

'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1

Deliver from me, even though it may be one verse.

2

Relate what you hear from the Children of Israel; there is no harm.

3

Whoever attributes to me something that I have not said shall take his place in the Fire.<sup>(1)</sup>

#### From the Qur'an

- ﴿Say: 'This is my way. I call [all mankind] to God on the basis of sure knowledge, I and all those who follow me. Limitless is God in His glory. I am not one of those who associate partners with Him'.﴾ (12: 108)
- ﴿Do not say – for any false thing you may utter with your tongues – that 'This is lawful and this is forbidden', so as to attribute your lying inventions to God. Indeed those who attribute their lying inventions to God will never be successful.﴾ (16: 116)
- ﴿Call people to the path of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the most kindly manner. Your Lord knows best who strays from His path and who are rightly guided.﴾ (16: 125)
- ﴿Who speaks better than he who calls people to God, does what is right, and says, 'I am one of those who have surrendered themselves to God?'﴾ (41: 33)

#### The Narrator

The Prophet urged his community to spread the knowledge of his message, and he permitted them to relate the stories of the Children of Israel. He forbade attributing to him what he had not said, stating that whoever deliberately did so was certain to be in Hell.

#### Summary

Abu Muhammad – or as some reports put it Abu 'Abd al-Raḥmān – 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ ibn Wā'il belonged to the Sahn branch of the Quraysh tribe. He learnt writing before the days of Islam, and he mastered the Syriac language. He embraced Islam long before his father. He used to fast often and spend much of his nights in voluntary worship. He died in Year 65 AH 685 CE.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3461.



# Message and Meaning



**1** The Prophet (peace be upon him) gives this order to the Muslim community to deliver his message and code of law, as it is within their ability and means. If a Muslim can only deliver one verse which he has learnt and understood, or an authentic hadith, then he should do so, and he is deemed to have done his duty.

The fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) says, 'even one verse', makes clear that it is not a condition that an advocate of Islam should be a scholar of Islamic Studies. A Muslim calls on people to believe according to his knowledge, provided that he understands what he delivers and makes sure that the hadith he is quoting is authentic and what he is telling people is correct.

This does not mean that he may say anything to all people. Advocacy of Islam requires wisdom and insight. God says in the Qur'an: Say: 'This is my way. I call [all mankind] to God on the basis of sure knowledge, I and all those who follow me'. (12: 108) It is important to understand the condition and understanding of the person being addressed. He should be given only what is easy for him to understand; otherwise, it may be confusing for him. 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib said: 'Speak to people according to their knowledge. Would you like that falsehood may be attributed to God and His Messenger?'<sup>(1)</sup>



**2** The Prophet (peace be upon him) then states that it is permissible to relate stories learnt from the Children of Israel. There is no harm in reporting these stories.

However, this is limited to what we are certain of being correct or possible of their stories. What we suspect to be false may not be related.



**3** The Prophet makes clear that it is strictly forbidden to attribute to him what he has not said. To do so deliberately earns severe punishment in Hell.

False attribution to the Prophet is more strictly forbidden than doing the same to others. This is due to the fact that such false attribution is indeed a false claim attached to God and His faith. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not speak of his own fancy. Therefore, when a pretender makes a false statement and attributes it to the Prophet, then he is inventing by whim a legislation of permissibility or prohibition. God says: 'Do not say – for any false thing you may utter with your tongues – that 'This is lawful and this is forbidden', so as to attribute your lying inventions to God. Indeed those who attribute their lying inventions to God will never be successful'. (16: 116)

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 127.



# Implementation

1

Every Muslim should try to be one who advocates belief in God. Such advocates are the best of people. God says about them: 'Who speaks better than he who calls people to God, does what is right, and says, 'I am one of those who have surrendered themselves to God?' (41: 33)

2

Advocacy of Islam is a duty of all Muslims, each according to their own ability. A person who is able to spread knowledge and deliver the message of Islam should do so. Otherwise, a person should do such advocacy by his good manners and values, and by explaining what type of life a Muslim should lead, publicly and privately.

3

Advocacy of Islam is easy for everyone. It is not a condition that an advocate should be a scholar who has spent years in Islamic studies. Everyone may do according to their own ability. God does not require anyone to do more than they are able to undertake.

4

Modern technology has made Islamic advocacy easier and simpler. A Muslim is able to search for the meaning of any Qur'anic verse and look it up in several books. He can establish the authenticity of a hadith very easily. With a mouse click, he can send verses, hadiths, recorded message, videos and other information to many people.

5

Is it not enough for anyone that he receives a reward that is equivalent to the rewards of everyone who follows his advice. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever advocates right guidance earns the same reward as the reward of those who follow him, without diminishing their reward in any way'.<sup>(1)</sup> He also said: 'By God, if God guides one single person through you, this is better for you than the best this world can offer'.<sup>(2)</sup>

6

Scholars and advocates who are in charge of Islamic advocacy, and those of experience who are ready to give what they can and devote their time to the spread of the message of Islam should explain to people that they must fulfil their own duty of advocacy. They should explain to them that they should get involved in the various aspects of Islamic advocacy, encouraging them to do what they can. They should further guide everyone to do what they can manage best, using all their talents and resources. By doing so, they open before people the different fields in which they can be involved.

7

Happy is the one who guides others to what is good and shows them the way to it. Wretched indeed is the one who promotes evil and encourages others to do it.

8

It is permissible to report stories and events that relate to the Children of Israel, provided that the reporter ascertains that they are true and explains to his audience that what he is mentioning is derived from their history. Thus, his audience will not be under the impression that these are absolutely true.

1 Related by Muslim, 2674.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 2942; Muslim, 2406.

9

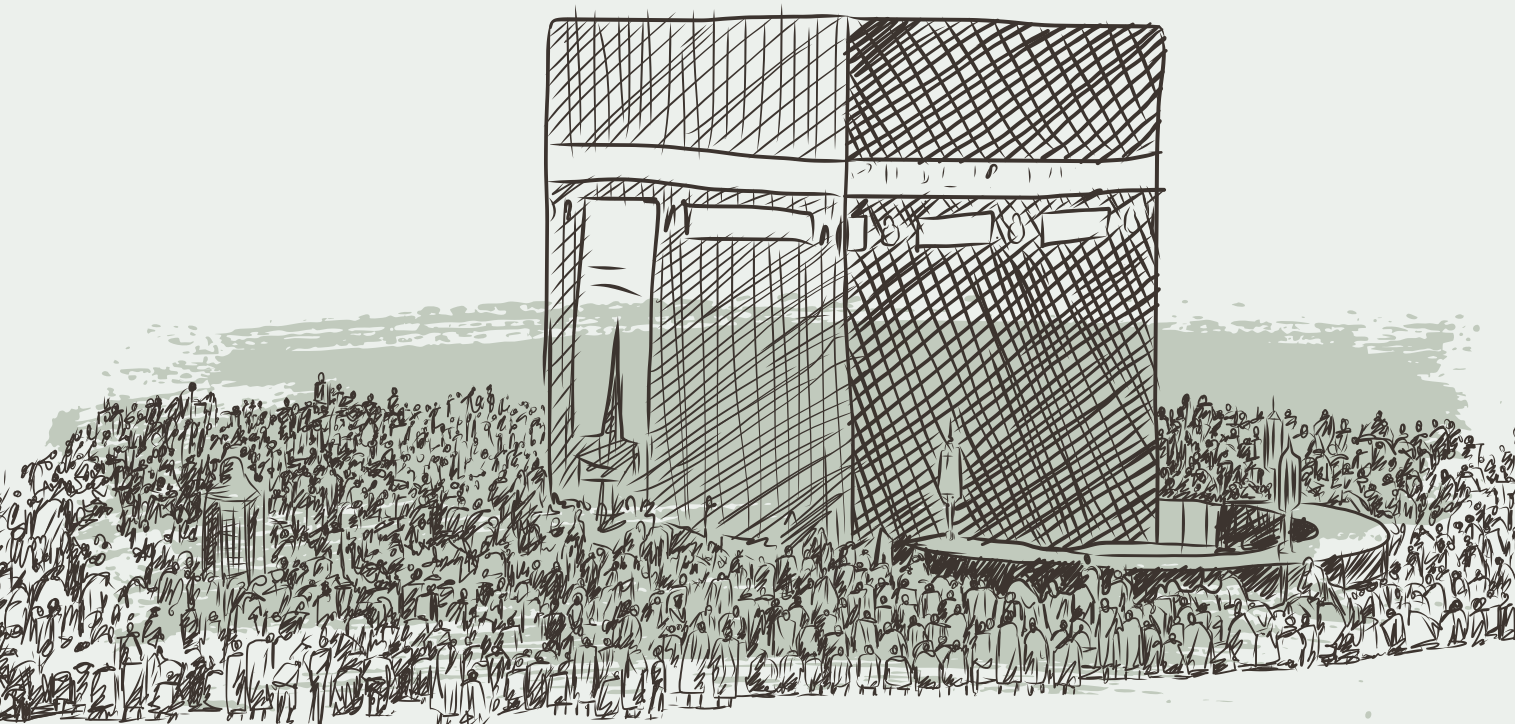
Everyone must beware of false attribution to the Prophet, whether deliberately or unwittingly. One must not relate a hadith unless one is absolutely certain that it is authentic. Otherwise, he may be one of those attributing falsehood to the Prophet.

10

To ignorantly speak about the religion of Islam, permitting what God has forbidden and forbidding what He has made lawful is one form of false attribution to God's Messenger (peace be upon him).

11

Another form of false attribution to the Prophet (peace be upon him) is to deliberately attribute to scholars something they did not say. A person may be told that a particular scholar says that a particular matter is permissible. He will then assume that the scholar must have expressed this on the basis of clear knowledge. As such, he will consider it as part of the religion. To do this is far more serious than saying a simple falsehood.<sup>(1)</sup>



1 Ibn Uthaymin, *Sharḥ Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, Vol. 5, p. 431.

