the end it will be known that these devout people have a pure and good character. Both Maryam and Yusuf (as) once stood accused of illicit relations, even though they are known to history as symbols of chastity. Yusuf's (as) brothers also accused him of being a thief, but within his lifetime he was recognized as a very trustworthy person and thus was appointed over the stores of Egypt.

All of this shows us a very important reality: It is Allah's will that every plan aimed against believers is destined to be stillborn, and that every piece of slander will come to nothing. Every hurtful word will return to its speaker in the form of punishment. In other words, every speech, deed, and cruelty directed against believers will cause the slanderer to feel deep regret and great suffering in both this world and in the Hereafter. Allah reveals the fate awaiting those who slander His messengers and devout servants:

As for those who abuse Allah and His messenger, Allah's curse is on them in this world and in the Hereafter. He has prepared a humiliating punishment for them. And those who abuse believing men and women, when they have not merited it, bear the weight of slander and clear wrongdoing. (Surat al-Ahzab, 57-58)

THE UNBELIEVERS' HOSTILITY

Throughout history, Allah's messengers have been made responsible for conveying His message to their people as well as enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. In times when there are no prophets among the people, believers who have a strong and sincere faith have taken it upon themselves to perform these tasks in order to earn Allah's good pleasure, mercy, and Paradise. However, throughout history, such people have been subjected to verbal and physical abuse and often threatened with death. Since they have no worldly ambition, they do not approach anyone out of self-interest. On the contrary, they are selfless, modest, and humble. However, they still face hostility and attacks from some people. Allah reveals the identity of these people in the Qur'an, and explains why they do what they do by providing examples from the past.

The Qur'an reveals that the underlying reason for this hostility is their hostility toward Allah and His religion. Due to their vanity, they do not want to acknowledge the existence of the All-Powerful Creator Who created them, gave them life when they were nothing, and then sustained them with endless means of sustenance. They choose denial because of their zeal for life and preference of this world over the Hereafter, and because they seek to escape the responsibility that believing in Allah's religion will bring upon them. They do not wish to feel answerable to anyone and so ignore the fact that one day they will be brought to justice for their evil, immoral, and sinful deeds. For these reasons, they perceive all who remind them of Allah, His religion, and the Day of Judgment as their enemy.

As a consequence of this hostility, they either try to hinder the believers or try to force them to return to their former religion. As we learn from the Qur'an, people who are far removed from the Qur'an's morality use various methods to achieve their ambitions. For example, they plot, scheme, and conspire against believers; torture them; and try to hurt them with mockery or slander. By slandering believers, they try to derail them and wear them down. Allah reveals that such hostile efforts have never succeeded:

If they come upon you, they will be your enemies and stretch out their hands and tongues against you with evil intent. They would dearly love [for] you to become unbelievers. (Surat al-Mumtahana, 2)

The source of the slanders examined in this book is those who, in the words of the Qur'an, **"stretch out their hands and tongues against believers with evil intent."** Over the coming pages, we will see that slander, which has been handed down from generation to generation over thousands of years as if it were an inheritance, is the method used by those who wish to spread immorality and disorder in the world. It is used against religious, sincere, and moral people, as in the cases of Prophets Nuh (as), Sulayman (as), Musa (as), Muhammad (saas), and every messenger in between, not to mention all of the devout people who were with them. In recent history, the great scholar Bediuzzaman Said Nursi was subjected to this type of bullying as well.

However, no slanderer in history, including Pharaoh and Nimrod, has ever achieved his or her goal, and neither have the people who sought to hurt the loved ones of our Prophet (saas) by slandering them. Allah has always cleared His righteous servants of the suspicions cast on them, as we learn in the account of Musa (as):

O you who believe! Do not be like those who abused Musa. Allah absolved him of what they said, and he was highly honored with Allah. O you who believe! Fear [and respect] Allah, and speak the right word. (Surat al-Ahzab, 69-70)

Just as all past slanderers against Muslims met with no success, they will not succeed either today or in the future.

WHO WERE THE SLANDERERS OF THE PAST?

In every era, Allah has sent messengers to warn their people of the Day of Judgment and the existence of Hell and Paradise. Allah reveals this reality:

We have sent you with the truth bringing good news and giving warning. There is no community to which a warner has not come. (Surah Fatir, 24)

Allah reveals that only a few people believed these messengers and followed their path, whereas the great majority chose to deny their message and so became their sworn enemies. As we read in the Qur'an:

... But those who believed with him were only few. (Surah Hud, 40)

Or is it that they do not recognize their messenger and therefore do not acknowledge him? Or do they say: "He is a man possessed," when he has brought the truth to them? But most of them hate the truth. (Surat al-Mu'minun, 69-70)

Allah also informs us that it is usually the affluent elite who stir up opposition against the messengers. Some of the following verses make this clear:

Similarly, We never sent any warner before you to any city without the affluent among them saying: "We found our fathers following a religion, and we are simply following in their footsteps." (Surat az-Zukhruf, 23)

We never sent a warner into any city without the affluent people in it saying: "We reject what you have been sent with." (Surah Saba', 34)

These verses draw our attention to two main characteristics of the unbelievers: First, these people are among the economic elite of their society, and second, their transgression causes them to deny the messengers. They oppose those who bring them the truth, namely, Allah's religion and the good morality it offers to people, because they fear that if this morality becomes widespread, they will lose their income, which they guard so greedily.

Despite their greed, however, Allah's messengers did not refrain from telling them and all other people that this world is a temporary and delusive abode; that what really matters is the life after death; and that earning the Hereafter does not depend on money, property or other worldly goods, but on one's morality and fear of Allah. Proclaiming this truth angers these people and causes them to become

hostile toward the believers, as they are told that everything that they value and desire is, in reality, worth nothing. Allah reveals these people's lust for the world:

These people love this fleeting world, and have put the thought of a Momentous Day behind their backs. (Surat al-Insan, 27)

This love gives us an idea as to why the affluent are usually unbelievers. Since they believe that they have power, status, wealth, or fame in their own right, and do not believe in Allah's prescribed limits, they think that they can do whatever they want to and will not suffer any consequences. The Qur'an's morality, on the other hand, reveals the flaws inherent in their way of life, beliefs, values of right and wrong, and selfish desires. Consequently, they do whatever they can to prevent the practice of this morality.

The unbelievers' false belief system and their great anger toward those who point out their errors are described in the Qur'an as follows:

... They love what causes you distress. Hatred has appeared out of their mouths, but what their breasts hide is far worse. We have made the signs clear to you, if you use your intellect. There you are, loving them when they do not love you, even though you believe in all the Books. When they meet you, they say: "We believe." But when they leave, they bite their fingers out of rage against you. Say: "Die in your rage." Allah knows what your hearts contain. (Surah Al 'Imran, 118-119)

As the above verses reveal, unbelievers try every possible way to harm believers, to destroy or incapacitate them. As we stated earlier, slander and plotting against them are the most frequently applied methods used to achieve such aims.

Unbelievers want everyone to stray from the righteous path, just as they have. For this reason, and to prevent people from being influenced by and complying with the believers' message, they try to belittle believers. However, believers remain steadfast in Allah's religion and thus do, say, or believe nothing that will disgrace them. They do not transgress the limits that Allah has established for them, and always maintain their good character and decent conduct. Aware of this, unbelievers can only try to achieve their goals through slander, lies, and deceit. They come together, conspire against believers, decide how to slander them, and, in order to disseminate their lies, delegate specific tasks to each member in the conviction that they can discredit believers in the eyes of the people. But they will never succeed. Allah informs believers of these people:

And likewise, in every city We set up its greatest wrongdoers to plot in it. They plot against themselves alone, but they are not aware of it. (Surat al-An'am, 123)

The Qur'an reveals some of the slanders that the messengers and Muslims have had to endure. It is important to remember these events and their consequences, if one truly wants to understand that the

unbelievers have never – and never will – achieve their goal. It will also help to motivate sincere and honest people who are slandered to see that other Muslims have had similar experiences.

SLANDERS AGAINST EARLIER BELIEVERS

There is great wisdom in the fact that the Qur'an relates details of the lives of past messengers and Muslims. Allah reveals this fact: **"There is instruction in their stories for people of intelligence"** (Surah Yusuf, 111). Past experiences are revealed so that people coming later may ponder and learn from them.

For instance, Allah has given many examples of how messengers and Muslims have dealt with slander. Therefore, Muslims who read these accounts should not be surprised when they are confronted with similar accusations. They will not suspect their fellow Muslims; rather, they will evaluate the unfolding events and the verbal and physical attacks according to the Qur'an's criteria. Just as the messengers of Allah and earlier Muslims responded to them with patience and restraint, they also will understand that they must show the same degree of tolerance, and reliance upon Allah.

In addition, it is a source of zeal and excitement to see that Muslims have always been accused by unbelievers with the same mentality and words, because Allah promises: **"You will not find any alteration in Allah's pattern"** (Surat al-Ahzab, 62). That past events recur in the particular believer's own time confirms Allah's word and signals the sincerity of those Muslims who are thus confronted. However, the important point here is that Muslims show the same superior character as did the messengers and other devout believers.

For these reasons, the coming pages will deal with the slanders that earlier Muslims faced and their measured, patient, trusting, tolerant, and rational manner of dealing with these personal attacks.

THE SLANDERS THAT MUSA (AS) SUFFERED

Musa (as) was sent as a prophet to the Israelites. Like all other prophets and sincere believers, he too suffered many verbal and physical attacks from the unbelievers.

At the time of his birth, Pharaoh was oppressing the majority of the population. In fact, his cruelty brought an entire generation close to extinction. The Qur'an relates this tyranny in the following way:

Pharaoh exalted himself arrogantly in the land and divided its people into camps, oppressing one group of them by slaughtering their sons and letting their women live. He was one of the corrupters. (Surat al-Qasas, 4)

Musa's (as) mother was afraid that Pharaoh's soldiers would kill her baby too, and, inspired by Allah, she entrusted her son to the Nile. According to the destiny that Allah had appointed for him, Musa (as) was found and taken in by Pharaoh's family. Consequently, Musa (as) grew up in Pharaoh's palace. But following his selection as a prophet by Allah, he was exposed to Pharaoh's hostile and aggressive attitude.

Pharaoh's Hostility towards Musa (as)

Musa (as), commanded by Allah, entered Pharaoh's presence and told him about Allah's existence and the true religion. However, he was met with aggression and denial. In fact, Pharaoh threatened him and his companions with death by torture. In the face of this threat, the Egyptians were too scared to believe in the truth Musa (as) brought them, and so they did not side with him. The Qur'an reveals that only a few young people believed in him:

No one believed in Musa, except for some children of his people, out of fear that Pharaoh and the elders would persecute them. Pharaoh was high and mighty in the land. He was one of the profligate. (Surah Yunus, 83)

As Allah reveals, it is certain from the beginning that Allah's devout servants will prevail: "...Allah will not give the unbelievers any way against the believers" (Surat an-Nisa', 141). However, Allah's law decrees that believers' faith, reliance upon Him, and patience be tried by means of demanding trials, denial, and slander. All of this happened to Musa (as) and his followers.

Pharaoh considered himself to be a deity, the sole and only owner, and the lord of the people. He was well aware that if the people realized that Allah is the only Lord of the people, he would no longer be able to claim lordship over them and thus would be unable to force them into submission. Thus, he tried to prevent the people from believing in Musa (as). Threatening death and torture was one of his

commonly used methods, as was his slander to discredit Musa (as) and his brother Harun (as). We list these slanders below, as follows:

The Allegation that Musa (as) Seeks Personal Gain and Power

The starting point for unbelievers when they plot their slanderous plans against the believers has always been their own evil character and worldview. For instance, people who do not live by the Qur'an's morality have an enormous ego and an uncontrollable selfish desire to enjoy the worldly pleasures of this life. Pharaoh was a typical example of such people. Obsessed with his desire to be the sole lord of Egypt and its people, he did not refrain from torturing and killing innocent people in the pursuit of this goal. Due to his own mistaken beliefs and lust for power, he considered everyone else in the same terms. For this reason, he was unable to judge the status of Musa (as) and Harun (as) in Allah's presence and why they had come to his court.

Musa (as) called the people to believe his words, but he did so only to introduce them to Allah's existence and infinite power, teach them the Qur'an's morality, and help them find enlightenment and right guidance. Pharaoh and his inner circle, on the other hand, believed that he sought power and therefore regarded him as a political rival. One of Allah's verses reveals how Pharaoh and his inner circle accused Musa (as) and Harun (as):

They said: "Have you come to us to turn us from what we found our fathers doing, and to gain greatness in the land? We do not believe you." (Surah Yunus, 78)

In reality, Musa (as) and Harun (as), like all other prophets and sincere Muslims, never sought worldly gain or status and never demanded any payment or reward. All that they sought was Allah's good pleasure, compassion, and Paradise by calling people to His path and reminding them of the Hereafter. Allah revealed that Musa (as) was His servant who only sought His good pleasure: **"Mention Musa in the Book. He was truly sincere and was a messenger and a Prophet"** (Surah Maryam, 51). Other verses reveal that Musa (as) and Harun (as) were Allah's believing servants:

We showed great kindness to Musa and Harun. We rescued them and their people from their terrible plight. We supported them, and so they were the victors. We gave them the clarifying Book, guided them on the Straight Path, and left the later people saying of them: "Peace be upon Musa and Harun!" That is how We recompense good-doers. They truly were among Our believing servants. (Surat as-Saffat, 114-122)

The Allegation that Musa (as) Endangers the People's Safety and Peace

One of Pharaoh's tactics was to depict Musa (as) and Harun (as) at every opportunity as a serious danger to Egypt and its people. With these unfounded slanders, he sought to provoke the people against

Musa (as). He even accused him of trying to “drive the people out of their land.” Allah informs us of the Pharaoh’s speech:

He said to the High Council round about him: “This certainly is a skilled magician who desires by his magic to expel you from your land. So, what do you recommend?” (Surat ash-Shu‘ara’, 34-35)

Another verse reveals that Pharaoh accused Musa (as) and his followers of conspiring to expel the people from their country:

Pharaoh said: “Have you believed in him before I authorized you to do so? This is just some plot you have concocted in the city to drive its people from it.” (Surat al-A‘raf, 123)

It is evident that Pharaoh tried to depict Musa (as) and his followers as traitors whom the Egyptians must oppose. As Allah promised, Pharaoh’s plot came to nothing, just like all plots directed against believers come to naught:

So Allah protected him from the evil things they plotted, and a most evil torment engulfed Pharaoh’s people. (Surah Ghafir, 45)

Musa (as) Is Accused of Magic

Pharaoh rejected the true religion because of his arrogance. By the will of Allah, Musa (as) had shown him many miracles proving Allah’s existence and that he was His messenger. Despite this, Pharaoh did not believe and tried to defeat his mission among the people by accusing him of sorcery and magic. This, he hoped, would convince the people that Musa (as) was not speaking the truth and that what he did was sorcery designed to manipulate others. As revealed in the verses:

We sent Musa with Our signs and clear authority to Pharaoh, Haman, and Qarun. But they said: “A lying magician.” (Surah Ghafir, 23-24)

Musa (as) replied in the following way:

Musa said: “Do you say to the truth, when it comes to you: ‘This is magic?’ Magicians are not successful.” (Surah Yunus, 77)

Sorcery is one of the accusations from which many believers have suffered both before and after Prophet Musa (as). In the following chapters, we will mention other Muslims who were accused of the same thing.

Musa (as) Is Accused of Being a Liar

But when Musa brought them Our clear signs, they said: “This is nothing but trumped-up magic. We never heard anything like this among our earlier forefathers.” Musa said: “My Lord knows best who has come with guidance from Him and who will have the best Home in the end. The wrongdoers will certainly not be successful.” Pharaoh said: “Council, I do not know of any other deity for you apart from me. Haman, kindle a fire for me over the clay and build me a lofty tower so that perhaps I may be able to climb up to Musa’s deity! I consider him a blatant liar.” (Surat al-Qasas, 36-38)

Pharaoh’s attitude toward Musa (as) and His religion is surely very heedless and unjust. For someone who has gone so far in disbelief, it is not surprising that he made all kinds of allegations against the messenger and even mocked him. In order to weaken Musa’s (as) effect on the people and to prevent them from believing in him, Pharaoh proclaimed ruthlessly that all of his words were lies. The Qur’an however, reveals clearly what happens to those who deny and try to cause difficulty for Allah’s messengers:

We sent a messenger among every people saying: “Worship Allah and keep clear of all false deities.” Among them were some whom Allah guided, but others received the misguidance they deserved. Travel about the land and see the final fate of the deniers. (Surat an-Nahl, 36)

As revealed in the above verse, any injustice committed against the sincere and honest servants of Allah who fear and love Him very much will be punished, both on Earth and in the Hereafter. Indeed, what befell to Pharaoh and his inner circle in this world and the end they met is a clear example of this. Allah advises people to learn from the fate meted out to Pharaoh and his inner circle, as well as from the events related in the Qur’an:

He and his troops were arrogant in the land, without any right. They thought that they would not return to Us. So, We seized him and his troops and flung them into the sea. See the final fate of the wrongdoers! (Surat al-Qasas, 39-40)

One of the most important things for people to remember is that the punishment that Pharaoh and his followers received in this life is nothing compared to what they will experience in the Hereafter. People who are arrogant regarding Allah’s verses, messengers, and sincere servants; who slander and plot against them; who deny the true religion and disregard Allah’s ordained morality so that they can spread their own totally misguided convictions will be punished severely in the Hereafter:

We made them leaders, summoning to the Fire, and on the Day of Resurrection they will not be helped. We pursued them with a curse in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection they will be hideous and spurned. (Surat al-Qasas, 41-42)

THE SLANDERS THAT YUSUF (AS) FACED

Yusuf (as) faced slander and plots from his early childhood onwards. Even though he had a pure and impeccable character, he was ill-treated even by his own family. His brothers turned on him in envy and tried to kill him. This pure person, who had a deep-seated fear of Allah and always sought to please Him, was accused of such shameful deeds as theft and adultery. And even though his innocence was clearly known, he remained in prison for many years because of the slanders directed against him by unbelievers.

The Governor's Wife Slanders Yusuf (as)

Yusuf (as) was one of the prophets given knowledge early in life. His brothers, who came to envy him, threw him down a well when he was still a child and left him there to die. However, he was found by some travelers who took him to Egypt and sold him to the governor for a reduced price. When he reached adulthood, the governor's wife "sought to seduce him" due to his great beauty. However, Yusuf (as) refused her advances because he would not disobey Allah. The rejected woman caught him as he raced to the door to get away from her, and then tore his shirt from the back. Just then, the governor arrived and his wife slandered Yusuf (as) in order to cover up her own guilt. The Qur'an reveals the entire incident:

And then when he became a full-grown man, We gave him knowledge and right judgment too. That is how We reward all doers of good. The woman, whose house it was, solicited him. She barred the doors and said: "Come over here!" He said: "Allah is my refuge! He is my lord and has been good to me with where I live. Those who do wrong will surely not succeed." She wanted him, and he would have wanted her had he not seen the clear proof of his Lord. That happened so that We might avert from him all evil and lust. He was Our chosen servant. They raced to the door. She tore his shirt at the back. They met her husband by the door. She asked: "How should a man whose intention was to harm your family be punished for what he did, except with prison or painful punishment?" (Surah Yusuf, 22-25)

Yusuf (as) defended himself by saying: **"It was she who tried to seduce me"** (Surah Yusuf, 26). One of the wife's friends suggested the following solution:

. . . "If his shirt is torn in front, she speaks the truth and he has clearly told a shameless lie. If his shirt is torn at the back, then she has lied and he has clearly told the simple truth." (Surah Yusuf, 26-27)

Yusuf's (as) shirt was torn at the back, proving that he had told the truth and had been chaste toward the governor's wife. And yet he was cast into the dungeon.

Yusuf (as) became the subject of a plot by people who did not fear Allah and who sought only high office and status. He was forced to choose between the woman's demands and the dungeon, and was charged with a crime that he did not commit—a crime despised by people, much gossiped about, and most shameful. He was accused of this crime because he was a chaste Muslim of superior character. Such a tactic, which is rather common, is often used to force Muslims off the righteous path and away from the true religion in the hope that they will embrace the ways of unbelief.

Another interesting aspect is that the woman tried to force Yusuf (as) to commit adultery and thereby follow her irreligious and immoral ways. But because he refused and remained a steadfast Muslim, she had him cast into the dungeon as an accused adulterer. As this account shows, unbelievers often accuse believers of those crimes and immoralities of which they themselves are guilty.

Yusuf (as) knew the plot against him, but as a Muslim who regarded Allah's good pleasure above anything else, he preferred to be imprisoned rather than commit the immorality unbelievers requested of him. Consequently, he remained there for many years. In the Qur'an, we find his prayer to Allah:

He said: "My Lord, this prison is preferable to me than what they call on me to do. Unless You turn their guile away from me, it may well be that I will fall for them and so become a man of ignorance." His Lord replied to him and turned away from him their female guile and deviousness. He is the One Who Hears, the One Who Knows. (Surah Yusuf, 33-34)

It is an indication of a person's strong faith to rebuff the mighty and powerful members of society without having anything to rely on, other than seeking Allah's good pleasure at the cost of prison.

It will be beneficial to analyze this incident. Yusuf (as) was slandered and convicted of a crime that he did not commit. He remained in prison for a long time, and was subjected to unfair and hostile treatment by the people around him. It seemed that nothing or nobody could help him clear his name. Despite his obvious innocence, that those in power imprisoned him indicated the injustice prevalent at that time as well as how a society that does not follow the Qur'an's morality "rewards" people who protect their chastity. Despite clear evidence, the people allowed this injustice to happen. Concerned only with their own selfish interests, those who knew the truth about this act of injustice did not side with the innocent Yusuf (as). Allah reveals:

Then, after they had seen the signs, they thought that they should still imprison him for a time. (Surah Yusuf, 35)

And so Yusuf (as) was imprisoned for many years (Surah Yusuf, 42). Irrespective of how irresolvable an incident appears to be from the outside, the situation is altogether different for believers who know the inner aspects. Regardless of hardship and trouble they encounter, believers always rely upon and praise Allah, never give way to despair, and know that there is wisdom and goodness in everything that He creates. To unbelievers, however, Yusuf (as) may appear to be in very negative

situation. But in the end, it turned out very well for him in his earthly life as well as for his life in the Hereafter.

During his prison term, the king had a dream that he wanted interpreted. One of his servants who had been held in the same prison with Yusuf (as) some years ago said that Yusuf (as) could interpret his dream. Allah's decreed destiny determined that Yusuf (as) would be remembered in prison years later. Yusuf's (as) wise interpretation of this dream brought him to the king's notice, who then summoned him to his presence. However, Yusuf (as) demands that his case be investigated and his name be cleared before he agrees:

The king said: "Bring him to me straight away!" But when the envoy came to him, he said: "Go back to your master and ask him what happened about the women who cut their hands. My Lord has knowledge of their cunning guile." (Surah Yusuf, 50)

The king called the women witness to this affair to his presence, including the governor's wife, and all of them concede Yusuf's (as) innocence. Finally, his name has been cleared:

He [the King] asked: "What was this past affair of yours when you solicited Yusuf?" Then they said: "Allah forbid! We know no bad of him." The governor's wife then said: "The truth has now emerged. Indeed, I tried to seduce him then and he has simply told the honest truth." (Surah Yusuf, 51)

His innocence now proven beyond any doubt, Yusuf (as) replied:

"In this way he [the governor] may know, at last, that I did not dishonor him behind his back and that Allah most surely does not guide the deviousness of the dishonorable." (Surah Yusuf, 52)

The fact that Yusuf (as) preferred to remain in a dungeon for years rather than commit a forbidden act, and that he remained steadfast and patient in the face of slander and accusations of adultery, is a model of exemplary behavior for all believers to follow. Allah gave Yusuf (as) power and authority in Egypt after his release, because he had proven his superior character, reliance upon Allah, and submission to Him. This is only the reward given to him on Earth:

And thus We established Yusuf in the land so he could live wherever he pleased. We grant Our grace to anyone We will, and We do not allow to go to waste the wage of any people who do good. But the wages of the Hereafter are the best for people who believe and fear their Lord. (Surah Yusuf, 56-57)

Yusuf's (as) life shows that irrespective of any slander or plot against believers, Allah's sincere servants are always cleared of wrongdoing in the end. Many verses of the Qur'an reveal this fact, as does Yusuf's (as) life story.

Yusuf's (as) Brothers Accuse Him of Theft

It is revealed in the Qur'an that Yusuf's (as) brothers, who envied him fiercely, cast him into a well when he was still a child and so separated him from his family and loved ones.

Many years passed. Yusuf (as) was freed from prison and appointed to oversee Egypt's stores. One day, his brothers came to him and, without recognizing him, asked for food and supplies. Yusuf (as) revealed his identity to his younger brother and told him not to despair over what his brothers had done to him. He wanted this particular brother to remain with him, but had to devise a clever plan, as the king's law would not permit him to do so. The Qur'an reveals:

Then when they were ushered into Yusuf's presence, he drew his [younger] brother close to him and said: "I am your brother. Do not be distressed concerning all the things they used to do." Then when he had supplied them with their needs, he put the goblet in his brother's bag. A herald called out: "Caravan! You are thieves!" They turned to them and asked: "What are you missing?" They replied: "We're missing the king's goblet. The man who brings it will get a camel's load. Regarding that, I stand as guarantor." They said: "By Allah, you know we did not come to corrupt the land and that we are not thieves." They said: "What is the reparation for it if it, in fact, transpires that you are liars?" They said: "Its reparation shall be him in the saddlebags of whom it is discovered. With us that is how wrongdoers are repaid." He started with their bags before his brother's. And then produced it from his brother's bag. In that way, We devised a cunning scheme for Yusuf. He could not have held his brother according to the statutes of the king—only because Allah had willed it so. We raise the rank of anyone We will. Over everyone with knowledge is a Knower. (Surah Yusuf, 69-76)

As a result, Yusuf (as) was able to keep his brother, whom he had not seen in so many years, with him. However, his jealous and cruel brothers slandered and accused him in his "absence" with theft:

They said: "If he steals now, his brother stole before." But Yusuf kept it to himself and still did not disclose it to them, saying: "The plight that you are in is worse than that. Allah knows best the matter you describe." (Surah Yusuf, 77)

Unbelievers and hypocrites hate and envy believers so much that they try at every opportunity to hurt and discredit them, either publicly or privately, just as these verses show. However, believers who are aware of the inner truth of matters can see reality and always think in terms of Allah's will. And so they respond with a good spirit and patience. They believe from the bottom of their hearts that Allah is with them at all times, and so live in submission and confidence. The life of Yusuf (as) is a good example of this submission, faith, and morality.

THE SLANDER HURLED AGAINST MARYAM (AS)

When we look at the Qur'an, we see that Muslims are usually confronted by accusations directed in the matters they are most sensitive about. One of the most serious allegations believers encounter has to do with their chastity. As we saw earlier, Yusuf (as) was accused of being unchaste even though he did everything possible to protect his chastity. The subject of this slander, so contrary to his superior character, was intended to discredit him in the eyes of others. But Allah cleared his name and made his innocence public.

A similar accusation has been hurled at Muslim women in the past. Maryam (as) was a devout woman chosen by Allah to serve as an example for all women because of her faith, sincerity, purity, chastity, and superior morality. Allah reveals how the angels informed her of her son's birth:

And when the angels said: "Maryam, Allah has chosen you and purified you. He has chosen you over all other women." (Surah Al 'Imran, 42)

Maryam (as) left her family and went toward the east, where she met Jibril (as) (whom Allah had sent to deliver His word to her) in the form of a handsome man. The Qur'an relates:

Mention Maryam in the Book, how she withdrew from her people to an eastern place and concealed herself from them. Then We sent Our Spirit to her in the form of a handsome, well-built man. She said: "I seek refuge from you with the All-Merciful, if you guard against evil." He replied: "I am only your Lord's messenger so that He can give you a pure boy." She asked: "How can I have a boy, when no man has touched me and I am not an unchaste woman?" He said: "It will be so! Your Lord says: 'That is easy for Me. It is so that We can make him a sign for humanity and a mercy from Us.' It is a matter already decreed." (Surah Maryam, 16-21)

By the will of Allah, Maryam (as) gave birth to a child without a father. When she returned to her people, she was received with great resentment and accusations of adultery:

She brought him to her people, carrying him. They exclaimed: "Maryam! You have done an unthinkable thing! O sister of Harun, your father was not an evil man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman!" (Surah Maryam, 27-28)

However, despite her people's slanders, accusations, and resentful behavior, she did not compromise her reliance upon Allah and so remained patient and acted in the knowledge that Allah was with her at all times. As commanded by Allah, she did not talk with them. Instead, her son 'Isa (as) miraculously spoke from the cradle with Allah's permission.

In reality, Maryam's (as) people knew that she was a chaste woman, but they disliked her for not being a follower of their false beliefs. 'Isa (as) revealed that he was a prophet while still in the cradle, and, as his mother, she was exposed to the people's mockery, gossip, and slander. All of those who had wronged her with their tongues have received the just return that their actions merited, both on Earth as well as in the Hereafter. Their slanderous accusations came to nothing, and they could not harm either her or her son. Allah cleared their names before the people and honored her in the Qur'an. Today, people of all religious denominations regard Maryam (as) highly. For example:

And Maryam, the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity—We breathed Our Spirit into her and she confirmed the Words of her Lord and His Book and was one of the obedient. (Surat at-Tahrim, 12)

However, it is important to know the fate waiting for those who have slandered Maryam (as). Many irreligious people since her time have spoken wrongly of her and her chastity. As a result:

Since they broke their covenant, rejected Allah's signs, killed the Prophets without any right to do so, and said: "Our hearts are covered," Allah has stamped them for their unbelief so that only a very few of them will believe. And on account of their unbelief, their utterance of a monstrous slander against Maryam, and their saying: "We killed the Messiah, 'Isa son of Maryam, messenger of Allah." (Surat an-Nisa', 155-157)

BELIEVERS ACCUSED OF ADULTERY

Slandorous attacks against Muslims regarding their chastity continued during the time of Prophet Muhammad (saas) and were not so different from the accusations faced by Maryam (as) and Yusuf (as).

A group of hypocrites wronged themselves by slandering a female believer. Although it is very easy for unbelievers to slander or lie about another person, the punishment for doing so is very harsh. Usually, unbelievers are unaware of this punishment. Even if they are aware of it, they consider it to be only a remote possibility. Given the fact that Allah does not forget even one word, those who casually try to discredit pure, chaste, and honorable people will experience irreversible regret and unspeakable pain when they are reminded of their crimes and shown the suffering waiting for them in the Hereafter. Allah reveals what will happen to those who slander pure female believers:

Those who accuse chaste believing women, unaware [of the evil], are cursed both in this world and the Hereafter. They will have a terrible punishment on the Day when their tongues and hands and feet will testify against them about what they were doing. On that Day, Allah will pay them in full what is due to them, and they will know that He is the Clear Truth. (Surat an-Nur, 23-25)

SLANDERS AGAINST SULAYMAN (AS)

The Qur'an reveals that Sulayman (as) possessed great wealth and power. He sought all of his wealth and power so as to remember Allah, and was grateful to Him at all times due to his full awareness that these were a gift and a grace from Him.

Surat al-Baqara states that those who denied Allah's book believed in what the satans said to them about Sulayman's (as) reign:

When a messenger comes to them from Allah confirming what is with them, a group of those who have been given the Book disdainfully toss the Book of Allah behind their backs, just as if they did not know. They follow what the satans recited in the reign of Sulayman. Sulayman did not become an unbeliever, but the satans did... (Surat al-Baqara, 101-102)

Unbelievers, slanderers, and those who seek to compromise believers have invented lies about Sulayman's (as) reign. Some historians have recorded that gossip circulated about how Sulayman (as) had chosen a life of luxury and splendor.

If such lies truly circulated, it is nothing but slanderous gossip, because Sulayman (as) lived in full awareness that wealth is a gift of Allah and, as His prophet, he was always grateful for what He had bestowed upon him. He always used his wealth and power to do as Allah willed.

The true reason for spreading such malicious gossip is people's animosity toward religion. Depicting believers and, in particular, prophets as people of weak faith who are obsessed with grandeur and pleasure, as well as causing suspicion about their chastity, is just one method that unbelievers use to prevent people from trusting and hearing the truth. However, Allah has always brought such conspiracies to naught and cleared the names of believers from all accusations of misconduct.

Muslims improve their standing in the Hereafter by being patient in the face of such accusations, and by relying upon and submitting to Allah. Every effort to hurt them is destined to be futile; however, it helps them earn eternal bliss and reward.

MOCKING AND SLANDEROUS ACCUSATIONS

As stated earlier, unbelievers do their best to prevent believers from conveying Allah's message. Throughout this book, we have listed examples from the Qur'an that reveal the various accusations made against Allah's messengers and devout Muslims. Over the coming pages, we will examine the lies designed to belittle believers, as the following verse says: **"... you will hear many abusive words from those given the Book before you and from those who associate [others with Me]"** (Surah Al 'Imran, 186). We will see that people hostile to Allah and His religion will not succeed by being spiteful, hurtful, and belittling toward Muslims.

Accused of Insolence

One of the most common accusations against Muslims is insolence. Every society dislikes this quality, and so the reason for making such an accusation is always the same: to prevent people from adopting the Qur'an's morality. People naturally despise such individuals and do not want to be associated with or compared to them. Unbelievers, who are well aware of this psychology, want to take advantage of it by accusing Muslims of having such qualities.

Salih (as) was a messenger who had to face such an accusation:

[The people of] Thamud denied the warnings. They said: "Are we to follow a human being, one of us? Then we would truly be misguided, quite insane! Has the Reminder been given to him of all of us? No indeed! He is an impudent liar." [Allah said:] "They will know tomorrow who the impudent liar is." (Surat al-Qamar, 23-26)

As these verses reveal, Salih's (as) people could not stand the idea that one of them should be graced by Allah and chosen to be His messenger. For this reason, they met His faithful, modest, devout, and moral prophet with hatred. When he began to call his people to the righteous path, the Qur'anic morality, and true religion, they slandered him. Such verbal attacks might seem to be a relatively insignificant matter, but believers should remember that those who do it will be given their just return in this world as well as the Hereafter. This is one of Allah's laws, from which no one is exempt. Allah reveals the end of Salih's (as) people:

How terrible were My punishment and warning! We sent a single Blast against them, and they were just like a thatcher's reeds. (Surat al-Qamar, 30-31)

Accused of Madness

Throughout history, unbelievers have used similar methods to express their hostility and hate toward the messengers of Allah. The accusations made against Yusuf (as), Maryam, and the

Companions of our Prophet (saas) regarding their chastity prove that these are classic methods. Another frequent method is to accuse the messengers of madness. Many prophets, including Muhammad (saas), were thus accused because of their devotion to Allah and His religion, as the following verses state:

Or is it that they do not recognize their messenger and therefore do not acknowledge him? Or do they say: “He is a man possessed,” when he has brought the truth to them? But most of them hate the truth. If the truth were to follow their whims and desires, the heavens and Earth and everyone in them would have been brought to ruin. No indeed! We have given them their Reminder, but they have turned away from it. (Surat al-Mu’minun, 69-71)

This hostile attitude is caused by the conflict of interest that exists between the unbelievers’ worldly desires and interests and the truth brought by the messengers. Although the messengers never expected anything in return for what they brought to their people, many of their people nevertheless tried to silence or even kill them, as if they were putting the unbelievers under a great debt. In reality, such undertakings will not alter the unbelievers’ fate in the Hereafter. Allah reveals:

Are you asking them for payment? Your Lord’s payment is better. He is the Best of Providers. You are calling them to a straight path. But those who do not believe in the Hereafter recoil from the path. (Surat al-Mu’minun, 72-74)

History records that unbelievers traditionally accuse Allah’s messengers of madness. All prophets, and after them those believers who conveyed His true message, faced similar accusations. However, in spite of every effort by the unbelievers, the Qur’an reveals that devout believers have remained on Allah’s righteous path. Some of the verses dealing with this accusation are listed below:

Prophet Muhammad (saas)

They say: “You, to whom the Reminder has been sent down, are clearly mad.” (Surat al-Hijr, 6)

Those who are unbelievers all but strike you down with their evil looks when they hear the Reminder and say: “He is quite mad.” (Surat al-Qalam, 51)

But then they turned away from him and said: “He is an instructed madman!” (Surat ad-Dukhan, 14)

Hud (as)

The ruling circle of those of his people who were unbelievers said: “We consider you a fool and think you are a liar.” He replied: “My people, I am by no means a fool, but rather am a

messenger from the Lord of all the worlds, transmitting my Lord's Message to you, and I am a faithful counselor to you.” (Surat al-A‘raf, 66-68)

Nuh (as)

“He is nothing but a man possessed, so wait a while and see what happens to him.” He said: “My Lord, help me because they are calling me a liar!” (Surat al-Mu’minun, 25-26)

Before them the people of Nuh denied the truth. They denied Our servant, saying: “He is madman,” and driving him away with jeers. (Surat al-Qamar, 9)

Musa (as)

He [Pharaoh] said: “This messenger, who has been sent to you, is mad.” (Surat ash-Shu‘ara’, 27)

As the verses above reveal, unbelievers have accused the messengers sent by Allah with madness and/or intellectual deficiency, or of being possessed in order to discredit and belittle them. As always, their intention was to reject the true religion so that they could continue to live by their selfish desires and consider themselves to be free and unaccountable to Him. They spread this slander, knowing that no one would want to follow people who were rumored to have an insufficient intellectual capacity.

However, people who accuse the messengers with madness and try to hurt and harm them with their tongues always meet the same fate. Allah reveals what happened to Pharaoh when he accused Musa (as) of sorcery and madness:

But he turned away with his forces, exclaiming: “A magician or a madman!” So, We seized him and his armies and hurled them into the sea. He was to blame. (Surat adh-Dhariyat, 39-40)

Accused of Perverting Religion

The Qur’an also reveals that many messengers were accused of perverting religion. Despite the fact that the unbelievers did not believe in Allah and the Hereafter, they tried to appear as if they were religious by asserting that the messengers were trying to damage their traditional religions by introducing perversions. They did this with the intent of depicting the messengers as untrustworthy people seeking personal gain under the guise of religiosity. Pharaoh and his inner circle applied this method to Musa (as) and Harun (as):

They said: “These two magicians desire, by their magic, to expel you from your land and abolish your most excellent way of life, so decide on your scheme and then arrive together in force. He who gains the upper hand today will definitely prosper.” (Surah Ta Ha, 63-64)

Another verse reveals that Pharaoh said the following, despite his irreligious and tyrannical nature:

Pharaoh said: “Let me kill Musa, and let him call upon his Lord! I am afraid that he may change your religion and bring about corruption in the land.” (Surah Ghafir, 26)

It is obvious that Pharaoh was not sincere, but only sought to manipulate the people, because he was the one who had tried to do away with religion, who conspired and schemed, and was tyrannical.

Nuh (as), as well as many of the other messengers, was also accused of perverting religion and trying to confuse his people:

The ruling circle of his people said: “We see you in flagrant error.” He replied: “My people, I am not in error at all; rather, I am a messenger from the Lord of all the worlds.” (Surat al-A‘raf, 60-61)

The Qur’an reveals that messengers and devout Muslims were accused by their people of trying to pervert the existing religion:

They said: “Salih, we had great hopes in you before this happened. Do you forbid us to worship what our fathers worshipped? We have grave doubts about what you are calling us to.” (Surah Hud, 62)

Those who did evil used to laugh at those who believed. When they passed by them, they would wink at one another. When they returned to their families, they would make a joke of them. When they saw them, they would say: “Those people are misguided.” (Surat al-Mutaffifin, 29-32)

Surely, only those who turn on Allah’s messengers, deny His existence and the Hereafter, and wrong pure, faithful, honest, and sincere people by slandering them are perverting religion. Allah reveals that they do so because they immerse themselves completely in the worldly life, forget about the Hereafter, and refuse to hear what they are told:

Those who are blind in the world will be blind in the Hereafter and even further off the Path. (Surat al-Isra’, 72)

Accused of Sorcery

One of the most frequent allegations made against the messengers, regardless of when or where they lived, was sorcery. Allah reveals in one verse that unbelievers made a habit of accusing believers of sorcery:

Equally, no messenger came to those before them without their saying: “A magician or a madman!” Did they bequeath this to each other? Indeed, they are an unbridled people. (Surat adh-Dhariyat, 52-53)

Unbelievers just cannot come to terms with the fact that one of their own people should be entrusted with conveying Allah’s message to them. Therefore, they accuse them of sorcery so that people will be afraid of the messengers and avoid them. They also disseminate misinformation by saying that the messengers gain control over people like magicians, because all conscientious and intelligent people who hear the messenger’s sincere and wise teachings, as well as witness their impeccable character and sincere devotion to religion, become their followers. Unbelievers portray the believers’ strong devotion as something worthless and insignificant. The Qur’an provides examples of such events:

Do people find it so surprising that We should reveal to a man among them: “Warn humanity and give the good news to those who believe, that they are on a sure footing with their Lord.” The unbelievers say: “This is downright magic!” (Surah Yunus, 2)

They are surprised that a warner should come to them from among themselves. The unbelievers say: “This is a lying magician. Has he turned all the deities into One God? That is truly astonishing!” (Surah Sad, 4-5)

Unbelievers not only accused messengers of being magicians, but also claimed that they were possessed. They did so in order to create the impression that the messengers were affected by magic and therefore spoke outside of reason and conscience. Some of the verses in this regard are the following:

We know how they listen when they listen to you, and when they confer together secretly, and when the wrongdoers say: “You are only following a man who is bewitched!” (Surat al-Isra’, 47)

They said: “You are merely someone bewitched. You are nothing but a human being like ourselves. So, produce a sign if you are telling the truth.” (Surat ash-Shu‘ara’, 153-154)

The wrongdoers say: “You are merely following a man who is bewitched.” (Surat al-Furqan, 8)

Allah’s response to such people is as follows:

Look how they make likenesses of you and go astray. They are unable to find their way. (Surat al-Isra’, 48)

See how they make comparative judgments about you. They are misguided and cannot find the way. (Surat al-Furqan, 9)

Words Full of Rage and Mockery

Unbelievers, who bitterly resented Allah's messengers and their followers and envied the material and spiritual wealth and beauty given to them by Allah, often utter the most hurtful and insulting words to believers. The Qur'an reveals some of these:

The ruling circle of those of his people who were unbelievers said: "We do not see you as anything but a human being like ourselves. We do not see anyone following you but the lowest of us, unthinkingly. We do not see you as superior to us. On the contrary, we consider you to be liars." (Surah Hud, 27)

The base and aggressive style of Pharaoh's speech to Musa (as) expresses the unbelievers' rage toward Muslims:

Pharaoh called to his people, saying: "My people, does the kingdom of Egypt not belong to me? Do not all these rivers flow under my control? Do you not then see? Am I not better than this man, who is contemptible and can scarcely make anything clear?" (Surat az-Zukhruf, 51-52)

As the above verses reveal, Pharaoh uttered hopelessly base words to Allah's messenger. Pharaoh, whose only criteria were material and worldly values, was not intelligent or conscientious enough to realize that human superiority does not depend on material wealth, status, or office. From his words, it can easily be deduced that he classified people according to their respective wealth and tribal origin, and that he was an irreligious man who would even mock people for their physical deficiencies.

Throughout history, unbelievers have lived under the mistaken belief that they could cause Muslims to give themselves over to depression, despair, and sadness by slandering them, as Pharaoh slandered Musa (as), and by either insulting them or lying about them. In reality, Muslims respond to even the harshest of such words with patience, knowing that they will be rewarded in the Hereafter. In their ignorance, the unbelievers are actually contributing to the believers' reward in the Hereafter.

This patience prevents believers from lowering themselves to the unbelievers' level. In fact, they continue their education and reach a spiritual maturity worthy of Paradise by persevering in good conduct and nice speech. Their subjection to such unwarranted attacks also indicates their sincerity and strong faith. Just as sincere Muslims before them faced such accusations, they too are tried by Allah as a general rule. Looking at it from this perspective, it is an honor for them to prove their patience in the face of insults, slanderous accusations, and lies.

People like Pharaoh, who trust in their wealth and forget about the Hereafter, cannot see this reality. Like him, they only drop their conceit and feel remorse when they realize that death has come. However, remorse at the point of death will not benefit them in the Hereafter. This is why the end of such people should be a lesson for everyone. Everything that people have in this world, whether

material or otherwise, is impermanent and of no use in the Hereafter. The only thing that will last and benefit them is their fear of Allah and their good deeds. Allah reveals the thought-provoking fate of Pharaoh and his inner circle, who were blinded and made conceited by their worldly possessions, and thus insulted and rejected Allah's messenger:

In that way he swayed his people, and they succumbed to him. They were a people of deviators. Then when they had provoked Our wrath, We took revenge on them and drowned every one of them. We made them a thing of the past, an example for later peoples. (Surat az-Zukhruf, 54-56)

As Allah's verse states, every deed and word against Allah's beloved and befriended servants is a cause of punishment in His presence. Those who commit such deeds may think that they will get away with it, but Allah is infinitely just. Slanderers and tyrants will be held accountable in the Hereafter for every word they uttered, and will be punished accordingly.

Allah reveals the surprise of cruel people, who uttered despicable words against Muslims in the world, when they face the Hellfire:

They will ask: "How is it that we do not see some men whom we used to count among the worst of people? Did we turn them into figures of fun? Did our eyes disdain to look at them?" All this is certainly true—the bickering of the people of the Fire. (Surah Sad, 62-64)

UNBELIEVERS ARE STILL SLANDERING BELIEVERS

As we have seen, whenever Allah's messengers were sent to their people, they were received with animosity and hate by the unbelievers. Apart from Allah's messengers, these unbelievers also verbally and physically abused all Muslims known for their dedication to Allah's religion, devotion to the righteous path, sincerity, and faithfulness. Allah reveals this animosity in the following verse:

We have placed covers on their hearts, preventing them from understanding it, and heaviness in their ears. When you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'an, they turn their backs and run away. (Surat al-Isra', 46)

The verse reveals that the unbelievers' true source of hate and rage is not the believers themselves, but rather the belief that they represent. They do not want to acknowledge their accountability to our Lord, Who has created them and whatever they possess. They cannot even bear to be reminded of His name. To prevent this, they adopt an aggressive stance against those who invite them to acknowledge Allah as the sole Divinity and to accept the true religion. Therefore, for as long as the true religion and truly religious people continue to exist, their slanders and hurtful words will continue to exist too.

Muslims, who are aware of this fact, do not suffer or despair when they encounter similar situations, because they are also aware of Allah's promise of goodness to them:

Those who were expelled from their homes without any right, merely for saying: "Our Lord is Allah." If Allah had not driven some people back by means of others, monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques, where Allah's name is mentioned much, would have been pulled down and destroyed. Allah will certainly help those who help Him—Allah is All-Strong, Almighty. (Surat al-Hajj, 40)

No doubt, it would be a grave error to think that such incidents, as well as unbelievers or slandered Muslims, no longer exist, for Allah has revealed that such groups of people will always exist.

In the recent past, one such example is the life of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, who was subjected to the enmity of certain people and resisted their attacks with patience and reliance upon Allah until he died. Bediuzzaman invited people to live by the Qur'an's morality, see the signs of faith, and appreciate Allah's existence and infinite power. But after he became the target of a campaign of slander, he was forced to endure prison and exile. The following few pages are dedicated to his experiences and impeccable reaction to them. He is a model that all Muslims facing the same campaign should emulate.

BEDIUZZAMAN'S LIFE STORY

Bediuzzaman was one of the foremost Islamic scholars of the twentieth century. In all of his 87 years, he defended Islam against the purveyors of materialism and the enemies of religion and the sacred. His 6,000-page master work, the *Risale-i Nur Collection*, is a Qur'anic commentary of deep insight as well as a work that refutes materialistic philosophies by explaining the principles of faith in the best possible way. He explored the subjects of the Hereafter, destiny, faith, and much more in a style that was unknown before him.

In his ideological struggle, he called people to the Qur'an's morality and the true religion. His greatest adversaries were people who had adopted materialistic and anti-religious philosophies as their guiding principles. These people strove to establish a model of society that was far removed from the Qur'an's morality. As a result of the propaganda and the pressure they applied, religion came to be perceived by some as backwardness and, therefore, a superstitious belief that prevents the nation from progressing and so must be overcome.

Bediuzzaman refuted such false philosophies, explained that religion and science do not conflict but rather meet at the same point, and inaugurated a great spiritual awakening in the society. At that time, the classic smear campaigns kicked in once more in order to stop him.

As we emphasized earlier, the experiences of past prophets and devout Muslims are a guiding light for all Muslims. From this perspective, knowing about Bediuzzaman's experiences and the hardship he endured will benefit the Muslims of today.

It must not be forgotten that Allah asks: **“Or did you suppose that you would enter the Garden without facing the same as those who came before you?”** (Surat al-Baqara, 214), reminding Muslims to prepare themselves to face similar events. The slanders that Bediuzzaman encountered, when compared to those revealed in the Qur'an, demonstrate that there is no change in Allah's law.

Accused of Chasing Personal Gain

Some people were disturbed by Bediuzzaman's communicating the news of Allah's existence and the importance of spiritual values, and so slandered him in the media. One of the daily newspapers of that time read:

Said-i Kurdi abused religion for his political aims, engaged in propaganda for backwardness and tried to lead certain people astray by misleading them. . . He is a backward thinker of 30 years who is on the lookout for naïve citizens to mislead. . . It has been discovered that the sheikh's [Bediuzzaman] role was to mislead certain naïve people in order to con them out of money. . . (Cumhuriyet [Republic, - a Turkish daily], May 10, 1935)

The same newspaper, in various issues, also proclaimed: *“An investigation has been launched against Said Nursi, who abused religion for his ends”* and *“Said Nursi is not to be taken seriously, as he is someone who seeks material as well as spiritual gain.”*

Bediuzzaman had no expectations of the world, no property or wealth, lived an extremely modest life, and, as he put it, had made it his profession not to be content with himself. Yet he was accused of

fleeing his students and followers and of satisfying his leadership complex. The sole reason for such unfounded and irrational claims was to discredit him so that he would be rendered ineffective and untrustworthy.

This allegation is not unlike the slanders faced by Allah's messengers, for they were also accused by their people of using religion to achieve material gain. For instance, Nuh (as) was slandered in the following way:

. . . “This is nothing but a human being like yourselves who simply wants to gain ascendancy over you.” (Surat al-Mu'minun, 24)

The Egyptians' accusations against Musa (as) and Harun (as) were as follows:

They said: “Have you come to us to turn us from what we found our fathers doing, and to gain greatness in the land? We do not believe you.” (Surah Yunus, 78)

These accusations caused Bediuzzaman to be imprisoned in Eskisehir prison. After his release, he was sentenced to house arrest in a room opposite the Kastamonu police station. After 8 years, the Denizli court sentenced him to a further 20 months in prison, after which he was exiled to Emirdag.

During this time, Bediuzzaman was subjected to frequent torture and cruelty; he was even poisoned on a number of occasions. Now elderly and fragile, he was kept in cold, moist, and airless cells. As will be shown in the coming pages, he received this cruelty with patience and reliance upon Allah, and demonstrated to all people the power of faith and submission to Allah. Bediuzzaman was an outstanding leader from whom everyone must learn.

Accused of Madness

One of the most common accusations faced by Muslims is that of madness. In 1908, Bediuzzaman was taken to court under an artificially created pretext. There, the report by the court-commissioned doctors concluded that he was mentally disturbed. The doctor at the mental institution to which he was sent, however, spoke to Bediuzzaman and then proclaimed: *“If this man is mad, there is no sane person on Earth,”* thereby thoroughly discrediting the earlier report.

From then on, Bediuzzaman was frequently accused of madness by the media outlets owned by his opponents. These anti-religious publications tried to discredit this great Islamic leader in the people's eyes by making such misleading comments as: *“Said Nursi has been a customer at the madhouse.”*

Accused of Misleading People

One of the accusations made against Bediuzzaman and his students was published in a newspaper as a serial entitled “Religious Exploiters.” In these articles, his students were alleged to be “affected by magic,” just like in the stories related in the Qur'an. It was further suggested that their loyalty to him was based on religious bigotry, that their ears and minds could perceive nothing else, and that they no

longer understood anything else. As we can see, these accusations are exactly the same as those suffered by earlier believers. The Qur'an reveals that the believers who followed the messengers were accused of "low levels of intellect" and "foolishness":

When they are told: "Believe in the way that the people believe," they exclaim: "What! Are we to believe in the way that fools believe?" No indeed! They are the fools, but they do not know it. (Surat al-Baqara, 13)

The ruling circle of those of his people who were unbelievers said: "We do not see you as anything but a human being like ourselves. We do not see anyone following you but the lowest of us, unthinkingly. We do not see you as superior to us. On the contrary, we consider you to be liars." (Surah Hud, 27)

Through such slanderous claims, Bediuzzaman's opponents tried to give the impression that he had brainwashed his young students, and that they were just foolish and irrational enough to be brainwashed. In other words, Bediuzzaman was accused of some form of "magic," as were earlier believers.

In reality, Bediuzzaman and the Muslims with him were intelligent people who acted in the light of reason, conscience, and the Qur'an's guidance. Those who made these unfounded allegations knew very well that this was so. In fact, none of these allegations hurt Bediuzzaman and his followers; rather, the patience and submission to Allah with which they bore these insults only increased their mental maturity and reward in the Hereafter.

Accused of Religious Distortion

Another allegation was that Bediuzzaman perverted Islam, promoted his personal religious beliefs, and imposed this distorted religion on his followers. His opponents also claimed that he did not abide by the Sunnah of the Prophet (saas) and that he had invented his own religion. The purpose of these provocative claims was to incite religious people who were not fully aware of what was going on, and to portray him as something he was not.

However, these slanderous claims came to nothing in the end, because they were recognized by intelligent and conscientious Muslims as being similar to those made against Prophet Nuh (as): **"We see you in flagrant error."** (Surat al-A'raf, 60)

The Smear Campaign against Bediuzzaman

Allah reveals in many verses that unbelievers always scheme and plot:

Those before them plotted, but all plotting belongs to Allah. He knows what each self earns, and the unbelievers will soon know who has the Ultimate Abode. (Surat ar-Ra'd, 42)

Irreligious people conspired against Bediuzzaman. One such scheme is related in *Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, His Unknown Side*. According to this, signatures were collected from drunkards on a sheet of paper stating that “Bediuzzaman’s assistant bought alcoholic drinks for him,” in a shop selling such drinks. This is just one of the methods used to discredit him and to portray him as a religious hypocrite.

Another example is mentioned in a letter written by Bediuzzaman. According to rumors disseminated among the people, at his house he held all-night parties that were attended by prostitutes and other people of low morals. Bediuzzaman’s reply to this unfounded allegation is clear:

“In reality my door was locked from the inside as well the outside in the night, and a guard was stationed for the night at my door by the order of that man [who slanders me].”

Such slanderous accusations of illicit relations and drunkenness came to nothing, and Bediuzzaman continued to serve his faith. The Qur’an reveals that such conspiracies and schemes cannot harm Muslims, and that, in the end, Muslims will win:

. . . But then, when a warner did come to them, it only increased their aversion, shown by their arrogance in the land and evil plotting. But evil plotting envelops only those who do it. Do they expect anything but the pattern of previous peoples? You will not find any changing in the pattern of Allah. You will not find any alteration in the pattern of Allah. (Surah Fatir, 42-43)

Bediuzzaman’s Attitude toward Slander

Bediuzzaman faced the slanders and conspiracies directed against him in the same way as the messengers and their followers did: He remained patient and faithful, and his motivation, cheerfulness, and determination were exemplary.

He relates in the *Risale-i Nur Collection* the positive and beneficial aspects of the above-mentioned prison term and cruelties inflicted upon him:

A number of officials made false accusations, which no one at all could believe. They tried to spread around the most extraordinary slander, but they could not make anyone believe it.

Then they arrested me during the most intensely cold days of winter on some trite pretext, and put me into solitary confinement in prison in a large and extremely cold ward, leaving me for two days without a stove. Having been accustomed to light my stove several times a day in my small room, and always having live coals in the brazier, with my illness and weakness I was only able to endure it with difficulty. While struggling in this situation, suffering from both a fever from the cold and a dreadful distress and anger, through Divine grace a truth unfolded in my heart. It uttered the following warning to my spirit:

“You called prison the ‘Medrese-i Yusufiyya’—the School of the Prophet Yusuf. And while in Denizli, things like relief a thousand times greater than your distress, and spiritual profit, and the other prisoners there benefiting from the Risale-i Nur, and its conquests on a larger scale, all made you offer endless thanks instead of complaining. They made each hour of your imprisonment and hardship like ten hours’ worship, and made those passing hours eternal. (Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Risale-i Nur Collection, The Twenty-sixth Flash, Fifteenth Hope)

Bediuzzaman relates that the Muslims around him who were subjected to the same slanders and cruelties never lost their cheerfulness and never despaired:

With all their stratagems, the dissemblers' attacks these last ten months and their getting hold of an official has not shaken even the youngest student. Their slanders are insignificant. . . Such slanders from such people have virtually no effect on us, and, Allah willing, they will cause no harm to the Risale-i Nur circle. (Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Risale-i Nur Collection, Letters, Fourteenth Ray)

All Muslims should learn from how Bediuzzaman and his followers responded to the conspiracies against them. Allah reminds Muslims, in the person of the Prophet (saas), how Muslims should respond in such circumstances:

Be patient. But your patience is only by Allah. Do not be grieved by them, and do not be constricted by the plots they hatch. Allah is with those who fear Him, and with those who are good-doers. (Surat an-Nahl, 127-128)

HOW MUSLIMS BEHAVE WHEN SLANDERED

The messengers are Allah's beloved servants who have won His good pleasure and have been promised His Paradise. Therefore, it is necessary for every Muslim who wants to earn Allah's good pleasure and love to behave like them. Allah reveals: **"You have an excellent model in the Messenger of Allah, for all who put their hope in Allah and the Last Day and remember Allah much"** (Surat al-Ahzab, 21). The purpose of this book is to encourage contemporary Muslims to learn from the patience and submission to Allah shown by the messengers, as well as the earlier devout Muslims and Islamic scholars.

For irreligious people or those of weak faith, slander means destruction. If unbelievers or people of weak faith were exposed to the slanders experienced by Allah's messengers, their entire life would come apart. For instance if they were accused of adultery or theft, they would be devastated. With a pure ignorant outlook on life, they would lose their interest in life, become depressed, give way to despair, and suffer. Even a small accusation can cause them to despair, and multiple slanders would devastate them. They would think: "How can I possibly clear my name from these accusations?" or "Millions of people have come to know me in this light. How on Earth am I to put the record straight?" They could be worrying about their financial future. They could panic, thinking that "Even if I clear my name, throw enough mud and some of it will stick." Thus, they would believe that they will always be remembered in the light of these accusations.

Believers, on the other hand, feel secure in their belief and trust in Allah. Irrespective of what they encounter, sincere Muslims will not behave irrationally or give themselves over to worry, like the people mentioned above. Having firm faith and the ability to submit to the destiny that Allah has determined for them, their attitude and behavior in such situations will differ markedly from that of people who do not live by the Qur'an.

Muslims know that being slandered is a test from Allah, that He will be pleased with them if they pass it, and that He will clear their names if they prove their patience and trust in Him. One verse reveals that, in reality, the accusations Muslims encounter are actually good for them:

There is a group of you who propagated the lie. Do not suppose it to be bad for you; rather, it is good for you. Every one of them will incur the evil he has earned, and the one who took it on himself to amplify it will receive a terrible punishment. (Surat an-Nur, 11)

People who live by the Qur'an believe with certainty that everything happens according to Allah's knowledge and control, and that everything is created in the best way possible and in their best interest. Therefore, even if they encounter the worst slander, they know that something good will come out of it. Sure, Muslims will do everything that is legitimately possible to clear their names and distance

themselves from the slanderous accusations, but they do so knowing that Allah ultimately wills goodness and benefit for them.

It is possible that Muslims will be tested by great hardship as a consequence of slander. They could simultaneously become seriously ill, or their family or relatives could be reduced to dependency or suffer financial problems. True Muslims will know that all of these are just trials sent by Allah, that a solution comes with every problem, and that patience is rewarded with Paradise. Therefore, they respond in a determined, measured, courageous, and energetic manner. They will not surrender to depression or despair and will receive all of the hardship that comes their way with the rational and disciplined manner required by the Qur'an.

Accusations Actually Benefit Muslims Even on Earth

The story of Yusuf (as) is a good example of how slanderous allegations might actually benefit believers. Yusuf (as), who had been falsely accused by the Egyptian governor's wife, was imprisoned for many years. While there, he found the opportunity to teach Allah's existence and Islam to his fellow prisoners. His full submission to his destiny eventually caused the news of his trustworthiness and ability to interpret dreams reach the ear of the king by means of a freed fellow prisoner. The king had him brought to the court to interpret his dream. Yusuf (as), however, requested that his name be cleared first and that the woman who had slandered him and her friends be asked to tell the truth. Now that he had established his innocence and been cleared of any suspicion, the king knew him to be a trustworthy, religious, and chaste person. Allah reveals in the Qur'an:

The King commanded: "Bring him to me straight away!" But when the envoy came to him, he [Yusuf] said: "Go back to your master and ask him what happened to the women who cut their hands. My Lord has knowledge of their cunning guile." He [the king] asked [the women]: "What was this past affair of yours when you solicited Yusuf?" Then they said: "Allah forbid! We know no bad of him." The governor's wife then said: "The truth has now emerged. Indeed, I tried to seduce him then, and he has simply told the honest truth." [Yusuf said:] "In this way he [the governor] may know at last that I did not dishonor him behind his back, and that Allah most surely does not guide the deviousness of the dishonorable." (Surah Yusuf, 50-52)

As we can see, this slander against Yusuf (as) was exposed as a lie, and his innocence and trustworthiness came to be known to the people. After he proved his faith during this trial, Allah rewarded him for his patience and good conduct on Earth as well as in the Hereafter. The verses continue:

The king said: "Bring him to me straight away, so I may draw him very close to me." When he had spoken with him, he declared: "Today you are trusted, established in our sight." He [Yusuf] replied: "Entrust the country's stores to me. In truth I am a knowing guardian." And thus We established Yusuf in the land so he could live wherever he pleased. We grant Our grace to anyone We will, and We do not allow to go to waste the wage of any people who do good. But

the wages of the Hereafter are the best for people who believe and fear [and respect] their Lord. (Surah Yusuf, 54-57)

Thinking Favorably for Slandered Believers

If we reflect on these past events, another important matter emerges: While the patience and faith of the slandered Muslim is tested, the stance and good opinion of his or her fellow Muslims is also tested.

Muslims must think positively for one another, because, as in the examples of the past, those who are hostile to religion try to support their accusations with forged evidence and false witnesses. They do this in order to discredit the accused in the eyes of the people, particularly in the eyes of other Muslims, in an attempt to create intra-Muslim rifts and frictions. As we saw in the previous chapter, this is what was done to Bediuzzaman. Despite the fact that he was devoted to Islam and spiritual values, he was subjected to a smear campaign designed to portray him as a religious hypocrite. A cunning plan is at work here: The unbelievers want to turn Muslims against each other so that they will not support each other. However, Allah commands all Muslims to support each other at all times:

Those who are unbelievers are the friends and protectors of one another. If you do not act in this way, there will be turmoil in the land and great corruption. (Surat an-Anfal, 73)

Therefore, it is crucial that Muslims first know the inside story when they hear something negative about a fellow Muslim. If the accused person is known to be a believer who fears Allah and abides by the Qur'an, maintaining good opinion of him or her becomes compulsory.

The unbelievers' hate and animosity toward Muslims is so fierce that they want to render the believers ineffective and force them to accept their own false beliefs. People who are far removed from the Qur'an's morality will always slander Allah's devout servants. Muslims must be very well aware of this.

Allah reveals yet another important fact in the following verses:

They concocted their plots, but their plots were with Allah, even if they were such as to make the mountains vanish. Do not imagine that Allah will break His promise to His messengers. Allah is Almighty, the Lord of Retribution. (Surah Ibrahim, 46-47)

As the verses reveal, Allah will foil all such cunning plots and lead the Muslims, as he did with Yusuf (as) and other Muslims, to a happy ending. However, until the unbelievers' conspiracies have been frustrated, Muslims are obliged to consider their slandered fellow Muslim with goodwill, good intentions, and trust. Allah reveals how Muslims must act toward fellow Muslims who are being slandered, and warns those who respond wrongly:

A group of you propagated the lie. Do not suppose it to be bad for you; rather, it is good for you. Every one of them will incur the evil he has earned, and the one who took it on himself to amplify it will receive a terrible punishment. Why, when you heard it, did you not, as male and female believers, instinctively think good thoughts and say: “This is obviously a lie.” Why did they not produce four witnesses to it? Since they did not bring four witnesses, in Allah’s sight they are liars. Were it not for Allah’s favor to you and His mercy, both in the world and the Hereafter, a terrible punishment would have afflicted you for your plunging headlong into it. You were bandying it about on your tongues, your mouths uttering something about which you had no knowledge. You considered it to be a trivial matter, but in Allah’s sight it is immense. Why, when you heard it, did you not exclaim: “We have no business speaking about this. Glory be to You! This is a terrible slander!”? Allah warns you never to repeat the like of it again, if you are believers. (Surat an-Nur, 11-17)

Slanders Must Not Be Considered from an Ignorant Point of View

Muslims must never forget that unbelievers will always hurl hurtful words and slander toward Muslims, as this is one of Allah’s eternal laws. Therefore, Muslims need to be aware of this truth so that they will not be misled into thinking badly of, or doing some injustice to, a fellow Muslim. In fact, Muslims can even consider it to be a sign of a fellow Muslim’s sincerity that he or she be subjected to slander.

Some people can fall for whispers that are incompatible with the truth revealed in the Qur’an, such as: “Where there’s fire there’s smoke” or “Why did someone tell this about him and not me?” Such people make a serious mistake by interpreting events outside the Qur’an, just as irreligious and unbelieving people do, with their own personal (and therefore deficient) way of reasoning and behavior. In other words, they forget the realities revealed in the Qur’an. People who believe in Allah must be very careful not to make such a mistake.

Muslims must not pay attention to such slanderous accusations. Even more, they must tell the perpetrators that they do not believe their lies, as this will bring their conspiracies to naught.

In addition, even if most people play their respective roles in an anti-Muslim conspiracy, their sheer numbers cannot be taken as evidence for the truth of their allegations. Allah reveals that the majority may often be wrong:

If you obeyed most of those on Earth, they would misguide you from Allah’s way. They follow nothing but conjecture. They are only guessing. (Surat al-An‘am, 116)

If the allegations against a Muslim come from someone who does not obey Allah, they must be carefully investigated and taken seriously only if strong evidence of their validity emerges. Those who choose to believe the allegations must first act according to the Qur’an’s directives while before reaching a decision, and must either see or produce the evidence. This is an order by Allah:

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. (Surat al-Hujurat, 6)

In order to avoid suffering from any possible remorse and regret in this life as well as the Hereafter, Muslims must always follow the Qur'an's guiding principles and keep truth and justice alive.

CONCLUSION: ALLAH IS ALL-KNOWING

Unbelievers have always—and will always—slander believers. Likewise, their slanderous and hurtful words have never—and will never—harm believers, because Muslims know an important fact and so live their lives accordingly: Allah sees, knows, and hears everything. No one can bring the slightest harm to anyone else unless it is His will.

Every slanderous word is uttered within Allah's knowledge and permission. When the slanderers hatch their plots, plan their conspiracies, and formulate their sentences, Allah is listening to and seeing them. Even when they utter the most slanderous words, thinking that they will force the Muslims to betray their religion, Allah knows what they are thinking, for as He reveals in the Qur'an:

Don't you see that Allah knows what is in the heavens and on Earth? Three men cannot confer together secretly without Him being the fourth, or five without Him being the sixth, or fewer or more than that without Him being with them wherever they are. Then He will inform them on the Day of Resurrection of what they did. Allah has knowledge of all things. (Surat al-Mujadala, 7)

Or do they imagine that We do not hear their secrets and their private talk? On the contrary, Our messengers are right there with them writing it down! (Surat az-Zukhruf, 80)

As these verses state, no slanderer is ignored and no slanderous word, even if it was said only between two people, goes unheard. The slanderer may forget, but Allah, Who sees, hears, and creates it, never forgets. All the rebellious words and unfounded accusations spoken by the unbelievers, as well as all their evil thoughts and evil deeds, will meet them on the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the sole Ruler and Owner of all that exists, is the Muslims' friend and guardian. Believers know that our Lord is infinitely compassionate and merciful, and that He creates everything in His wisdom in the best, most beneficial, and most just way possible. They trust and depend only on Him, and fear only Him. No slander, attack, threat, mockery, or attempt on their life or property will ever cause the believers to forsake the beauty of faith or to live by the Qur'an's morality. Allah reveals the Muslim's devotion and the rewards they will receive in return:

Among the believers are men who have been true to the contract they made with Allah. Some of them have fulfilled their pact by death, and some are still waiting to do so, not having changed in any way at all. So that Allah might recompense the faithful for their sincerity and punish the hypocrites, if He wills, or turn toward them. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Allah sent back those who disbelieved in their rage without their achieving any good at all. . . (Surat al-Ahzab, 23-25)