# UNVERIFIED INFORMATION IN SOCIAL NETWORKS: ANALYSIS FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract:**

In contemporary society, social media has evolved into an indispensable and pervasive tool, impacting individuals worldwide across various dimensions, including the personal, social, economic, and political spheres. The basic expectation from social networks is to serve the people and society by providing important, authentic information and verified news. Unfortunately, false news, rumours and fabricated information on social networks have become a threat to individuals, and a destructive tool for peace and societal harmony. The unregulated proliferation of hoaxes on social networks can lead to a myriad of societal disruptions and issues, thereby intensifying the need for harmonious and peaceful coexistence as advocated by both individuals and society at large. This is a qualitative descriptive article that explores the Islamic understanding and rulings on the spread of unverified information in social networks intentionally for gaining personal interest or political advantages. The article also recommends some ethical and moral precepts of revealed knowledge to ensure the proper use of social networks for the benefit of individuals and community, and to avoid unethical violation and immoral actions.

**Keywords:**

Hoax, Social Media, Social Unrest, Fabricated News, Islamic Ethics.

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## Introduction

The Internet has a significant impact on communication technology and electronic media in this advanced world. Undoubtedly, the Internet provides unlimited advantages and facilities for people to interconnect globally and facilitate their technological tasks. Thus, social networks have become the essential tools for people's needs with the help of the internet, which is currently playing an important role in communication technology globally. And the use of social networks has emerged as a main factor in disseminating information and knowledge in every aspect of life. (Farid et al., 2022). Social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and so on seem to be more influential, dominant and attractive nowadays than mainstream media such as traditional and conventional means of media including print media, television, radio, et cetera.

As technology has proven itself, people are likely to be more comfortable using social media for their personal affairs, social issues, and political purposes; to keep in touch with families and friends; and to create new friendships and platforms. The transformative impact of civil society, governmental, non-governmental, and semi-governmental organizations on the global communication landscape, through their increased engagement with social networks, is now evident. This represents a noteworthy and positive consequence of the influence of social networks on the developed world.

On the other hand, internet-based social networks facilitate their users with free and uncontrolled spaces which pushes people to use it for politically unjustified personal gain. The scope of misinformation of freedom of expression and freedom of thought has recently increased dramatically all over the world, and most of the countries suffer from the hoax and unjustified information in social networks. Individuals who disseminate false and fabricated news to fulfil their illicit personal motives contribute to a fundamental threat to societal stability. This predicament is exacerbated by political manipulators, pseudo-intellectuals, and purveyors of fake news, all of whom exploit social networks to advance their self-serving agendas. Society is now noticing that many of them are using social networks as an influential medium of their communication to attract and provoke audiences. The spread of slander, deception, and unjustified information to shape people's fears has reached an alarming problem now, which leads to uncertainty, panic, and instability in society.

A peaceful and harmonious society is always a demand of Islam. Islam teaches a beautiful standard for evaluating the behaviour of individuals and society. The revelation (the Qur'an) and the teachings of the Messenger Mohammad (peace be upon Him) commanded individuals to promote certain moral characteristics that are obligatory to build themselves within the framework of Islamic thought, which will have an impact in building a beautiful and peaceful society. To ensure individual inner peace and societal harmony, there is a need to imposing some ethical standards and principles on using social networks. Freedom of Expression in Islam by Mohammad Hashim Kamali is also an important reference for understanding ethical reporting issues such as lying, backbiting and slander, and also ethical issues such as freedom of speech. (M. B. Ali, 2014).

This article aims to analyse the effects of unjustified information in social networks and its impact on the psychological health of humans and society. The study also aims to encourage critical thinking about the responsible and proper use of social networks. This includes studying

the ethical considerations related to privacy, misinformation, and fabricated news that lead to committing major sins.

Based on divine directives (Quranic) and prophetic practices, it has been proven that the spread of any false and unjustified information constitutes an obstacle to brotherhood and societal coexistence. It is also clear that this type of interactions is a sign of hypocrisy. Accordingly, spreading unjustified information, rumour, lies, slander and provocation with the aim of destroying the peace of people and society is strictly prohibited in Islam.

**Literature Review**

*Unjustified Information in Social Networks*
The globalization has introduced an own atmosphere and social life connection in corporation with the internet. People can share quickly their information, views, opinions easily which can also be spread faster. This is the reason why all the sectors such as academic, social, religious, cultural and political are very much influenced by the social networks which has a huge impact positively and negatively. Thus, the information or news is sometimes implosive and explosive because of the possibility of the copy and share options in social media. (Ratna Istriyani & Nur Huda Widiana, 2016). The hoax, fake news, the falsehood and the provocation cannot be separated from the emergence of the development of the communication technology that changed communication tools to be faster and easier for the people, which structured a new life management called global village (Jay W Jensen Rivers & Theodore Peterson, 2008).

I used a thematic approach here to understand the verses of the Holy Qur'an and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) related to hoaxes, lies, fabricated news and provocation. The ethical characteristics stated in Islam should be followed to counter the spread of hoaxes, lies and provocation. An individual who practices the behavioural lessons of Islam, will never get involved in harming others or to put the society in an unrest situation, for personal privilege. The Islamic ethics require acquisition and proper evaluation, and only then can share or disseminate any information or news. Allah SWT said in the Holy Qur'an:

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْبَصَرَ وَٱلْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْـُٔولًا

And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned (Qur'an, 17:36).

Those who believe in monotheism are bound within Islamic ethical framework; they believe in oneness of Allah who is the Sole Master and Creator. They will be asked by Allah hereafter about their actions and deeds. So, a believer does not act without acquiring proper knowledge and without a truthful investigation in fear of being accountable for their wrongdoings. The individual responsibilities and societal relations are also guided by the fundamental principles of Islam to enjoin good and to forbid evil. This is considered as the 'accountability' as stated in the Holy Qur'an:

وَلْتَكُن مِّنكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى ٱلْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ ٱلْمُنكَرِ ۚ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْلِحُونَ

And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong,1 and those will be the successful. (Qur'an, 3:104).

The deep concern that has been raised now on the dissemination of unlimited hoaxes, lies, fake news and provocation in social media to deceive people, or to play tricks on someone, or to make people believe in specific fabricated news or false information. Whatever act, document or artifact intended to deceive the public is considered a hoax. (Emery 2004). Some individual users of social networks are taking this trick either to make a joke on somebody or to pull down someone else for their personal interest. And the most worrying issue is that, the agencies or the news platforms especially electronic media channels are being used by the people of falsehood and hoaxes in return of money; where the maliciously fake information or fabricated news is being published intending to be viral on social media to bring the counterpart down or to provoke mass people. Both the purveyors of misinformation and their channels are complicit in perpetrating these grave crimes, inciting and misleading the masses. Furthermore, there are individuals who propagate false information without due diligence or substantiation, unquestionably undermining both societal tranquillity and the reputation of the victims.

*Factors in Spreading Unjustified Information: A Review of Islamic Discourse*

The major factor in spreading hoaxes or fake news is uncontrolled freedom to issue news to shape the people's opinion for the purpose of certain interests including political or religious or individual. Mostly, the hoaxes or fake news are being published to slander, to harm, and to accuse others or to claim that the specific people or platforms are superior to the others. So, whoever is involved in issuing or spreading such unauthentic or unjustified news and information for personal interest, commits serious sins that leads to the punishment of Allah. For those who create or initiate such fabricated news or hoaxes, they definitely commit the sin of lie or slander which is completely forbidden in Islam. The Prophet Muhamamd (PBUH) said:

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا الأَعْمَشُ، عَنْ شَقِيقٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم: عَلَيْكُمْ بِالصِّدْقِ فَإِنَّ الصِّدْقَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْبِرِّ وَإِنَّ الْبِرَّ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَمَا يَزَالُ الرَّجُلُ يَصْدُقُ وَيَتَحَرَّى الصِّدْقَ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ صِدِّيقًا وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَالْكَذِبَ فَإِنَّ الْكَذِبَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْفُجُورِ وَإِنَّ الْفُجُورَ يَهْدِي إِلَى النَّارِ وَمَا يَزَالُ الرَّجُلُ يَكْذِبُ وَيَتَحَرَّى الْكَذِبَ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَذَّابًا.

Abdullah reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying:
It is obligatory for you to tell the truth, for truth leads to virtue and virtue leads to Paradise, and the man who continues to speak the truth and endeavours to tell the truth is eventually recorded as truthful with Allah, and beware of telling of a lie for telling of a lie leads to obscenity and obscenity leads to Hell-Fire, and the person who keeps telling lies and endeavours to tell a lie is recorded as a liar with Allah. (Sahih Muslim, 2607).

عن أبي هريرة، رضي الله عنه، أن رسول ﷺ قال: آية المنافق ثلاث: إذا حدث كذب، وإذا وعد أخلف، وإذا أؤتمن خان..(متفق عليه)

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported:

Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, There are three signs of a hypocrite: When he speaks, he lies; when he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he is trusted, he betrays his trust. (Sahih al-Bukhari, 33. Tirmidhi, 2631).

Based on the study of above Hadiths, it's clear that the lie, slander and fabrication are the signs of hypocrite and evil doers, which obscenity leads to Hell-Fire. Thus, Allah SWT warns us to publicise or broadcast any evil.

لَّا يُحِبُّ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْجَهْرَ بِٱلسُّوٓءِ مِنَ ٱلْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَن ظُلِمَ ۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا

Allah does not like the public mention of evil except by one who has been wronged. And ever is Allah Hearing and Knowing. (Qur'an, 4:148).

The key Arabic term in this verse, '*al-jahr*', means "publicising or broadcasting," and the term *sū*', means "evil comment, evil speech". Thus, this verse warns to issue any kind of evil news, speeches or comments; and this is agreed by Mohammad Hashim Kamali. (Kamali, 167). And similarly, Allah SWT ordered us to stay away from committing any disgraceful deeds or wrongdoings.

قُلْ تَعَالَوْا۟ أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا۟ بِهِۦ شَيْـًٔا ۖ وَبِٱلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ إِحْسَـٰنًا ۖ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوٓا۟ أَوْلَـٰدَكُم مِّنْ إِمْلَـٰقٍ ۖ نَّحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ ۖ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا۟ ٱلْفَوَٰحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ ۖ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا۟ ٱلنَّفْسَ ٱلَّتِى حَرَّمَ ٱللَّهُ إِلَّا بِٱلْحَقِّ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّىٰكُم بِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ.

Say, Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited to you. [He commands] that you not associate anything with Him, and to parents, good treatment, and do not kill your children out of poverty; We will provide for you and them. And do not approach immoralities – what is apparent of them and what is concealed. And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden [to be killed] except by [legal] right. This has He instructed you that you may use reason. (Qur'an, 6:151).

The Arabic term '*fawāhish*' in these verses in this context commonly denotes adultery and fornication, however, linguistically the term used for 'indecent or disgraceful deeds, impure acts, or everything goes beyond proper limits. Sayyid Qutub thought the same. (Al-Mawdūdī, 1:5990), (Sayyid Quṭb, 5:357).

For those who spread hoaxes or fake news without proper justification, also commit serious crimes according to Islamic ethics. These unjustified acts or deeds surely take part in lies, fake news and slander to be viral on social media, which is against the Islamic behavioural ethics. Spreading hoaxes and fake information about anybody, or slandering someone is a defamation. Allah SWT orders Muslim to prevent themselves from insulting, harming and defaming others. (Ibn Kathīr, 330). The Holy Qur'an said:

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَكُونُوا۟ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَآءٌ مِّن نِّسَآءٍ عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ ۖ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا۟ بِٱلْأَلْقَـٰبِ ۖ بِئْسَ ٱلِٱسْمُ ٱلْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ ٱلْإِيمَـٰنِ ۚ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلظَّـٰلِمُونَ.

"O, you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them.

And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name [i.e., mention] of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent – then it is those who are the wrongdoers." (Qur'an, 49:11).

Let us remember the incident of Ayesha when she was defamed and suspected by several Muslims without any valid evidence in Madina, and Ayesha complained to Allah SWT which was heard and answered by Allah, and He criticised and refuted those who defamed Ayesha, the wife of the Prophet (PBUH).

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ جَآءُو بِٱلْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنكُمْ ۚ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُم ۖ بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۚ لِكُلِّ ٱمْرِئٍ مِّنْهُم مَّا ٱكْتَسَبَ مِنَ ٱلْإِثْمِ ۚ وَٱلَّذِى تَوَلَّىٰ كِبْرَهُۥ مِنْهُمْ لَهُۥ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

"Indeed, those who came with falsehood are a group among you. Do not think it bad for you; rather, it is good for you. For every person among them is what [punishment] he has earned from the sin, and he who took upon himself the greater portion thereof – for him is a great punishment [i.e., Hellfire]." (Qur'an, 24:11).

During the regime of Prophet (PBUH), some hypocrites and bad people used to spread untrue news and misinformation in Madina that caused to destroy peace in Muslim and in the community. (Sabuni, 1:292). They continued to create doubts, initiate false rumors and spread propaganda to exploit Muslims, and to weaken the Madina state. (S.M Hasan al-Banna: 2007). Allah SWT described their hoaxes and disgraceful deeds by revealing the Qur'anic verse as follows:

وَإِذَا جَآءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ ٱلْأَمْنِ أَوِ ٱلْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُواْ بِهِۦ ۖ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱلرَّسُولِ وَإِلَىٰٓ أُوْلِى ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ ٱلَّذِينَ يَسْتَنۢبِطُونَهُۥ مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُۥ لَٱتَّبَعْتُمُ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

"And when there comes to them something [i.e., information] about [public] security or fear, they spread it around. But if they had referred it back to the Messenger or to those of authority among them, then the ones who [can] draw correct conclusions from it would have known about it. And if not for the favor of Allah upon you and His mercy, you would have followed Satan, except for a few." (Qur'an, 4:83).

**Methodology**
This article used a combined approach of qualitative and descriptive analysis methods. By tracing the different interactions and behaviors of people on social networks, this study identified the key effects of spreading unjustified information and its impact on communities. Descriptive analysis is used to convey the true teachings of Islam and ethical Islamic guidelines for using social networks in order to avoid committing major sins forbidden in Islam.

**Results and Findings**
Based on the verses, none of Muslims is allowed to initiate or publicise hoaxes, falsehood and fake news. As the signs of disobedience and hypocrisy, such indecent activities will surely take the doers to the punishment of hellfire. Therefore, Islam designed some ethical guidelines and principles that Muslim need to be enlightened with, which will prevent anybody from wrongdoings or evil.

Firstly, avoiding suspicion and presumption, which is worse than lying and falsehood. Allah SWT and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) warned the believers and ordered them to stay away from suspicion. The Holy Qur'an says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ.

"O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] suspicion. Indeed, some suspicion is sin." (Qur'an 49:1). And the Prophet said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: إِيَّاكُمْ وَالظَّنَّ فَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ أَكْذَبُ الْحَدِيثِ، وَلَا تَحَسَّسُوا، وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا، وَلَا تَبَاغَضُوا، وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا، وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا.

Narrated by Abu Huraira: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Beware of suspicion, for it is the worst of false tales and don't look for the other's faults and don't spy and don't hate each other, and don't desert (cut your relations with) one another O Allah's slaves, be brothers!" (Sahih al-Bukhari, 6724. Sahih Muslim, 2563).

Secondly, one of the initial causes of creating or spreading hoaxes, lies and provocation is mockery. Laughing at someone or making jokes on anybody is prohibited in Islam. Allah emphatically prohibits it; asks to remember that perhaps those whom we mock might actually be better than us.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَى أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاء مِّن نِّسَاء عَسَى أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الِاسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ.

"O, you who have believed, let not a group of people mock [other] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women mock [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of shamelessness after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent – then it is those who are the wrongdoers." [Quran 49:11].

عَنْ أَبِي جَبِيرَةَ بْنِ الضَّحَّاكِ، قَالَ فِينَا نَزَلَتْ مَعْشَرَ الْأَنْصَارِ (وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ) قَدِمَ عَلَيْنَا النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم . وَالرَّجُلُ مِنَّا لَهُ الِاسْمَانِ وَالثَّلَاثَةُ فَكَانَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم رُبَّمَا دَعَاهُمْ بِبَعْضِ تِلْكَ الْأَسْمَاءِ فَيُقَالُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ يَغْضَبُ مِنْ هَذَا فَنَزَلَتْ (وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ).

It was narrated that Abu Jabirah bin Dahhak said: (Allah's saying) "Nor insult one another by nicknames (Surah Al Hujarat 49:11)" was revealed concerning us, the Ansar. When the Prophet(ﷺ) came to us, a man among us would have two or three names, and the Prophet(ﷺ) might call him by one of those names, only to be told: "O Messenger of Allah(ﷺ), he does not like that name." Then: "Nor insult one another by nicknames." was revealed." (Musnad Ahmad, 18288. Sunan Ibn Majah, 3741).

Thirdly, respecting the privacy of others is one of the basic principles of the Islamic family and societal ethics. Nobody is allowed to break the privacy of others. Islam prohibits entering in

the houses of others without permission, consent and proper greetings, and that is a fine manner for Muslims. The Holy Qur'an says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّىٰ تَسْتَأْنِسُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ.

فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّىٰ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ ۖ وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمُ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا ۖ هُوَ أَزْكَىٰ لَكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

عَلِيمٌ.

"O, you who believe! do not enter houses other than your own until you have asked permission and greeted the inmates . . . and if it is said to you, 'Go back', then go back." (Qur'an, 24:27-28)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ ۖ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا ۚ أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ

أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ.

"O, you who believe! avoid most of suspicion (against others), for surely suspicion in some cases is sin; and do not spy (into other people's affairs), nor let some of you backbite others." (Quran, 49:12)

What we can understand from the verses is that, breaking of the privacy of others, spying on anybody and backbiting others are strictly forbidden in Islam and whoever commits these would be considered as the big sin and surely be punished by Allah SWT. And these verses indicate that, trying to ensure any suspicion or slander is also against the Islamic ethics. Baig writes:
"the right to privacy is a sacred human right which nobody (including the journalist) can violate ... [and] in the pursuit of good, Islam does not permit, not even to a journalist, to spy and seek to confirm suspicions, slander, circulation of rumour, and name calling." (Baig: 2008).

Fourthly, to investigate and justify any information or news prior to publishing or spreading that. Examining the authentication of any news or information is compulsory for a Muslim before believing in that, which will prevent him/her from publicising or spreading hoaxes, fake news or slander. The Holy Qur'an stated:

"يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَإٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ."

"O, you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful." (Qur'an 49:6).

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) warns us not to speak of everything that we hear, which indicates that the investigation or justification is a must before informing others. The Prophet (PBUH) said: "It is enough lying for a man to speak of everything that he hears." (Sahih Muslim).

## Conclusion

Islam imparts a virtuous code of conduct to its believers, guiding them on how to harmoniously coexist in society, collaborate with others, and safeguard the well-being and peace of all individuals. The morality and Islamic fundamental principles aim for a pure and peaceful

existence from every individual. And that is why Allah SWT asserts the boundaries of living and the guidelines to purify the hearts of the individuals and the sickness of the society. To tell a lie, to publicise slander, to spread fake news, disrespecting other's rights to privacy, and to spread hoaxes are the absolute immoral and indecent deeds, and they are the signs of hypocrisy that is threatened to be painfully punished by Allah SWT.

اِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ.

"Indeed, those who like that immorality should be spread [or publicized] among those who have believed will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter. And Allah knows and you do not know." (Quran, 24:19).

So, Muslims must be careful in receiving any news or information, or in carrying out their daily activities. Islam emphasizes that anything should be received or publicised after a proper verification of sources, and authenticity of that. Otherwise, the acts will be considered as disgraceful deeds that will harm others, and will cause the destruction of peace and harmony in society.

## Acknowledgment

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