

Harms of spreading misinformation

Modern devices, social media and the internet provide us with breaking news almost as it happens. Never before was it so easy to be in touch with the world. Sadly, the benefits of such advancement have been overshadowed by its misuse. The same technology that brings us news in a flash is also used to spread misinformation, hoax messages, lies, slander, gossip and deception. These messages in turn create anxiety, panic, rage, protests, violence and a whole host of problems in society. Spreading misinformation through lies, gossip, slander and deception is a major sin.

The chief weapon of Dajjal (The great deceiver) will be lies, misinformation and deceit. The real challenge of the information age is to be truthful.

Many of us can relate to receiving messages from well-meaning family members or friends with dubious content or that are unverified. Many of us are also guilty of forwarding such information with 'good intentions', only to find out later that the information was false and potentially disruptive.

At times, Shaytan misguides people by engaging them in a 'cause' they assume to be noble but in reality causes tremendous harm by peddling false information about families, scholars, organisations and their representatives. This entails cynicism, disrespect, untruths, assumptions and false information - all in the name of 'truth'.

The Noble Qur'an condemns spreading information without verification.

Rasulullah ﷺ said, *“Deliberation and forethought should go into everything except for deeds pertaining to the Hereafter.”*

(Abu Dawud)

Another Hadith states: *“Deliberation is from Allah and haste is from Shaytan.”*

(Tirmizi)

May Allah Ta'ala help us to guard what we say and protect us from spreading information that is harmful.