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## First step in purification of ethic after familiarity with alphabet of this science

### Tongue is interpreter of heart and key of personality

Correction of tongue and speech plays a role of major importance in moral discussions because tongue is the interpreter of heart, representative of intellect, key of man's personality, and the most important window to man's soul.

In the other words, what is depicted on the tablet of man's soul (including mental, emotional and sentimental events), first of all emerges on the tongue and within his speech. If in the past, physicians recognized a major part of moderation and unbalance of temperament through the condition of tongue, nowadays psychoanalysts mostly seek mental problems within the individuals' speech.

On these accounts, ethic scholars consider a special importance for correction of tongue and deem its correction as the sign of spirit's perfection and strengthening of prominent moral virtues and habits.

This reality is also stated in the traditions of the Prophet's House (A.S.) in short and interesting phrases. Two following phrases narrated respectively from Imam Ali (A.S.) and Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) is an evidence for this claim:

1- Man is hidden under his tongue. 1

«الْمَرْءُ مَخْبُوءٌ تَحْتَ لِسَانِهِ».

That is to say not only scientific personality, but also moral and social personality and in general his humanistic personality is under his tongue, and as long as he has not spoken, his fault and virtue is concealed.

2- Firmness and straightness of belief is not possible without firmness and straightness of heart, and the latter too will not exist without firmness and straightness of tongue.2

«لَا يَسْتَقِيمُ إِيمَانُ عَبْدٍ حَتَّى يَسْتَقِيمَ قَلْبُهُ، وَ لَا يَسْتَقِيمُ قَلْبُهُ حَتَّى يَسْتَقِيمَ لِسَانُهُ».

## Thirty great sins, which originate from tongue

The importance of correction of tongue is made clearer when we know that a large part of sins as a large part of good deeds are performed by tongue.

Ghazali has narrated twenty types of vices and sins for tongue as follows:

- 1- Speaking about the affairs not concerned with man.
- 2- Rant and babbling
- 3- Speaking about forbidden affairs like description of meetings of wine, gambling and unchaste women.
- 4- Dispute and fussing (caviling and objecting others for wrong purposes as humiliating them or one's own pedantry).
- 5- Enmity and affray and quarrel in utterance
- 6- Affectation in speech and trouble in rhythm and such like
- 7- Abuse and insult
- 8- Cursing
- 9- Profane singing and unsound sings
- 10- Indulgence in humour
- 11- Irony and mockery
- 12- Disclosing mysteries of others
- 13- Lie promise
- 14- Lie in speech and oath
- 15- Slander

16- Gossip

17- Hypocrisy in speech

18- Inappropriate eulogy

19- Negligence from speech's elegance and tools and mistakes thereof

20- Vulgar questions in respect to complicated issues related to beliefs, which cannot understand them

Surely, pests and vices of tongue are not restricted to what "Ghazali" has numerated. For instance, following affairs are among the vices of tongue, which are not stated by him:

1- Accusation

2- False evidence

3- Self-admiration

4- Spreading fornication and unfounded rumours, although being mentioned as a probability

5- Harshness in utterance

6- Improper insist (like Children of Israel, and etc)

7- Molestation of others with one's speech

8- Blaming one who is not despicable

9- Ungratefulness with tongue

10- False propagation and encourage to sin There is no doubt that correction of tongue should be studied and taught as one of the most critical moral issues.

The importance of this subject is clear when we consider the fact that tongue is the simplest and easiest and cheapest means available for man, and its speedy function is not comparable with anything else, and so we shall be very careful of it, and in this view, we can resemble it to the useful materials having an explosive power and capability. As man takes care of them attentively, he should always be watchful to this sensible organ.

## **Silence and reticence**

Taking into account the above risks caused by leaving the tongue free, ethic scholars have deemed silence, in cases that speaking is not necessary, as one of the ways of preventing those great risks, and a lot of traditions are mentioned about it from Prophet (S) and Prophet's House (A.S.), and this is the

reason why a number of great men have started purification of their carnal soul from this matter.

Moreover, silence causes a condition of "reflection" and "spirituality" and "clear-sightedness", which is noteworthy, and perhaps for this reason we read in the biography of Zachariah, God's great prophet, that three days of his silence and dumbness were put as the sign of fulfilment of his supplication concerning his request for a child:

قَالَ آيَتِكَ إِلَّا تَكَلَّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا

**He said: Thy token is that thou, with no bodily defect, shalt not speak unto mankind three nights.**  
(19:10)

And Mary was ordered to vow silence fast:

فَقُولِي إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنْسِيًّا

**Say: Lo! I have vowed a fast unto the Beneficent, and may not speak this day to any mortal.**  
(19:26)

We read about the states of Islam's Prophet (S) that before revelation, he had been silent and reflected, and meditated about the mysteries of creation in Hara cave for several days.

We can summarize advantages of silence in following affairs:

1- Silence insures man against a lot of sins. Prophet (S) says in his short and meaningful phrase:

«مَنْ صَمَتَ نَجَا».

Whosoever mums is saved.<sup>3</sup>

The reason for this issue is clear, because most of the sins are performed by tongue. As Prophet (S) says:

«إِنَّ أَكْثَرَ خَطَايَا ابْنِ آدَمَ فِي لِسَانِهِ».

Most of man's mistakes are in his tongue.4

And it is narrated from the Prophet in another tradition:

«أُخْزِنُ لِسَانِكَ إِلَّا مِنَ الْخَيْرِ فَإِنَّكَ بِذَلِكَ تَغْلِبُ الشَّيْطَانَ».

Keep your tongue save a good utterance and thereby you will overcome Satan.5

2- Silence invites man to thinking and reflection which are the sources of his spiritual life, and thus a silent person is typically resourceful, a thinker and a man of action. In contrast, talkative people are often frail and show less action.

It is narrated in a tradition from Prophet (S):

«إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَ صَمُوتًا وَقُورًا فَادْنُوا مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ يُلْقِي الْحِكْمَةَ».

When you find a believer silent and courtly, contact with him that he teaches you wisdom.6

And also it is narrated from Imam Ali (A.S.):

«إِذَا تَمَّ الْعَقْلُ نَقَصَ الْكَلَامُ».

As intelligence increases, speech decreases.7

In addition to the fact that silence is the best means for reviving reflection power, the above phrase may refer to this point that plenty of mental powers are used for speaking. When these energies are saved, they will form massive power through which understanding of great realities will be possible. Furthermore, silence is tranquilizer of soul and moderator of sentiments.

3- Chattiness as the opposite point of silence, makes man improvident, because it increases man's errors, decreases his shame, and breaking the barrier of shame as a result of excess of errors, it simplifies evil deeds for man as Imam Ali (A.S.) says:

«مَنْ كَثُرَ كَلَامُهُ كَثُرَ خَطَاؤُهُ، وَ مَنْ كَثُرَ خَطَاؤُهُ قَلَّ حَيَاؤُهُ وَ مَنْ قَلَّ حَيَاؤُهُ قَلَّ وَرَعُهُ، وَ مَنْ قَلَّ وَرَعُهُ مَاتَ قَلْبُهُ، وَ مَنْ مَاتَ قَلْبُهُ دَخَلَ النَّارَ».

He, who speaks more, commits more errors. He, who commits more errors, becomes shameless. He, who is shameless, would have less fear of Allah. He whose fear of Allah is less, his heart dies. He, whose heart dies, enters Hell.<sup>8</sup>

And perhaps on this account, silence is considered as one of the important sorbs.

«الْعِبَادَةُ عَشْرَةٌ أَجْزَاءُ تِسْعَةٌ مِنْهَا فِي الصَّمْتِ».

Worship has ten portions, nine of which exist in silence.<sup>9</sup>

It should not be mistaken; silence is not like seclusion and dissociation which removes the object of sin. Rather, it is sort of avoiding sin, and in cases that man finds a desire to commit some sins including slander, sin, when he selects continence and silence; he acquires a virtue for his health.

It should also be mentioned that silence when speaking is necessary, is considered as one of the greatest faults, and is the sign of weakness, humbleness, disability, lack of spiritual bravery, and fear of else than God.

It is also noteworthy that as most sins are performed by tongue, a large portion of services and good deeds, like God's remembrance, guiding people, training and education, bid to good, and forbiddance of wrong, warfare with utterance, too are performed by tongue.

## **Honesty, the most manifest sign of personality**

- Miraculous results of truthfulness
- Lie, source of all sins
- Lie is not compatible with belief
- Lie makes man improvident
- The liar does not trust even himself
- Source of lie
- Way of treating lies
- Lie in exceptional cases
- What is equivocation?

- A new interpretation about equivocation

Undoubtedly, two attributes of truthfulness and honesty (truth and trust) are the most manifest signs of personality. Rather, we cannot call a human the one who lacks these two, and both of them originate from a common source, because truthfulness is nothing else than trust in speech, as trust is nothing else than truth in action, and as we will see their social results are similar.

Haply for this respect, "truth in speech" and "trusteeship" are mentioned together in the sayings of Islamic great leaders, and even in ordinary speech, truthfulness and honesty are accompanied.

## Value and importance of truthfulness

As it was referred, truthfulness and honesty are the manifest signs of man's personality as well as magnificence of his mind and purity of his soul.

Truthful people are usually brave, frank, sincere, disinterested, and free from wrong prejudices and excessive love and hatred, because truthfulness is not possible without them.

In contrast, liars are usually cowards, hypocrites, greedy, fanatic, stubborn, and or involved in wrong love and hatred.

Truthful people are certainly principled. Rarely are such people guileful, erratic, and hypocrite, because honesty is not in concord with any of these affairs. As it will be described in incentives of lying, this attribute originates from one of the above vices, and on this account, we can consider truthfulness as a key for detecting interior of individuals in different aspects, and so truth in speech is called as a means of evaluation of people in the narrations and traditions of Prophet's House (A.S.):

Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.):

« لَا تَنْظُرُوا إِلَى طُولِ رُكُوعِ الرَّجُلِ وَ سُجُودِهِ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ شَيْءٌ قَدْ اِعْتَادَهُ فَلَوْ تَرَكَهُ  
اسْتَوْحَشَ لِذَلِكَ، وَلَكِنْ اَنْظُرُوا إِلَى صِدْقِ حَدِيثِهِ وَ اَدَاءِ اَمَانَتِهِ.»

Do not regard one's long bowing and prostration, because it may be their habit, and if they leave it, are disturbed. Rather, look at their truthfulness and honesty. 10

Holy Qur'an says:

وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ

***And thou shalt know them by the burden of their talk. (47:30)***

## **Miraculous results of truthfulness**

In social point of view, the greatest service that truth and trust can offer to men is attracting confidence and reliance. Of course, we know that all scientific, industrial and economic developments are the results of his life system that is social life.

But collaboration and consultation, which are the basis of social life, are only possible when individuals trust and rely on each other. Otherwise, people will have the problems of social life, disturbances, struggles, disputes and sabotages, without enjoying its advantages.

Obviously, the most important and effective means of attracting reliance and confidence is "truth and trust", and its most dangerous enemy is lie.

If economical firms lie only in introduction of one of their goods, people will suspect their best products.

If the rulers lie, people will disregard their promises, invitations, and warnings, and they will lack powerful public support.

If lie becomes popular in scientific environments, scientists and scholars will not trust on the speeches, narrations, and judgments of each other, and thus everybody should personally suffer all required labours for a scientific research, and could not use the results of thousands years of others' life. And this type of lie is the ugliest and dirtiest one.

## **Lie, source of all sins**

In several narrations, it is referred to this reality that trust and truth cause purity of action, and lie is the key of all types of sins.

For better understanding of effect of truthfulness and lie on the man's deeds and actions, first we refer to a number of narrations from Prophet's House (A.S.) in this regard, and then we will analyze it.

Imam Ali (A.S.) says:

«الصِّدْقُ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْبِرِّ وَالْبِرُّ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ».

Truthfulness guides people to goodness, and goodness invites to paradise. 11

Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) says:



«إِذَا صَدَقَ الْعَبْدُ قَالَ اللَّهُ: صَدَقَ وَ بَرَّ، وَإِذَا كَذَبَ قَالَ اللَّهُ كَذَبَ وَ فَجَرَ».

When a God's servant says the truth, God says: he said the truth and performed a good deed, and when he lies, He says: he lied and performed an evil deed.12

Imam Askari (A.S.) says:

جُعِلَتِ الْخَبَائِثُ كُلُّهَا فِي بَيْتٍ وَ جُعِلَ مِفْتَاحُهَا الْكَذِبُ».

All vices are put in a room and its key is lie.13

It is easily inferred from this tradition that lie is the key of all vices and evils.

Now we study the effects of truthfulness and lie in man's deeds:

1- Lie is the source of hypocrisy, because truthfulness refers to harmony of tongue and heart, and lie is disharmony of these two, and hereof difference between men's interior and outward is started, and the liar gradually proceeds to full hypocrisy.

Holy Qur'an refers to this fact and says:

فَأَعْقَبَهُمْ نِفَاقًا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ يَلْقَوْنَهُ بِمَا أَخْلَفُوا اللَّهَ مَا وَعَدُوهُ وَبِمَا كَانُوا  
يَكْذِبُونَ

***So He hath made the consequence (to be) hypocrisy in their hearts until the day when they shall meet Him, because they broke their word to Allah that they promised Him, and because they lied. (9:77)***

2- Lie is the tool of most sins. Dishonest and guileful, robber and treacherous, short weighing and hoarder, tricky and perjurer individuals cannot continue anymore and reach to a stalemate if they do not lie.

3- An envious person for envying, a proud person for ostentation and frippery, a subservient and flatterer person for achieving his goals, greedy and secularist individuals for attaining their objectives, usually resort to lie. They debase the envied person in public view falsely, and glorify themselves falsely. They say thousands of flatteries falsely, and resort to lie for satiation of their greedy souls.

4- One who is bound to truthfulness has no alternative save restraining himself from most of the sins, because he thinks that if he is asked about that issue, he shall say the truth, and if he says the truth, it will be disgraceful. So, he prefers to forget those deeds on the whole. Thus, being bounded to this attribute insures man against numerous sins.

5- Most of the lies cause other lies or sins, because it is widely seen that liars say other lies for justifying their untrue subjects, and or perform other evil deeds for preventing disclosure of their lies.

It is clarified from what was mentioned above (considering the explanations mentioned in each part), that if a man is verily bounded to truthfulness and honesty, he has to leave most sins because each of them somehow originates from lie. Rather, lie is the key of achieving them and a truthful man should recede from sin willingly or not.

## Lie is not compatible with belief

It is deduced from different traditions that lie is not in concord with belief, and lying is the sign of a sort of disbelief.

These traditions have been inspired by Holy Qur'an where it says:

إِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِي الْكُذِبَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ

***Only they invent falsehood who believe not Allah's revelations, and (only) they are the liars.***  
(16: 105)

"Forge falsehood" may refer to deliberate falsehood.

And now some of the narrations:

«سُئِلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) : يَكُونُ الْمُؤْمِنُ جَبَانًا؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ. قِيلَ: وَ يَكُونُ بَخِيلًا؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ. قِيلَ: وَيَكُونُ كَذَّابًا؟ قَالَ: لَا.»

The Prophet (S) was asked: Is it possible for a believer to be coward? He answered: yes. It was asked: Is it possible for him to be stingy? He answered: yes. It was asked: Is it possible for him to be liar? He answered: no. 14

«قَالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): لَا يَجِدُ عَبْدٌ طَعْمَ الْإِيمَانِ حَتَّى يَتْرُكَ الْكُذْبَ  
هَزْلَهُ وَجِدَّهُ».

Imam Ali (A.S.) said: A man does not taste the taste of belief, unless he refuses lie, either seriously or for humour. 15

«عنه (عليه السلام): جَانِبُوا الْكُذْبَ فَإِنَّهُ مُجَانِبُ الْإِيمَانِ».

Avoid lie, which is not in concord with belief. 16

And it is concluded from these narrations that believers avoid lie, and belief and lie do never accompany each other.

This point refers to the fact that the liars do not easily accept invitation of the prophets based on self-comparison. Since they themselves lie in little affairs of life, they cannot believe prophets to be really truthful in such big affairs.

They may be among the believers, but if we explore in depth of their hearts, we will find that it is not free from doubt and suspicion. Of course, this is true for those whose life is overshadowed by lie, and as interpreted in the tradition are liars.

The contrary is also true. That is to say the truthful people are often credulous, because they themselves are truthful and honest, and accept whatever they hear based on their superior nature, and so called they are "ear" unless they are notified.

Liars have a special pessimism and suspicion on everybody and everything. They assume everything false, untrue, or at least suspicious. How it is possible for such people to believe in all speeches of prophets without any doubt and suspicion. So we see in history that hypocrite, deviated and liars often attribute lying to divine prophets.

The issue of self-comparison is one of the mental conditions in man, which could serve as the key for solving a lot of problems. It is often observed that unusual movements of criminal, thief and treacherous individuals acquaint the others. Since they are aware of their own condition, they suppose the same about the others, and so try to conceal themselves, and such unusual movements attract the attention of others.

## Lie makes man improvident

A liar supposes that if he does not perform his different duties, can justify his violation through false excuses. For such person, not being faithful to promise and covenant, not observing time, not performing assigned duties and such like is easy, because he glosses over the issue with a series of false pretexts and saves himself from any rebuke.

But in contrary, one who is bound to observing the principle of "truthfulness and honesty" is obliged to observe such affairs and so cannot be improvident and careless.

## The liar does not trust even in himself

The liars not only do not trust in others and assume them as themselves, but also do not trust in themselves, because they are suspicious to the reality of everything, including the degree of their ability and power when faced with the problems and different events of life as well as their determination and will power in performing the works.

We read in aphorisms of Imam Ali (A.S.):

«إِيَّاكَ وَ مُصَادَقَةَ الْكُذَّابِ فَإِنَّهُ كَالسَّرَابِ! يُقَرِّبُ عَلَيْكَ الْبَعِيدَ وَ يُبَعِّدُ عَلَيْكَ الْقَرِيبَ».

You should avoid making friend with a liar because he is like a mirage, making you feel remote things near and near things remote.<sup>17</sup>

Although the matter of altering the realities is mentioned for the associates of a liar, but it is also formed in the liar as a result of getting accustomed to the lie, and they become suspicious and uncertain to the realities and facts related to themselves and the others, and this is one of the most painful conditions occurring for man in his life.

## Source of lie

As it was already referred, lie originates from one of the mental weak points:

Sometimes, a man lies for the fear of poverty, people leaving him alone and losing his position and rank.

Sometimes, he lies for the earnest to wealth, dignity, and other sensual desires, and uses this illegitimate means for achieving his purpose.

Sometimes, passion as well as excessive love and hatred cause a man to say untruth in favor of one who he loves or against one who he hates.

Once he lies in different scientific, historical and such like issues for showing himself more than what he really is and expressing science and knowledge.

But all of these vicious attributes, which are the sources of lie, actually originate from one's low personality and weakness of spirit and belief.

Those who do not believe in their own personality, and have a feeble and humble spirit, resort to lie, falsification, fraud and treachery for gaining their purposes and escaping losses. In contrary, powerful and high personality individuals rely on their own personality and ability, and seek their victory thereon.

Moreover, those having a perfect belief on divine everlasting power, and considering His dominant will as the source of all blessings, victories and successes, have identified His power beyond all powers and His support beyond all supports, do not have any reason for resorting to untruth and lying for gaining a benefit or escaping a loss.

And sometimes this dangerous vice roots in man for inattention to the disadvantages of lie and importance of truthfulness, and unhealthy family, or environment of society and associates.

One of the other important factors in lying is feeling low personality and inferiority complex. Those who are affected by such complexes, try to compensate it with all types of lie, exaggeration and self-glorification.

## **Way of treating lie**

Taking into account the factors effective on formation of this attribute and its rooting, treatment procedure will be relatively clear, and in general for treating this moral deviation, we shall take following actions:

1- First of all, the liars should be informed about the painful consequences as well as spiritual, material, individual and social ill effects of this unfavourable vice, and it should be evaluated through meditation and thinking in Qur'anic verses and traditions of great leaders of religion and aforementioned analyses and speeches of the great men that assumptive benefits of lie never counterweigh with such a lot of disadvantages.

Moreover, the liars should be warned that if in some cases, lie has a personal benefit, it is temporary and very transitory, because no capital for a man in the society, in any condition and any rank, is higher than the capital of people's trust and confidence in him, and the greatest enemy of this capital is lie.

It is noteworthy that some suppose it is possible for a man to say some lies, never being disclosed and

causing people's distrust.

But this is a big mistake because experience has shown that in most cases, the untruthfulness of a liar is made clear, and its point is that any event has different relations with time, place, individuals and other events. One who wants to create an event, not externally existing, with his tongue, creates only one discrete event from among all other relations, and if he is very sharp and smart, he may already think about some other lies around it, and link the main false event with those events.

However, he can never predict all possible relations with all other events, and consider their connections. So, most often after several questions, he fails to justify his speeches.

For example, consider the interesting judgment of Imam Ali (A.S.) about the young man whose father had travelled with a lot of wealth together with some people, and when returning, his companions claimed for his death.

The accused people, who were in fact the murderers of that young man's father, were disgraced very soon after Imam (A.S.) asked them several questions about the details of disease, death, shrouding and burying, as they had colluded for all together saying that he has become sick and died, but they had not colluded for where, what time of day and who has made ablution, and has shrouded, and has performed funeral prayer, and actually they could not collude for all of these matters.

On this account, even the lie of the sharpest liar may be disclosed through a simple inspection.

Specially, the false and artificial relations, which a man creates for his lies, are not kept in his mind properly, because they are untrue, and if the liar is asked in different intervals, he involves in self contradiction and confusion, and this contradiction is one of the other factors for disclosing their lie. If it is commonly said that "a liar does not have a good memory", it may refer to the fact that whatever his memory may be strong, it is not possible for a liar to memorize everything!

2- Personification – One of the most effective ways of treating lies is developing individuals' personality, because as we know, one of the important mental causes of lie is feeling inferiority and low personality, and in fact lying is a kind of reaction for compensating it.

If the liars feel that they possess powers and talents through developing of which they can increase their own value and personality, they do not find any need for resorting to lie for developing a false personality in them.

Moreover, they should realize that social value of a truthful man, who has succeeded to attract "public confidence" through this moral virtue, is beyond all values, and his great spiritual capital of "social reputation" is the highest capital, with which no material capital can countervail, and he can provide all material facilities for himself using this capital.

Such person is not only is respected by people, but also enjoys a rank among the martyrs and prophets

because in Qur'an the rank of truthful people is mentioned besides the rank of prophets and martyrs, where it says:

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ  
وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٤٦٩﴾ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا

***Whoso obeyeth Allah and the messenger, they are with those unto whom Allah hath shown favour, of the prophets and the saints and the martyrs and the righteous. The best of company are they! (4:69)***

The famous scholar, "Ragheb", in his book, "Mofradat" has narrated several meanings for "truthful" all proving this fact:

- a- One who always says the truth
  - b- One who never lies
  - c- One who is truthful in his speech and idea, and his action proves his truthfulness.
- 3- Endeavour for strengthening foundations of belief in God in the heart of liars and notifying this fact to them that God's power is beyond all powers, and He is able to solve all problems for which weak faith individuals resort to lie.

The reliance point of truthful people when facing different events is God, and liars are alone in such cases.

4- The motives of lie and roots of this moral deviation including avarice, fear, self-conceit, excessive love and hatred and such like should be eradicated so that this dangerous vice cannot find a favourable culture for its development in man.

5- The educational and association environments of liars should be cleaned from other liars so that gradually, according to the principle of "imitation" and impressibility, their own existence is purified of this vice.

This is so critical that it is narrated from Imam Ali (A.S.) in Islamic educational instructions:

«لَا يَصْلِحُ الْكُذْبُ جِدًّا وَلَا هَزْلًا وَلَا أَنْ يَعِدَ أَحَدُكُمْ صَبِيهَةً ثُمَّ لَا يَفِي لَهَا».

Lying is not proper, either for joke or seriously, and also it is not proper that one of you give a promise to

his child, and then do not fulfil it. 18

It goes without saying that if parents are accustomed to truthfulness (even in giving small promises to their children); their child will never be a liar.

## Lie in exceptional cases

The great jurists and ethic scholars following the traditions narrated in this respect, have mentioned some cases as exceptional from lie judgment, and have summarized some of them in two subjects: "exigency" and "reconciliation among people".

It is narrated in a tradition from the Prophet (S):

«إِحْلَافٌ بِاللَّهِ كَاذِبًا وَ نَجِّ أَحَاكَ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ».

Swear falsely and save your innocent brother from death. 19

Herein, two points are notable:

First, all cases of exception actually return to one subject that lie is only permitted for more important expedients overshadowing its disadvantages, and of course, this is not restricted to "truthfulness" and "falsehood". Rather other forbidden things such as "eating carrion", "eating unclean food", "orphan molestation" and such like are permitted for survival or correction, and the cases mentioned in the traditions are some examples.

For instance, since reconciliation among people and joining scattered hearts and washing out the dust of hatred and enmity from hearts is more important than the lie, which does not harm anyone else, it is permitted. The same is true in exigency cases for preserving life and honour of oneself or others, and or in planning and implementation of war plans, a lie, causing expedition in termination of war and preventing blood shedding and or repressing an unjust and corrupter enemy in this way, and also when two spouses argue about some matters, the continuation of which may result in their divorce or other corruption, but it is possible to solve their problem through one lie. In all of these cases, lie would be permitted for preservation of more important expedient affairs. If we pay attention accurately, in these cases, disadvantages and harms of lie which were already mentioned, are much less and do not overweigh its advantage and benefit.

It is also noteworthy that prescription of "lie" in such cases is just like prescription of eating carrion, which should be contented as much as the necessity, and not so that exceptions cause daring performance of this "capital sin", and saying lie for each little issue with the pretext of lie permits.



In fact, moral mistakes are always around the exceptional cases and notes. These are the same ambiguous matters which are the "risk area" bounded by the "forbidden area":

«مَحَارِمُ اللَّهِ حِمَى اللَّهِ فَمَنْ يَرْتَعِ حَوْلَ الْحِمَى يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَقَعَ فِيهَا».

The forbidden degrees are divine forbidden areas; one who leads his animal near the forbidden boundaries, there is the risk of slumping in them.<sup>20</sup>

Ghazali at the end of a chapter under the title of leaving lie in "Ehyaol Oloum" writes: some people believe that fabrication of traditions in the virtues of actions and intensification of vices is permitted.

Then he adds: this is just a false desire and fancy, because its advantages never overweigh corruption of lie. Moreover, there is not any necessity for this, and there are enough correct verses and traditions in each respect. On the other hand, introducing this custom may result in discomposure and perturbation of religion.<sup>21</sup>

But we believe such foolish actions and ideas belong to the base, fool and unaware individuals who assume themselves more compassionate than God and Prophet (S) for Islam. This is a pure evil and is thoroughly harm and corruption. The danger of this action and such like fool friends is not less than the danger of enemies for Islam.

## What is equivocation?

Equivocation refers to the speech, from the appearance of which something is understood, while the purpose of speaker is something else.

It is well known among our jurists that the cases in which lie is prescribed for an exigency, equivocation should be applied, and as far as equivocation is possible, explicit lie is not advisable.

It is inferred from some phrases of Sunnite scholars that the same is popular among them.

And equivocation is defined to be when a man says something with a meaning in accordance with the reality, but the speech is so that listener understands something else, and this is the purpose of speaker that while willing a correct concept, the listener understands something else.

For instance, one was asked, who the substitute of Prophet S.A is. He said, "One whose daughter was in his house". The listener supposed that he meant the one whose daughter was in Prophet's (S) house, but he meant "one whose Prophet's daughter was in his house".

## A new interpretation about equivocation

But herein there is a point which may be the key of solving problems of this discussion, that is, "equivocation" does not refer to any sort of intention against appearance. Rather, equivocation appertains to the cases in which the speech is inherently ambiguous and can bear two meanings, but the mind attracts one of them in speech.

For example, the phrase (إِنَّكُمْ لَسَارِقُونَ), "You are robbers" which was told to Joseph brothers, its primary meaning is the same "current robbery", but it can also refer to the "previous robbery" (robbing Joseph from his father), which is in contrary with its primary meaning.

Or when it is asked from someone, "has that person presented this clothing to you"? In reply as equivocation, he says: "God may lengthen his life". The listener supposes that the speaker means "yes, God may lengthen his life", while he may not have such purpose.

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1. Nahjul Balaghah, aphorisms, no. 148
  2. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 262/75, and Mohajjatol Beisae, 193/5
  3. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 90/77 and Mohajjatol Beisae 192/5
  4. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, 194/5
  5. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, vol. 5, page 195
  6. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, 195/5
  7. Nahjul Balaghah, aphorisms, no. 71
  8. Nahjul Balaghah, aphorisms, no. 349
  9. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, 196/5
  10. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 8/71
  11. Tabarsi, Mishqat al-Anwar, 300, Heydariyeh Publications, Najaf
  12. The same document, page 299
  13. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 263/72
  14. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 262/72
  15. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 249/72
  16. The same document, volume 78, page 9
  17. Nahjul Balaghah, aphorisms, no. 38
  18. Hurr al-Amili, Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, 577/8
  19. Hurr al-Amili, Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, 134/16
  20. Sadough, Faghih, vol. 4, page 75
  21. Ghazali, Ehyaol Oloum, 139/3

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