

Signs of a hypocrite: Lying

Hadīth #1282:

Narrated Abū Hurayrah:

Allāh's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) 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." (Agreed upon)

[Al-Bukhāri and Muslim reported the hadīth of Abdullāh ibn Umar with this addition: "and when he quarrels, he abuses."]

Types of hypocrites:

There are *two* kinds of a hypocrite:

1) *In actions*: If someone is of this kind, he is not considered a kāfir.

2) *In faith*: Someone who falls under this category is a kāfir.

Abdullāh bin Salul was the biggest hypocrite in Madīnah. He betrayed the Muslims and the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) many times. He was a hypocrite in faith and thus, he was a kāfir.

A person who has one of the four characteristics of a hypocrite is not an absolute hypocrite, but has traits of hypocrite; thus, he is a hypocrite in actions.

A person who commits the 4 acts mentioned in the hadith above, continually and habitually, is considered out-and-out hypocrite. Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr said that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, "The 4 aspects of a hypocrite, whoever has all these qualities in them, is purely a munāfiq (hypocrite). And whoever has one, has an aspect of nifāq (hypocrisy) until he leaves it." [Bukhāri & Muslim]

"when he speaks, he lies..."

Lying

"Oh you who believe! Be afraid of Allah, and be with those who are true (in words and deeds)." [9:119]

"Allah guides not him who is a liar and ungrateful." [39:3]

Abdullāh narrated the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

“Truthfulness leads to al-Birr (righteousness) and al-Birr (righteousness) leads to paradise. And a man keeps on telling the truth until he becomes a truthful person. Falsehood leads to Al-Fujūr (wickedness-evil-doing), and al-Fujūr leads to the hell fire, and a man keeps on telling lies until he is written as a liar before Allāh.” [Sahīh Al-Bukhāri]

Kinds of Lies:

a) Lying upon Allāh:

“On the Day of Judgment you will see those who told lies against Allah; their faces will be turned black...” [39:60]

b) Attributing to Allāh a son or partner:

“Further that He may warn those (also) who say "Allah hath begotten a son"...what they say is nothing but falsehood!” [18:4-5]

c) Claiming one is a messenger of Allāh:

“Who can be more wicked than one who invents a lie against Allah or said "I have received inspiration" when he has received none...” [6:93]

d) Speaking about Allāh without knowledge:

“Or is that you say of Allah what you do not know?” [2:80]

e) Lying upon the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) - Fabricating hadīth:

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

“He who lies upon me should reserve his seat in Hell-fire.” [Bukhāri]

f) Lying on the Muslim believers.

g) Spreading lies about your brother.

h) Talking behind someone's back:

- talking about someone when it is a lie.
- talking about someone and what is said is true.

General lies -

Lies people overlook:

1) *Someone who lies desiring attention:* For example, if a father tells his son if he comes to him, he will give \$5. If the child comes to the father and the father does not give him the money he promised him, then that is *harām*, and is considered a lie. A mother was calling her child by enticing him that she will give him something, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was sitting there and he warned her that if she wouldn't give it to him, then she would be a liar.

2) *Spreading anything one hears:* The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said it is sufficient for a man to be considered a liar if he talks about everything he hears [Muslim].

3) *When one tells a joke that is a lie:* The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, "Woe to the person who tells lies as jokes to make people laugh. Woe to him, Woe to him!"

He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) also said, "I guarantee a palace in the middle of heaven to the one who doesn't lie in telling jokes."

When the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to joke, it was ALWAYS the truth.

Lies that people do not consider lies:

Exaggeration: For example when someone says, 'I called you a million times; when he actually called only once or twice. It is a lie according to most scholars.

Desiring and lying: When someone desires something but says one does not desire: One time 'Āishah had some women at her house. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) offered food to her and the women. They declined out of shyness even though they wanted to eat. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) exclaimed, "Hungry and liars! Don't combine lying with being hungry."

Lying and claiming 'Allāh is my witness': When one says he did something and then says, "Allāh is my witness," when he actually did not do what he claimed: This is a lie and is *harām* because the person is attributing ignorance to Allāh. Doesn't Allāh know what he did? This is an issue with the person's belief about Allāh's capability; therefore, the person who does this is considered a *KĀFIR*.

Changing last name: When one attributes his lineage to someone other than his biological father; meaning, one changes his last name to someone else's. This is common when women get married and change their last name to their husband's. This is not only a lie but also an imitation of Western culture.

What the Sahabāh and the Tabi'ī used to think about lies:

- Al-Rabi ibn Khuthaym was astray, but suddenly he changed and became well known for his piety and later became a scholar. He had a son who was ill. One day, he and his sister went to visit his sick son. When his sister walked in the room, she said to sick boy, "How are you, my son?" Al-Rabi ibn Khuthaym said to her, "Do not lie. Say my nephew, not my son."

- Mālik ibn Dinar said whoever lies, Allāh will cut his tongue with scissors in hell. His tongue will be made to grow back again, and this process will be repeated over and over.

- 'Umar said, "Stay with the truth even if it will kill you." At another place, he said, "For truthfulness to put me in a lower position is more beloved to me than to say a lie and acquire a higher position."

Types of Lies:

كذب (Kadhaab) means a regular lie.

فرية (Faryah) means a huge lie and is a bigger lie than Kadhaab.

How to treat lying:

- One who recognises the severe punishment of Allāh will stop this bad deed (does one want to be known as a liar in the sight of Allāh?).

- Take responsibility for his actions.

- Leave gatherings of vain talk and lies.

- Know that every time someone utters a word, Allāh has it recorded.

- Keep in mind that lying is wicked and wickedness leads to hell.

- Raise children not to lie.

- Lead by example (do not lie, especially in front of children).

- Instill fear of Allāh in them.

- When a child makes a mistake and comes with the truth, ease up on the consequence and point out that the truth was said.

If a Muslim faces a difficult situation where he needs to say what is against the truth in order to protect himself or someone who is innocent, or to save himself from serious trouble, is there a way for him to escape the situation without lying or falling into sin?

Yes, there is a legal way and a permissible escape that one can make use of if necessary. It is equivocation or indirectness in speech. Imām al-Bukhāri (رحمه الله) entitled a chapter of his Sahīh: "Indirect speech is a safe way to avoid a lie". [Sahīh al-Bukhāri, Kitāb al-Adab (Book of Manners), Chapter 116].

- Equivocation means saying something which has a closer meaning that the hearer will understand, but it also has a remote meaning which is what is actually meant and is linguistically correct. The condition for this is that whatever is said should not present a truth as falsity and vice versa. (This is when someone says something but it's not what is meant in one's heart).

Ibrahim An-Nakhai' was a scholar and people used to come to his house frequently. He liked to study and preferred not to be bothered by people; so he told his wife not to tell people where he was. When people came to his door asking where he was, she would reply, "Go look for him in the masjid." (She did not lie and say he wasn't there, but rather just suggested a place to look for him).

- When an old woman came to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), he told her that old women will not enter paradise. He said this to mean that everyone will be young in heaven and not old, and not that she will not enter heaven.

- There was once another man who liked to study and didn't want to be bothered. He told his wife when people come and ask for me, point your finger to the peephole, and say, "Wallāhi, he is not here." (meaning, he is not inside the peephole, so it is not a lie).

- Ibrahim (عليه السلام) did tawriya (creative lying) on 3 different occasions. Since he did this, he will not be allowed to do intercession on the Day of Judgement. When people run to him on that day, pleading for him to intercede, he will reply because he did tawriya, he will not be able to intercede for people and will send them to Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). It is suggested by scholars that tawriya was forbidden in Ibrahim's legislation, but not in the Prophet's.

Abū Hurayrah narrated that Ibrahim (عليه السلام) did not tell a lie except on three occasions: *twice* for the sake of Allāh (Exalted and Almighty) when he said: "I am sick," when his people were holding a festival in honour of their gods, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) excused himself by saying he was sick [37:89] and when he said: "(I have not done this but) the big idol has done it." The *third* was while Ibrahim (عليه السلام) and Sarah were on a journey. They passed through the territory of a tyrant. It was known that this tyrant would take married women. So when Ibrahim (عليه السلام) was asked who Sarah was, he replied his sister (meaning his sister in Islām, since all Muslims are brothers and sisters, coming from the same parents).

The following are examples of such statements used by the Salaf and early Imāms:

- Imām Sufyan Al-Thawri was brought to the Khalīfah al-Mahdi, who liked him, but when he wanted to leave, the Khalīfah told him he had to stay. Al-Thawri swore that he would come back. He then went out, leaving his shoes at the door. After some time he came back, took his shoes and went away. The Khalīfah asked about him, and was told that he had sworn to come back, so he had come back and taken his shoes.

- Imām Ahmad was in his house, and some of his students, including al-Mirwadhi, were with him. Someone came along, asking for al-Mirwadhi from outside the house, but Imām Ahmad did not want him to go out, so he said: "Al-Mirwadhi is not here, what would he be doing here?" whilst putting his finger in the palm of his other hand, and the person outside could not see what he was doing.

[Collected by Imām Ibn al-Qayyim in his book Ighaathat al-Lahfaan].

Other examples of equivocation or indirectness in speech include the following:

- If someone asks you whether you have seen so-and-so, and you are afraid that if you tell the questioner about him this would lead to harm, you can say “ma ra’aytuhu”, meaning that you have not cut his lung, because this is a correct meaning in Arabic [“ma ra’aytuhu” usually means “I have not seen him,” but can also mean “I have not cut his lung”]; or you could deny having seen him, referring in your heart to a specific time and place where you have not seen him.

- If someone asks you to swear an oath that you will never speak to so-and-so, you could say, “Wallāhi lan ukallumahu”, meaning that you will not wound him, because “kalām” can also mean “wound” in Arabic [as well as “speech”].

- Similarly, if a person is forced to utter words of kufr and is told to deny Allāh, it is permissible for him to say “Kafartu bi’l-laahi”, meaning “I denounce the playboy” [which sounds the same as the phrase meaning “I deny Allāh.”]

[Ighaathat al-Lahfaan by Ibn al-Qayyim, 1/381 ff., 2/106-107. See also the section on equivocation (ma’aareed) in Al-Adaab al-Shar’iyyah by Ibn Muflih, 1/14].

Ruling regarding tawriya (creative lying):

One should be cautious that the use of such statements is restricted only to situations of great difficulty, otherwise:

- Excessive use of it may lead to lying.

- One may lose good friends, because they would always be in doubt as to what is meant.

- If the person to whom such a statement is given comes to know that the reality was different from what he was told, and he was not aware that the person was engaging in deliberate ambiguity or equivocation, he would consider that person to be a liar. This goes against the principle of protecting one’s honour by not giving people cause to doubt one’s integrity.

- The person who uses such a technique frequently may become proud of his ability to take advantage of people.

Imām Nawawi said it is makrūh. Ibn Abbas said it is permissible under cases of necessity. Others (like ‘Umar) say it can be used only when one fears he will be oppressed. The best opinion is it is permissible only under the cases of necessity.

Permissibility of Lying:

Lying to one’s wife: To avoid confrontation (only in halal matters. One can’t partake in haram and lie. If he does so, then it is counted against him as a lie and does not fall under this category) as a compliment to his wife, or a wife to her husband.

During times of war: For example, if there is an army far away and the group wants to meet the enemy. They tell the people around them they are going somewhere else, when in actuality they are heading towards the enemy.

Reconciliation: When one wants to unify or reconcile two Muslims. One can go to one party and say, “so and so says these good things about you, or really respects you, etc.”

The hadīth supporting this: “He is not a liar he who unites two.” [Bukhāri]

- For one to be a good Muslim or caller to Islām, they must be a truthful person.

The effects of lies on the Day of Judgment:

- Allāh blackens the faces of liars.

- If someone is truthful, Allāh will boost them in front of others on the Day of Judgment.

- If someone is truthful, Allāh will ask about their truthfulness as if to brag in front of the others (to make the truthful person look good).

Reasons why people lie:

- To stay away from trouble.

- Fear of being exposed.

- To obtain a benefit (position, job, prestige, etc).

- To harm others, hasad (envy).

- As a bad habit.

- The person who lies has no fear of Allāh.

- In order to entertain others.

Ka'b ibn Mālik said:

The Muslims and the Rasūl (صلى الله عليه وسلم) went out to Tabūk for a battle against the kuffār. Tabūk was very far away, and the trip was long and tiresome. Some of the hypocrites and three of the Muslims stayed

behind. When the Rasūl and his companions came back from Tabūk, the hypocrites started to tell the Rasūl their excuses as to why they had not accompanied the Rasūl in the battle. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) pardoned them and send them off. When كعب بن مالك came to the Rasūl (صلى الله عليه وسلم) he decided to tell the truth and say that he had decided just not to fight. After the Rasūl heard this, he sent him and two others away (since they also had no excuse, and told the truth). It was a month of hardship for these three men, since none of the Sahābah or Rasūl would talk to them, not even to say Salām. Finally, Allāh revealed Ayāhs 118-119 in Sūrat Tawbah, and granted them forgiveness.

Types of truthfulness:

Truthfulness in the heart (being truthful with Allāh): This is when someone changes his life to an 'Ibadāh and everything is for the sake of Allāh.

Truthfulness in the tongue: The Prophet used to always make du'ā:

اللهم اني اسالك لسانا صادقا

“Oh Allah, I ask you a truthful tongue (to always speak the truth)”

Truthfulness in actions:

Ameer bin Hammam gave commitment to the Rasūl (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that he would meet Allāh as a martyr and pointed to his forehead and neck where the arrow would kill him. During the battle of Bādr, he died exactly the way he described. When another Sahābah saw his body, he said exactly where عمير بن حمام had pointed, is where he was shot with an arrow. The Rasūl replied by saying:

'He was truthful (and sincerely asked for it) so Allāh granted it to him.'

Another example was of Abdullāh bin Jahsh. There is an unforgettable story involving Abdullāh ibn Jahsh and his friend Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqas concerning an incident that took place during the Battle of Uhūd. Let us leave Sa'd to tell the story:

"During the battle, Abdullāh came to me and said, "Aren't you making a du'ā to Allāh?" "Yes," said I. So we moved aside and I prayed, "O Lord, when I meet the enemy, let me meet a man of enormous strength and fury. Then grant me victory over him that I might kill him and acquire spoils from him." To this my prayer, Abdullāh said 'Āmīn' and then he prayed: "Let me meet a man of great standing and enormous fury. I shall fight him for Your sake, O Lord, and he shall fight me. He shall take me and cut off my nose and ears and when I meet You tomorrow you will say, 'For what were your nose and ear cut off?' And I would reply, 'For Your sake and for the sake of Your Prophet.' And then You would say, 'You have spoken the truth...'" Sa'd continues the story: The prayer of Abdullāh ibn Jahsh was better than mine. I saw him at the end of the day. He was killed and mutilated, and in fact his nose and his ear were hung on a tree with a thread." Allāh responded to the prayer of Abdullāh ibn Jahsh and blessed him with martyrdom as He blessed his uncle, the Leader of Martyrs, Hamzah ibn Abdul-Muttālib. The noble Prophet buried them together in a single grave. His pure tears watered the earth and the earth was anointed with the fragrance of martyrdom.

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said a trait a Muslim will never have is lying. Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was asked if a Muslim could ever commit adultery, he said yes; however, when he was asked if a Muslim could lie, he said no.

(As part of a longer hadīth) It was narrated by Samra ibn Jundab, the Prophet said, "I saw (in a dream), two men came to me." Then the Prophet narrated the story (saying): "They said: The person, the one whose cheek you saw being torn away (from the mouth to the ear) was a liar and used to tell lies and the people would report those lies on his authority till they spread all over the world. So he will be punished like that until the Day of Resurrection." [Bukhāri]

~ An explanation from Bulugh al-Maram by Shaykh Ahmad Musa Jibrīl (حفظه الله).
[Transcribed]