

YAQeen INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC RESEARCH

40 HADITHS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

LECTURE NOTES

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YAQeen
Institute for Islamic Research

Chapter Twelve "Whoever deceives is not from us"

وعن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مر على صيرة طعام، فأدخل يده فيها، فنالت أصابعه بللا، فقال: " ما هذا يا صاحب الطعام؟" قال أصابته السماء يا رسول الله، قال: " أفلا جعلته فوق الطعام حتى يراه الناس! من غشنا فليس منا"

Abu Huraira (ra) said, The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) happened to pass by a heap of corn. He thrust his hand in it and his fingers felt wetness. He said to the owner of that heap of corn, "What is this?" He replied: "O Messenger of Allah! These have been drenched by rainfall." He remarked, "Why did you not place it on top so that the people might see it? Whoever deceives is not of us."

In another version of this narration he (ﷺ) said, "Whoever deceives is not from me" (i.e., not from the ummah of Rasool-Allah (ﷺ)). This doesn't mean they are not Muslim, but that they are not behaving like followers of the Prophet (ﷺ) should behave.

How can you claim to be committed to the Prophet (ﷺ) and to his ummah if you are cheating the very people you claim to support? You do not have a true allegiance to people if you are trying to cheat them. There are numerous *ahadith* to this effect. This particular one is narrated in both Bukhari and Muslim.

Abu Huraira (ra) narrated that Rasool-Allah (ﷺ) told us that once there was a man who used to sell wine. He would dilute it with water, thereby cheating people. He had a monkey and they went on a ship. The monkey went on top of the ship's deck carrying with him all the money the man had made. He then proceeded to throw one coin in the ship and one in the sea until he cut his money in half. [Ahmed] The monkey was being used by Allah to purify this man's wealth.

At-Tabaraani narrated that Jareer ibn 'Abd-Allaah al-Bajali (may Allah be pleased with him) asked his freed slave to buy a horse for him. So he bought him a horse for three hundred dirhams, and he brought the horse and its owner to him so that he could pay him. Jareer said to the owner of the horse, "Your horse is worth more than three hundred dirhams. Will you sell it for four hundred dirhams?" He said, "Yes, O Abu 'Abd-Allah." Then he said, "Your horse is worth more than four hundred dirhams. Will you sell it for five hundred dirhams?" He kept increasing it by one hundred each time, with the owner agreeing and Jareer saying, "Your horse is worth more than that," until he reached eight hundred, for which price he bought it. And he said concerning that, "I gave my oath of

allegiance (*bay'ah*) to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that I would be sincere towards every Muslim.”

Jareer (ra) didn't have to keep increasing the price of the horse, but it was because of his piety and sincerity and fear of cheating another believer that he asked for the price to be increased.

Imam Abu Hanifa was not only the founder of one of the four major schools of law, he was also known as one of the most wealthy and honest merchants in the marketplaces of Madinah. He maintained his business even after he became a scholar and he would buy his students clothes so they would look dignified. Honesty in the marketplace often isn't seen as positive as it usually leads to losing out on business. However, in the case of Abu Hanifa (ra) people would buy from him because of his honesty and dishonest merchants ended up being run out of business by him.

Three stories about Imam Abu Hanifa (ra):

1. Abu Hanifa once had a woman come to him and try to sell him something. He said how much? She said 100, he said no, it's worth more. So she said 200? 300? 400? To which he kept replying that it's worth more than that. He then called a man and asked him how much he thought it was worth. He said 500 after which Imam Abu Hanifa was pleased and bought the item.
2. Imam Abu Hanifa stayed in business even after he became an *aalim* (scholar) in Islam and got a partner by the name of Hafs Ibn Abdulrahman. Once he had a cloth with a defect in it so he told Hafs to make sure you show this defect to any potential customer before selling it. Hafs forgot to do this when a customer came and sold the cloth without showing the defect. Abu Hanifa came back and didn't see the garment so he asked Hafs if he had told the customer about the defect, and he said, “I forgot.” Abu Hanifa said how much did you sell it for? He said about 500 dirhams. Abu Hanifa then gave the whole day's profits in charity and broke his partnership with Hafs. And then he told his son to go find the customer so they could inform them of the defect.
3. Hammad, the son of Abu Hanifa, was once told to get an item off of the shelf for a customer. As he retrieved the item he said “*salAllahu alayhi wa salaam*,” sending *salawat* upon the Prophet but doing so in a way that was praising the item in front of the customer. Abu Hanifa said, “لقد مدحت لبيع له ولا شرا” Indeed upon him (Muhammad ﷺ) is peace and blessings but you have praised the garment so I am not selling it.” Hammad, by praising the garment, had raised the value of the garment. Abu Hanifa did not want to take advantage of the customer who may have been led to believe the garment was something it was not. This illustrates the extremely high standards that Abu Hanifa held himself to.

All of these examples serve to inspire us, but at a practical level, what is considered injustice? Ibn Hajar said that it is injustice to sell something and to hide a defect that, had the person been aware of that defect, they would not have purchased it for the price they paid. In that instance hiding the defect becomes a form of deception and injustice.

يُنصَبُ لِكُلِّ غَادِرٍ لَوَاءٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَقَالُ هَذِهِ غَدْرَةُ فُلَانٍ

the person who betrayed so-and-so."
(Bukhari)

"Every traitor will have a banner on the Day of Resurrection and it will be said: This is

Treachery (الخبيانة) is a form of deception.

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: ثَلَاثَةٌ أَنَا خَصْمُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ: رَجُلٌ أُعْطِيَ بِي ثُمَّ غَدَرَ (1)، وَرَجُلٌ بَاعَ حُرًّا فَأَكَلَ ثَمَنَهُ، وَرَجُلٌ اسْتَأْجَرَ أَجِيرًا فَاسْتَوْفَى مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُعْطِهِ أَجْرَهُ

who gave his word and then betrayed it; a man who sold a free man into slavery and kept the money; and a man who hired someone, benefited from his labor, then did not pay his wages." (Bukhari)

"God said: There are three whom I will oppose on the Day of Resurrection: a man

What's the worst type of deception? Ibn Hajar says it is the deception done with regards to religion. Even saying "Wallah" about something that is not true is a form of religious deception.

Imam Al-Qurtubi wrote about people who would try to appear "religious" in the marketplace so that others would want to do business with them when in reality they were the opposite. A modern example of false appearance of the person and not just the product is when sellers on Amazon boost their ratings or write false reviews to make themselves and their products more desirable.

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " يَخْرُجُ فِي آخِرِ الزَّمَانِ رِجَالٌ يَخْتَلُونَ الدُّنْيَا بِالدِّينِ يَأْتِسُونَ لِلنَّاسِ جُلُودَ الضَّأْنِ مِنَ اللَّيْنِ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ أَحْلَى مِنَ السُّكَّرِ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ قُلُوبُ الدُّنَابِ يَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَبِي يَغْتَرُّونَ أَمْ عَلَيَّ يَجْتَرُّونَ فَبِي حَلْفَتٌ لِأَبْعَثَنَّ عَلَى أَوْلِيكَ مِنْهُمْ فَنَنْتَهُ تَدْعُ الْحَلِيمَ مِنْهُمْ حَيْرَانًا

Abu Huraira (ra) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Towards the end of time there will come men who will swindle with religion for materialistic ends, deceiving the people in soft skins of sheep, their tongues are sweeter than sugar but their hearts are the hearts of wolves. Allah [Mighty and Sublime is He] says: 'Is it me you try to delude or is it against me whom you conspire? I swear to send upon these people a *fitnah* that leaves them utterly devoid of reason."

Zahr Al-Shahree wrote a book by the name of *Al-Ghish* in which he discussed many different manifestations of deception.

Deception in business transactions

- Fruit-sellers who put a lot of leaves or papers in the bottom of the basket of fruit, and put the best fruit at the top, aiming to deceive the purchaser and cheat them by making them think that the basket is full from top to bottom, and that all the fruit is of the same quality as that which they see on the top.
- Merchants who take food oil and mix it with perfume and then put the mixture into perfume bottles and sell it for a low price.
- Some traders buy a product in a very light wrapper and then put it in a much thicker wrapper. Then they sell the wrapper and its contents, weighing the whole lot and charging for both the wrapper and the contents.
- Some traders do some light mending on clothes, and they sell them without explaining that they have been mended or used (i.e., selling used/old clothing as new).
- Some vendors and shopkeepers make their stores very dark by using colored lights, so that rough products will look smooth and ugly ones will look beautiful.
- Some goldsmiths mix gold with copper and the like, selling the product as if it was pure gold.
- Someone will take a refurbished product and sell it as if it's brand new.
- Some will turn back the odometer so that they can trick the buyer into thinking that the car has been used less than it actually has.
- Some of them, if they have a car that they want to sell, will praise it and swear by Allah that it is good, and they will fabricate reasons why they want to sell it.
- Some will do نجش (superficial bidding) on a product to create artificial inflation of the price. This is something that the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade.
- Another kind of cheating in selling is when butchers inflate the animal carcass that they want to sell so that the purchaser will think that it is more meat than it is actually is and can sell it for more than it's worth.

The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade any kind of deception that involves using exterior appearances to give false impressions, because deception eventually becomes a habit. Once a person learns this habit, they will begin to deceive in new ways, and in different realms/domains.

Deception in marriage

- Concealing some sickness or fault (not including past spiritual issues).
- Hiding debts/financial troubles before marriage. These things need to be disclosed.
- Some guardians marry off their female children without making the effort to find out enough about the suitor, his religious commitment, or what his attitude is like. This is a kind of cheating and wrongdoing against the daughter.
- Knowing someone was abusive to his prior wife and not telling the next potential wife when they come to ask you about that person. The Prophet (ﷺ) was entirely honest and dissuaded women from marrying people whose character he knew was flawed. He told them openly about their shortcomings.
- Similarly, it is *ghish* when people praise the suitor before the people whose daughter he wishes to marry, speaking of him in the highest terms and describing him as one who prays and is righteous, when they know he is not.
- Hiding other wives or "secret" second wives. There is a reason why the Prophet (ﷺ) said that the marriage should be publicized and made known to the community. It is to honor the rights of the wives and to make sure there is accountability.

Cheating in *naseeha* (sincere advice) or a *fatwa* (legal opinion/ruling)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said that anyone who gives a *fatwa* in ignorance, then the sin is upon him/her. Some people don't like to admit they don't know something so they give a misguided opinion anyway. To give the wrong advice intentionally to a person is a form of *ghish*.

قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
" مَنْ أَقْتِيَ بَعِيرٍ عَلِمَ كَانِ إِثْمُهُ عَلَى مَنْ أَقْتَاهُ " . زَادَ سُلَيْمَانُ
الْمَهْرِيُّ فِي حَدِيثِهِ " وَمَنْ أَشَارَ عَلَى أَخِيهِ بِأَمْرٍ يَعْْلَمُ أَنَّ الرُّشْدَ
فِي غَيْرِهِ فَقَدْ خَانَهُ " . وَهَذَا لَفْظُ سُلَيْمَانَ

Narrated Abu Huraira (ra): The Prophet (ﷺ) said: If anyone is given a legal decision ignorantly, the sin rests on the one who gave it. Sulayman al-Mahri added in his version: If anyone advises his brother, knowing that guidance lies in another direction, he has deceived him.

Maymoon ibn Mihran said that one day he saw a woman who he wanted to marry and so he asked a friend for advice regarding her. The friend had replied that she wasn't a good fit because he had seen her kiss a man. Maymun later found out that his friend had married that same woman. He went to him and asked why he married her when he said that he had seen her kiss a man? His friend said that the man she kissed was her father. Regardless of the fact that he was being literally truthful, his intention was to deceive

Maymoon, so that was a form of *ghish* in giving advice; it was not sincere advice, but in fact, misguidance.

مَا مِنْ وَالٍ يَلِي رَعِيَّةً مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، فَيَمُوتُ وَهُوَ غَائِبٌ لَهُمْ، إِلَّا
حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ .

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "If any ruler with the authority to govern Muslims dies while he is deceiving them, Allah will forbid Paradise for him."

Anytime you hear about a hadith that refers to those in governance/leadership you should think about it on a personal level and consider your relationship with those whom you have authority over.

Cheating on tests, job applications, etc.

- Can you exaggerate about your virtues when you apply for a position? Yes, so long as the exaggeration is within acceptable bounds. For example if you sincerely consider yourself responsible or a good leader it's permissible to slightly exaggerate as long as you're not cheating or being deceptive. It becomes impermissible when it departs from the truth. Lying or being deceptive in any way about education, qualifications, or characteristics that you know you don't have is not okay.
- Gray areas like this are governed by *taqwa* (piety.) So when Yusuf (as) presented himself for the post of minister in the government of al-Aziz he praised some of his own skills and didn't exaggerate or go too far but did what was acceptable in terms of talking about his own strengths.

Three major problems with deception:

1. You're not paying attention to the One Who is watching you. You feel that you've deceived the people, but fail to recognize that you can never deceive Allah. It represents a lack of God-consciousness and a significant weakness of faith (not realizing that you are being watched by Allah swt).
2. You are harming people by either selling a defective product or selling yourself in a deceptive manner.
3. You suffocate honesty through your deception so people doing honest business can't make a living. Through your actions you create and perpetuate a culture of cheating; others start to say, "Everyone does it," and then even more people do it.

This applies to all people, not just Muslims; i.e., it is not okay to deceive anyone, Muslim or not.