

RUMOUR HAS IT

Rumour is the oldest media in the world and has evolved with the advancement of societies.

Along the way in its development it became recognized as a tool for propaganda, fake news, yellow journalism and tabloid media. Ultimately in this digital age, it gave rise to specialized practitioners such as lobbyists, spin doctors and image consultants amongst others who harnessed this power of shaping opinion.

WHAT IS A RUMOUR?

It is anonymous information of doubtful veracity and uncertainty that people are currently talking about and is always harmful. It is known by many names such as **“gossip, chit-chat, tittle-tattle, it is said, hearsay, bush telegraph, whisperings, the buzz, the word in the street, heard it through the grapevine”** and the famous one employed by a notorious serial-slandering tabloid, **“a brother/sister wrote.”**

Rumours can begin anywhere at any time. All it needs is an ear to a mouth and it's on its way. It gets add-on information tacked on to it along the way. It's the beginning of untold harm to relationships.

Few are immune to creating and perpetuating rumours. Do you know of anyone that never started or listened to a rumour?

Islam has very comprehensive rules and guidelines of conduct in the Noble Quraan and as exemplified by His Messenger, our Leader the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him). Almighty Allah explains the problem as well as the solution in the following Quraanic verse: **“O you who believe! If a transgressor brings you news, verify it lest you harm a people in ignorance. You will then be regretful about what you did.”** (Chapter 49, Verse 6)

The teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also records very clearly advice in these matters. Al-Imaam Muslim narrated that

Hafs ibn `Asim said: Rasulullah *sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam* said: **“It is sufficient for a person to be called a liar if he conveys all that he hears”.** (Muslim)

The very technology where you can transfer funds from your mobile phone, get an Uber to your door in minutes, have your food delivered etc. is also one that has stripped the media sectors domain of responsibility for veracity and cross-check before publication. Now it's a case of mindless forwarding without the checks.

As the country's leading Halaal authority, SANHA's National Halaal Helpline receives voice, email and digital queries daily. It has processed an astounding 250 000 calls since its inception 17 years ago. Many of the calls debunk rumours that concern our callers.

Rumours begin with intensity and lose momentum in a matter of weeks and occasionally even a few months. Sometimes they resurface years later with the product names and places changed but with similar text. Surprisingly, there are some rumours that endure over the ages and continuously resurface to create the whole cycle all over again.

Here are the three most popular rumours based on the thousands of queries we have received over the years and still continue to this day.

1. HISTORY OF PIG FAT BY DR AMJAD KHAN

http://www.themajlis.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=444:history-pig-fat&catid=34:majlis-articles&Itemid=27

An outrageous fabrication of a plot by western countries to chemically process pig fat and the creation of the E-Numbers code for export to Muslim countries.

This is hogwash and an international hoax of epic proportions. This story has been around for about 30 years. There is no Dr Amjad Khan. Hundreds of queries received is testimony that people from all walks of life have been fooled and still are by forwarding this story.

2. MOUNTAIN DEW, PEPSI AND FANTA APPLE CONTAIN PIG FAT

This rumour first surfaced in 2011. It quoted an unknown doctor in the USA informing his hosts over dinner that the Mountain Dew beverage that he was being served was Haraam as it contained pig fat in its yellow colouring. Since then the query has become an urban myth and has moved internationally in the borderless cyber world. The doctor now appears in stories in places like Cape Town and the rumour also got upgraded to include Pepsi and Fanta Apple flavor. To this day there is no credible evidence but the fabrication continues with the help of the ever ready keyboard rumour-mongers.

3. USE OF PORK INGREDIENTS BY MCDONALDS AND ALBANY BAKERY

This originated in 2011 from the USA. LM10, a pork ingredient was used in mayonnaise in McDonalds in Florida. As with the nature of rumours and the add-

on factor, this then got extended to include burger buns, bread and patties. The falsehood gained traction in other countries such as Malaysia, the GCC countries and South Africa with a twist in the tale. Here it was stated that in addition to McDonalds where two Halaal certifiers withdrew their certification, the ingredient was also used in Albany breads.

LM 10 is a synthetic chemical (6-fluoro-3-[(E)-2-(1H-1, 2, 3, 4-tetrazol-5-yl)ethenyl]-1H-indole) that was developed as a potential anticancer drug which is still under research, is not found in nature and has no application in the food industry. Even after investigations by the Governments of Malaysia and the GCC States, the rumour is still sustained by mindless forwarders.

WARNING

Why do Satan's abominable work and compound the sin by ensnaring fellow Muslims to be your unwitting partners. The reliance on the disclaimer of *"forwarded as received"* is a mindless innovation that lulls one into a false sense of security. Muaz bin Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) asked the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) if we would be held to task for the things that we say, he replied, *"Does anything cast people on their faces into Hellfire, more than the harvests of their tongues?"* (Ahmad, Tirmizi)

RUMOURS ARE CARRIED BY HATERS, SPREAD BY FOOLS AND ACCEPTED BY IDIOTS. DON'T DO IT!

Any queries pertaining to the above or any other aspect of Halaal may be referred to our offices

Halaal Helpline 0861 786 111