

Treatment of Hateful Speech in the Light of the Prophetic Sunnah

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ABSTRACT

If you look at the situation of Islamic societies in recent times, the spread of hateful speech, especially on social media sites, is affecting peaceful communities. This is against the Prophetic guidance, which emphasizes the importance of respect, love, care and peace. The researchers tackle the subject of hateful speech from the perspective of the Prophetic Sunnah on a preventative level and also dealing with situations after they have occurred. According to the Sunnah, it is forbidden to harm others verbally, physically and financially. This prevents disrespect and humiliation by preventing the tongue from uttering words that would be tools of hatred. Being kind is a methodology of dealing of Believers in dealing with others. Whenever hateful speech had occurred, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to handle the situation in the best way he could. He called for reconciliation and calm, which made some people use hateful speech against him, in order to prevent him from spreading the message of Islam.

Keywords: Prophet, Sunnah, Hateful Speech.

Introduction

Praise be to God, Who said in the Holy Qur'an:

"Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly."
Surah Al Mumtahina, V: 8

And Praise be to Prophet Muhammed who, when asked to invoke curse upon the polytheists, he said:-

*"I have not been sent as the invoker of curse, but I have been sent as mercy."*¹

In spite of this guidance from the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic instruction given to prevent hateful speech, it is unfortunately clear, through all forms of media (particularly social media,) that this is a wide-spread issue, and is encouraging racism and sectarianism. This will threaten peace and unity within the community. The definition of hateful speech is:

"The advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred and incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence"

This article shows the role of Prophetic Sunnah in treating social illness, and shows the steps to prevent and treat this issue. Those who follow these steps are following the footsteps of the Prophet (ﷺ) in daily life.

Importance of The Study

This study shows the role of the Prophetic Sunnah in solving and treating community problems, and the implementation of Prophetic Guidance in spreading the culture of love, tolerance and to boycott hateful speech.

Aims and Objectives

- 1) Admitting that hateful speech will divide the community
- 2) Preventative steps to avoid hateful speech and how to deal with it after it has occurred.
- 3) Implementing the Prophetic Sunnah in solving all Humanitarian problems
- 4) Presenting an idealistic image of Islam and providing answers to accusations about the validity of Islam.

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Problems of the Research

In this study, we will try to answer the following questions:

- 1) How the Prophet (ﷺ) used to treat hateful speech
- 2) The practical steps implemented by the Prophet (ﷺ) to reduce the effects of hateful speech

Methods of Research

- 1) Deductive methods: by collecting the Sunnah or sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ), that have tackled hateful speech
- 2) Methods of analysis: this research follows the analytical and conceptual framework in which components from various sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ) in order to show how the problem was solved

Literature Review

After a thorough but humble research, we could not find an academic study which tackles the treatment of hateful speech in the Sunnah. Although we did come across a study called “*Love and Hatred in the Qur'an and the Sunnah*,” By Khidr Mussah Hmood.²

In this article, the author tackles the subject of love and hatred in the Qur'an and Sunnah, in a general way. He mentioned certain affairs that have encouraged love and also hate in the Qur'an and Sunnah. However, he does not tackle treatment of hateful speech.

Section One

Concept and appearance of hateful speech

1:1 Concept of hateful speech

- Linguistic definition of hateful speech:

“*Kha, Ta, Bah*” - refers to speech between two people.³

“*Al Khitab*” - directing speech towards others.⁴

“*Al Khutbah*,” - derived from “*Al Khitab*,” means delivering speech to people.⁵

“*Ya Takhataban*” – when two people are talking to each other.⁶

The root of *Al Karahiyah* comes from “*Ka-ra-ha*,” which means to hate.

“*Al kara hiyah*” – the opposite of love.⁷ According to Al Qathi,

“*Kara hiyah*” is something that is disliked.⁸

- Terminology of hateful speech:-

The term hateful speech describes a wide range of terms that encourage racism, national or religious hatred and gender related hatred. This results in uttering abusive verbal assault towards those mentioned above.⁹

Hatred is a negative mental attitude that contradicts a persons beliefs and conscious thought, and may turn into a deeply hateful attitude towards the subject or person that is hated.¹⁰

According to R. Sternberg 2005, hate has three elements¹¹:-

- 1) Negation of Intimacy

Seeking to distance yourself from a person due to an arousal of feelings of disgust or repulsion. This may be because of a person's characteristics or acts that lead one to feel the targeted person to be inhuman.

- 2) Passion

Intense anger or fear in response to a threat. This stage is often very quick to develop and also very quick to move to the next stage.

- 3) Decision/Commitment

The hated person has now become contemptible to the extent that he/or she is de-humanized.

There is no clear definition for hateful speech in International law because there are many types of speech that can fall into general discussion. These are very difficult to distinguish, such as:- speech that leads to the hatred of police due to actions against citizens, or against government due to corruption of some of its members¹².

According to the “Article 20,” in “International Governance of Political and Civilian Rights”, we can define hateful speech as “any call of hatred due to race, nationality or religion, in order to encourage hatred and violence.”¹³

*Incitement to hatred*¹⁴ refers to a person pushing or encouraging another towards rough feelings, and sometimes resulting in decisive action.¹⁵

Izzat identifies hatred speech as calling a mass of people, either directly or un-directly, to act against individuals or groups by using openly racist or prejudice phrases or insults.¹⁶

According to “*The Camden Principles on Freedom of Expression And Equality, Article 19*,”:-

*“The terms ‘hatred’ and ‘hostility’ refer to intense and irrational emotions of opprobrium, enmity and detestation towards the target group.”*¹⁷

Camden elaborates further on this issue:-

*“The term ‘advocacy’ is to be understood as requiring an intention to promote hatred publicly towards the target group. The term ‘incitement’ refers to statements about national, racial or religious groups which create an imminent risk of discrimination, hostility or violence against persons belonging to those groups.”*¹⁸

To conclude, hateful speech consists of two elements:-

1. Declaring/showing hatred
2. Advocacy of others towards hatred

The above result in either insults, violence or humiliation of others due to faith, colour, gender, racism, etc.

1:2 Multiple appearances of hateful speech

- Intolerance

The meaning of intolerance is a thought or action that leads a person to feel, think or act negatively towards others. This may be towards an individual or a group.¹⁹

The main elements of intolerance are²⁰:-

- (1) Ruling with no accuracy, foundation or objectivity
- (2) Negative feelings toward others
- (3) Encouragement of hateful actions by advocacy
- (4) Bias intolerance towards a group without sufficient evidence

- Discrimination

Such as discrimination due to origin, colour, faith, religion, language, age and nationality. This prevents or weakens people from enjoying his/her Human Rights, in the field of Politics, Economics, Sociology and other ways of life.²¹

- Aggression

The definition of aggression is:- “any attitude or behaviour of a group or person that was aimed towards another with the intention of harming them.”²²

This definition includes both physical aggression (such as beating,) and verbal aggression (such as humiliation and swearing, or ignoring a person.)²³

There is a connection between the concept of aggression and the concept of violence. However we can say that violence is one form of aggression, and is related to aggression towards a group by different methods of verbal communication.²⁴

Section Two

Preventative treatment of hateful speech in Sunnah

2:1 Spreading the culture of love in communities and warning against hate

The remedy of hateful is to implement the opposite by spreading words of love and harmony between people, such as saying “Salam” (peace,) as it has a great affect on people.

The Messenger of Allah (may peace and blessing be upon him) said:

*"You shall not enter Paradise so long as you do not affirm belief (in all those things which are the articles of faith) and you will not believe as long as you do not love one another. Should I not direct you to a thing which, if you do, will foster love amongst you: (i. e.) give currency to (the practice of paying salutation to one another by saying) as-salamu alaikum."*²⁵

Spreading Salaam is the reason for harmony and a key to bringing happiness between people. Thus avoiding hatred.²⁶

Spreading Salaam reflects respect and care towards others, which is why the Prophet encourages the spreading of Salaam towards all members of the community.

On the authority of Anas Ibn Malik, he said:-

*"A man passed by the Prophet (ﷺ) while another man was sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ). The man sitting by the Prophet said "I love this man for the sake of Allah," the Prophet replied "did you tell him that?" The man replied "No." The Prophet (ﷺ) said "get up, and go and tell him that." So he went and told him that, and the man replied, "The One whom you love me for His sake, may the Almighty love you."*²⁷

Therefore, to tell someone you love them is one way of spreading the culture of love in society. On the other hand, the Prophet (ﷺ) warned us from showing hatred towards others.

He said in the hadith:-

*"Do not hate each other; do not envy each other; do not desert each other; and be the servants of Allah as brethren. It is not allowed for a Muslim to keep apart from his brother for more than three days."*²⁸

Hate and not speaking to one another will spread the culture of hatred. This is why the Prophet (ﷺ) has forbidden it.

2:2 Implementing peace in society by forbidding assault towards others

It is narrated on the authority of Abu Musa Ash'ari:

*"I asked the Messenger of Allah which (attribute) of Islam is more excellent. Upon this he remarked: One in which the Muslims are safe, protected from the tongue and hand of (other Muslims)"*²⁹

In this Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) regards the safety of the people as a sign for distinguishing a degree of excellency. He also mentioned two parts of the body that can be used as a tool for hateful speech, which are the tongue and the hands. It is a Muslim's power to control these that makes he/she excellent.

Moreover, the Prophet (ﷺ) declared during his Last Sermon:-

"Narrated `Abdur-Rahman bin Abi Bakra's father:

*Once the Prophet (ﷺ) was riding his camel and a man was holding its rein. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked, "What is the day today?" We kept quiet, thinking that he might give that day another name. He said, "Isn't it the day of Nahr (slaughtering of the animals of sacrifice)" We replied, "Yes." He further asked, "Which month is this?" We again kept quiet, thinking that he might give it another name. Then he said, "Isn't it the month of Dhul-Hijja?" We replied, "Yes." He said, "Verily! Your blood, property and honor are sacred to one another (i.e. Muslims) like the sanctity of this day of yours, in this month of yours and in this city of yours. It is incumbent upon those who are present to inform those who are absent because those who are absent might comprehend (what I have said) better than the present audience."*³⁰

Advocating or encouraging hatred starts by showing aggression towards the reputation of a person. This will usually be verbal and may develop to physical abuse (including aggression against wealth and souls/persons). Therefore, the Sunnah warns Muslims against humiliating others. It is considered as one form of oppression.

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying:

"Don't nurse grudge and don't bid him out for raising the price and don't nurse aversion or enmity and don't enter into a transaction when the others have entered into that transaction and be as fellow-brothers and servants of Allah. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor humiliates him nor looks down upon him. The piety is here, (and while saying so) he pointed towards his chest thrice. It is a serious evil for a Muslim that he should look

down upon his brother Muslim. All things of a Muslim are inviolable for his brother in faith: his blood, his wealth and his honour."³¹

This includes aggression against a Muslim and/or a non-Muslim.

Narrated `Abdullah bin `Amr:

*The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whoever killed a person having a treaty with the Muslims, shall not smell the smell of Paradise though its smell is perceived from a distance of forty years."*³²

2:3 Preserving the tongue from hateful speech

Islam considers cursing and using bad language as an encouragement for hatred. Therefore, the Prophet (ﷺ) came with instructions to purify the tongue from such words.

Anas Ibn Malik reported:-

*"The Prophet (ﷺ) was not one who would abuse (others) or say obscene words, or curse (others)"*³³

When the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked to curse the non-believers, he refused, according to the following Hadith:-

"Abu Huraira reported it was said to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ):

Invoke curse upon the polytheists, whereupon he said: I have not been sent as the invoker of curse, but I have been sent as mercy."³⁴

To show the potential danger in using certain words, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, as reported in the following Hadith:-

"Abu Huraira reported that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying:

The servant speaks words for which he is sent down to the Hell-Fire farther than the distance between the east and the west."³⁵

By using 'word,' the Prophet (ﷺ) was referring to a word that is obscene.³⁶

Using bad language is therefore not the characteristics of a Believer. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, as narrated in the following Hadith:-

*"Abdullah narrated that the Messenger of Allah said: The believer does not insult the honor of others, nor curse, nor commit Fahishah, nor is he foul."*³⁷

In another Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) warns against cursing or killing:-

"It is narrated on the authority of 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud that the Messenger of Allah (may peace and blessings be upon him) observed:

*Abusing a Muslim is an outrage and fighting against him is unbelief."*³⁸

Some hateful speech maybe directed towards those who have passed away. This has also been forbidden, as narrated in the following Hadith:-

*"Narrated `Aisha: The Prophet (p.b.u.h) said, "Don't abuse the dead, because they have reached the result of what they forwarded."*³⁹

This means that regardless if person has done good deeds or bad, they have already passed away.⁴⁰

The Prophet (ﷺ) prevented hateful speech even towards those who commit sins such as drinking alcohol. This is shown in the below Hadith:-

"Narrated Abu Salama:

*Abu Huraira said, "A man who drank wine was brought to the Prophet. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'Beat him!'" Abu Huraira added, "So some of us beat him with our hands, and some with their shoes, and some with their garments (by twisting it) like a lash, and then when we finished, someone said to him, 'May Allah disgrace you!'" On that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'Do not say so, for you are helping Satan to overpower him."*⁴¹

Since the Prophet has declared it is forbidden to curse one who has committed a major sin, we can imagine how wrong it is to curse any other person!

Al Qadi-Eyad said:-

"Some scholars say it is permitted to curse those who committed sins, provided they don't receive their legal

punishment. However if they do receive their legal punishment, we are not allowed to curse them, since receiving punishment is an expiation for their sin. This is not true because the Prophet (ﷺ) has forbidden cursing anyone in general. For those who curse the drunkard, it is like helping the Satan, as the above Hadith has mentioned the Prophet (ﷺ) saying *'Do not say so, for you are helping Satan to overpower him.'*"⁴²

So, the Prophet (ﷺ) has warned us from using any such words, as mentioned in the following Hadith:-

*"It is reported on the authority of Ibn 'Umar that the Apostle (may peace and blessings be upon him) observed: When a man calls his brother an unbeliever, it returns (at least) to one of them."*⁴³

Abu Dhar narrated that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying:

*"If somebody accuses another of Fusuq (by calling him 'Fasiq' i.e. a wicked person) or accuses him of Kufr, such an accusation will revert to him (i.e. the accuser) if his companion (the accused) is innocent."*⁴⁴

In another version:-

It is reported on the authority of Abu Dharr that he heard the Messenger of Allah (may peace and blessings be upon him) saying:

*"...and he who labelled anyone with unbelief or called him the enemy of Allah..."*⁴⁵

2:4 Unity of Mankind

One of the main reasons for hateful speech is racism against gender, colour, cast, etc. These can lead to stereotypical views towards particular members of the community. This is why The Prophet (ﷺ) emphasizes that all people are equal and all are children of Adam, and all from dust. He said in the following hadith during his last Sermon:-

*"Oh People, your Lord is One, your Father is One, there is no superiority of Arabs over non-Arabs, or non-Arabs over Arabs, nor red over black or black over red, except by piety."*⁴⁶

Also, in another Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) said to those who are proud of their fore-fathers (Sunan Abu Dawud):-

"Narrated AbuHurayrah:

*The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Allah, Most High, has removed from you the pride of the pre-Islamic period and its boasting in ancestors. One is only a pious believer or a miserable sinner. You are sons of Adam, and Adam came from dust. Let the people cease to boast about their ancestors. They are merely fuel in Jahannam; or they will certainly be of less account with Allah than the beetle which rolls dung with its nose."*⁴⁷

In a third Hadith, The Prophet (ﷺ) considers those who are under the banner of racism are considered as ignorant:

"It was narrated that Jundab bin 'Abdullah said:

*"The Messenger of Allah [SAW] said: 'Whoever fights for a cause that is not clear, advocating tribalism, getting angry for the sake of tribalism, then he has died a death of Jahiliyyah.'"*⁴⁸

The Prophet (ﷺ) limited the belonging of any Human Being to a specific cause and not his/her tribe. According to Annas Ibn Malik, the Prophet (ﷺ) said in the following Hadith:-

*"Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or he is an oppressed one. People asked, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! It is all right to help him if he is oppressed, but how should we help him if he is an oppressor?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "By preventing him from oppressing others."*⁴⁹

2:5 Kindness and affinity is one of the descriptions of a Muslim

"Abu Haraira narrated that Prophet (ﷺ) said:-

*"Believers have affinity towards others, and there is no good in a person in whom none find affinity and he does not find affinity in others" "*⁵⁰

Affinity between people is when there consists respect, kindness and good dealings amongst themselves. Provoking hateful speech, therefore, will bring enmity, hatred and loneliness. A combination affinity and loneliness cannot be present in the heart of a believer. This is why the Prophet (ﷺ) has encouraged believers to have affinity towards others

all the time. He has in the following Hadith:-

“A'isha, the wife of Allah's Apostle (ﷺ), reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

'A'isha, verily Allah is kind and He loves kindness and confers upon kindness which he does not confer upon severity and does not confer upon anything else besides it (kindness).’”⁵¹

He also mentioned in the following Hadith:-

“A'isha, the wife of Allah's Apostle (ﷺ), reported Allah's Apostle (ﷺ) as saying:

Kindness is not to be found in anything but that it adds to its beauty and it is not withdrawn from anything but it makes it defective.’”⁵²

Jarir reported the following Hadith that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:-

“He who is deprived of tenderly feelings is in fact deprived of good.’”⁵³

One can just imagine how much a person who provokes any sort of hateful act (verbal or physical), would be deprived of kindness.

2:6 Encouraging hate is a Satanic act

On the Authority of Jabir, the Prophet (ﷺ) said in the following Hadith:-

“I heard Allah's Apostle (ﷺ) as saying: Verily, the Satan has lost all hopes that the worshippers would ever worship (him) in the peninsula of Arabia, but he (is hopeful) that he would sow the seed of dissension amongst them.’”⁵⁴

Encouragement refers to provoking a person towards temptation and may lead to fighting,⁵⁵ quarrels and hatred.⁵⁶

Therefore, those who encourage hateful speech are followers of Shaytan and are stimulating him. The Shaytan begins his work with whispers, then words, then actions. These lead to disputes and hatred amongst members of the community.

Section Three

3: Treatment of hateful speech in the Light of the Sunnah

3:1 Reminding those who call for hatred that his acts are akin to ignorance and part of an ignorant era.

During the Prophet's lifetime, many incident occurred which raised hatred between community members.

The Prophet (ﷺ) dealt with this in a serious way, as this is detrimental to the peace in the newly established state. Some of these incidents were by individuals, but others were as a result of collective insults. These are considered more dangerous.

One such incident occurred between Abu Dhar, who had insulted another Companion by saying “Your Mother wears black.” The Companion then went and complained to the Prophet. The Prophet said to Abu Dhar:-

“O Abu Dhar! Did you abuse him by calling his mother with bad names You still have some characteristics of ignorance.’”⁵⁷

The words of The Prophet (ﷺ) greatly affected Abu Dhar, and he regretted his words and apologized to the Companion. He later used to buy the same clothes for this Companion that he brought for himself.

Another incident, involving a collective group, is described in the following Hadith:-

Narrated Jabir:

We were in the company of the Prophet (ﷺ) in a Ghazwa. A large number of emigrants joined him and among the emigrants there was a person who used to play jokes (or play with spears); so he (jokingly) stroked an Ansari man on the hip. The Ansari got so angry that both of them called their people. The Ansari said, "Help, O Ansari!" And the emigrant said "Help, O emigrants!" The Prophet (ﷺ) came out and said, "What is wrong with the people (as they are calling) this call of the period of Ignorance? "Then he said, "What is the matter with them?" So he was told about the stroke of the emigrant to the Ansari. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Stop this (i.e. appeal for help) for it is an evil call. "Abdullah bin Ubai bin Salul (a hypocrite) said, "The emigrants have called and (gathered against us); so when we return to Medina, surely, the more honorable people will expel therefrom the meaner," Upon that `Umar said, "O

*Allah's Prophet! Shall we not kill this evil person (i.e. `Abdullah bin Ubai bin Salul) ?" The Prophet said, "(No), lest the people should say that Muhammad used to kill his companions."*⁵⁸

We can say that although each man called for help from his own people, this was alarming as it may have led to temptation between the two parties. The Prophet (ﷺ) intervened at the right time, and reminded them that such a call is a call for ignorance. We need to be aware in our own communities of the effect of such biased calls and how they may cause hatred.

The Prophet (ﷺ) also objected to Umar's (RA) request to kill Abdullah Ibn Salul (the hypocrite,) because those who were looking to aggravate may have used this incident as leverage towards provoking hatred. This is why he said:-

"(No), lest the people should say that Muhammad used to kill his companions."

3:2 Responding to other people's verbal assaults by kindness and not violence

When hateful speech occurs, it is wise to not react immediately, but rather to think wisely, as the response can effect people. The Prophet (ﷺ) came across so many incidents and dealt with them with a wise, calm and soft approach. The following hadith indicates this:-

Narrated `Aisha:

A group of Jews came to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and said, "As-samu 'Alaika " (Death be on you), and I understood it and said to them, "Alaikum AsSamu wa-l-la'na (Death and curse be on you)." Allah's Apostle said, "Be calm! O `Aisha, for Allah loves that one should be kind and lenient in all matters." I said, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! Haven't you heard what they have said?" Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "I have (already) said (to them), 'Alaikum (upon you).'"⁵⁹

When the group above said "As-samu Alaykum," (Death be on you,) it was a call for hateful speech, reflected the hatred in their hearts towards the Prophet. Although he Prophet (ﷺ) understood the hidden meaning of the phrase, which appeared at first glance to be "peace be upon you," but was actually "death upon you," he stopped Aisha from returning the same words ("wa alaykum" – "and on you,") by saying to her, *"Be calm! O `Aisha, for Allah loves that one should be kind and lenient in all matters."*

What a lovely approach this was! Omitting hateful words and replacing them with kindness!

3:3 Rushing towards conciliation in order to remove the effects of hateful speech

Imam Al Bukhari, in his Sahih, entitled one chapter, "Al Sulh" – reconciliation between people.

The following Hadith is from this chapter:-

Narrated Anas:

It was said to the Prophet (ﷺ) "Would that you see `Abdullah bin Ubai." So, the Prophet (ﷺ) went to him, riding a donkey, and the Muslims accompanied him, walking on salty barren land. When the Prophet (ﷺ) reached `Abdullah bin Ubai, the latter said, "Keep away from me! By Allah, the bad smell of your donkey has harmed me." On that an Ansari man said (to `Abdullah), "By Allah! The smell of the donkey of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) is better than your smell." On that a man from `Abdullah's tribe got angry for `Abdullah's sake, and the two men abused each other which caused the friends of the two men to get angry, and the two groups started fighting with sticks, shoes and hands. We were informed that the following Divine Verse was revealed (in this concern):- "And if two groups of Believers fall to fighting then, make peace between them."⁶⁰

Here, we can see the wisdom of The Prophet (ﷺ) when he was insulted verbally. He remained patient and kept clam. When another Companion became angry for Him, and started and started fighting with their hands, the Prophet (ﷺ) stopped them and recited over them the verse of the Qur'an. Although the Prophet (ﷺ) would have felt insulted by the comment, he did not use the situation to aggravate hatred, but instead calmed them down and reminded them that they are believers. The situation was thus sorted.

3:4 Forbidding phrases that lead to hateful speech

This means that there are some phrases that are not insulting in its definition but may be interpreted incorrectly and

lead towards hateful speech. The situation and audience must be taken into consideration here. Therefore, Islam forbids such words in order to be on the safe side.

According to Abu Hur'airah, in the following Hadith:-

A Muslim and a Jew quarreled. The Muslim taking an oath, said, "By Him Who has preferred Muhammad over all people..." The Jew said, "By Him Who has preferred Moses, over all people." The Muslim raised his hand and slapped the Jew who came to the Prophet (ﷺ) to tell him what had happened between him and the Muslim. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Don't give me superiority over Moses, for the people will become unconscious (on the Day of Resurrection) and I will be the first to gain consciousness to see Moses standing and holding a side of Allah's Throne. I will not know if he has been among those people who have become unconscious; and that he has gained consciousness before me, or he has been amongst those whom Allah has exempted."⁶¹

Scholars have said that the Prophet (ﷺ) prevented further aggravation in order to not lead to arguments and fights.⁶² This is exactly what happened in this incident, and shows that quarrelling can lead to physical violence. In spite of the Prophet (ﷺ) being favored by Allah above all Prophets, he would forbid others to favor him as this would lead to arguments which may end in violence, as in the above example.

3:5 Responding to hateful speech with contradictory words

Narrated Anas:

said: "It reached Safiyyah that Hafsa said: 'The daughter of a Jew' so she wept. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) entered into her house while she was crying, so he said: 'What makes you cry?' She said: 'Hafsa said to me that I am the daughter of a Jew.' So the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'And you are the daughter of a Prophet, and your uncle is a Prophet, and you are married to a Prophet, so what is she boasting to you about?' Then he said: 'Fear Allah, O Hafsa.'"⁶³

In the above situation, Hafsa practiced hateful speech against Safiyyah by calling her the daughter of a Jew. This comment was based on religious racism. This is why the Prophet did not accept this comment from her.

At the same time, he calmed Safiyyah by reminding her that she is the descendant of Prophet Haroon and Musa, and his own wife. He also said "Fear Allah," to Hafsa.

In another incident, two workers for the Prophet (ﷺ), one from Abyssinia and another an Egyptian Christian, were having an argument. One of them remarked "O' Abyssinian Man," and the other replied "O' Christian Egyptian." The Prophet (ﷺ) heard this and said: "Do not say that, you are two men from the family of the Prophet Mohammed."⁶⁴

We can see the Prophet (ﷺ) treated the above situation, based on racism once again, by saying: "You are two men from the family of the Prophet Mohammed."

3:6 Calming the situation

Narrated `Urwa-bin Az-Zubair:

Usama bin Zaid said, "The Prophet (ﷺ) rode over a donkey with a saddle underneath which there was a thick soft Fadakiya velvet sheet. Usama bin Zaid was his companion rider, and he was going to pay a visit to Sa'd bin Ubada (who was sick) at the dwelling place of Bani Al-Harith bin Al-Khazraj, and this incident happened before the battle of Badr. The Prophet (ﷺ) passed by a gathering in which there were Muslims and pagan idolators and Jews, and among them there was `Abdullah bin Ubai bin Salul, and there was `Abdullah bin Rawaha too. When a cloud of dust raised by the animal covered that gathering, `Abdullah bin Ubai covered his nose with his Rida (sheet) and said (to the Prophet), "Don't cover us with dust." The Prophet (ﷺ) greeted them and then stopped, dismounted and invited them to Allah (i.e., to embrace Islam) and also recited to them the Holy Qur'an. `Abdullah bin Ubai' bin Salul said, "O man! There is nothing better than what you say, if what you say is the truth. So do not trouble us in our gatherings. Go back to your mount (or house,) and if anyone of us comes to you, tell (your tales) to him." On that `Abdullah bin Rawaha said, "(O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)!) Come to us and bring it(what you want to say) in our gatherings, for we love that." So the

*Muslims, the pagans and the Jews started quarreling till they were about to fight and clash with one another. The Prophet (ﷺ) kept on quietening them (till they all became quiet). He then rode his animal, and proceeded till he entered upon Sa`d bin 'Ubada, he said, "O Sa`d, didn't you hear what Abu Habbab said? (He meant `Abdullah bin Ubai). He said so-and-so." Sa`d bin 'Ubada said, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! Excuse and forgive him, for by Allah, Allah has given you what He has given you. The people of this town decided to crown him (as their chief) and make him their king. But when Allah prevented that with the Truth which He had given you, it choked him, and that was what made him behave in the way you saw him behaving." So the Prophet excused him.*⁶⁵

From the above incidents, we can identify the following points:-

- 1) The Prophet (ﷺ) greeted a mixed gathering, including Muslims, Jews and Idolators. This shows peace towards all community members.
- 2) There was hateful speech in Abdullah Bin Abi Salool's talk and actions. He covered his face and said "do flick dust on us and do not harm us in our gatherings."
- 3) An angry reaction from Abdullah Bin Rawahah when he said "you cheated in our gathering."
- 4) The occurrence of verbal insults from some members of the gathering.
- 5) This situation was instigated by some members of the gathering wanting to fight with each other. They started with verbal insults and this escalated to physical violence.
- 6) The intervention of the Prophet (ﷺ) at the right time by using words of calmness and having a calm attitude, although the insults were directed to himself.

Conclusion

Findings

After completing our research, we can see that The Prophet (ﷺ) gave a clear cure for hateful speech. This cure consists of two parts:-

- 1) Prevention – in order to protect members of the community from participating in such harmful acts by spreading the culture of love, tolerance, peace and forbidding harming others verbally, physically, financially or undermining them. This also controls the tool that can lead to hatred, which is the tongue. The Prophet (ﷺ) demonstrated that all Human Beings are descendants of Adam (AS), and as such all are equal.

The Prophet (ﷺ) showed that any attempt for hateful speech is a satanic act and encourages Muslims to quarrel with each other.

- 2) Procedures – the Prophet (ﷺ) also advised on the appropriate procedures in handling hateful speech after it has occurred. It is important to remember that the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) was very fragile as the Islamic State was newly introduced. He (ﷺ) reminded people that such actions is the work of ignorance, and advised not to react in a similar way, and to work towards calming the situation. He advised reconciliation between people, in order to calm feelings. This is especially important in the immediate aftermath.

Recommendations

- 1) It is important for all Muslims to commit themselves to the etiquettes of discussion and dialogue in social situations as presented in the Sunnah. This is especially important for those who are committed to Da'wah
- 2) To explore this topic further, and to analyse how the Prophet (ﷺ) dealt with hateful speech.
- 3) Members of Parliament and Scholars must consider legislating certain laws that prevent hateful speech

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علاج خطاب الكراهية في السنة النبوية

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ملخص

المتابع لأوضاع المجتمعات الإسلامية يرى اتساع خطاب الكراهية ولا سيما على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي، مما يؤثر على السلم المجتمعي، وهذا مخالف للهدى النبوي الذي جاء بخطاب المحبة ونشر ثقافة السلام، فتناول الباحثان موضوع علاج خطاب الكراهية من منظور السنة النبوية على المستوى الوقائي والإجرائي، فالسنة تحرم الاعتداء على الآخرين لفظياً وجسدياً ومالياً وتمنع احتقارهم، وتحث على حفظ اللسان الذي يمثل الأداة الأخطر لخطاب الكراهية والتحريض، وكذلك فإن الرفق في التعامل مع الآخر منهجاً إسلامياً فالمؤمن يألف ويؤلف رفيق بمن حوله. وبعد وقوع خطاب الكراهية، كانت حكمة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم اتباع العلاج الأمثل بحسب الموقف، وخاصة في الدولة الناشئة التي تتأثر بشكل واضح من خطاب الكراهية، ودعت للإصلاح والتهدئة عند ممارسة البعض لخطاب الكراهية للقضاء عليه في مهده، ومنع تطوره، وسد ذرائعه، والرد على خطاب الكراهية بنقيضه. وأوصى الباحثان بتطبيق العلاج النبوي للحد من خطاب الكراهية.

الكلمات الدالة: علاج، النبي، خطاب، الكراهية.

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