

Speaking with Falsehood is Greater [in Evil] than Keeping Silent Regarding the Truth

by Shaykh Nāsir ibn Hamad al-Fahd

Source: *at-Tankeel Bi Ma Fi Bayaan al-Muthaqafeen Min al-Abateel*

Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem

From the Noble Shaykh, Naasir bin Hamad al-Fahd, may Allah hasten his release

Know that keeping silent from some of the truth, or hiding it without showing falsehood, or with showing falsehood is upon four levels:

The First Level:

Where one leaves some of the truth, intending by this, to be gradual in his call or his teaching, and not to hide knowledge, then this is permissible. Nay, it is how things are done and there is no other way; for no one can learn all matters of this religion at once, and there is a necessity in being gradual, so this [individual] learns things bit-by-bit, whether this person learning is from the disbelievers who are being called to Islaam, or from the Muslimeen who are learning the matters of this religion, and this is proven by what is found in the Saheehayn from Ibn 'Abbas, when the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam sent Mu'aath to the Yemen he said, 'You are going to a people from the people of the Book, so let the first of what you call them to is the worshipping of Allah 'azza wa jall, if they know that, then inform them that Allah has made five prayers compulsory upon them in their night and day, and if they do that, then inform them that Allah has made zakaah compulsory upon the rich from them, so that it can be given to the poor of them, and if they obey you in this, then take it from them, and avoid the rest of their wealth'.

This is also supported by the seerah of the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam in teaching his companions, and in informing the new-comers to Islaam of its principles, and his graduality-approach in this; further this is supported by the continuity of using this method amongst the people of knowledge, until this time.

The Second Level:

Where leaving the exposition of some of the truth for sake of some benefit (maslaha), and for fear of tribulation, then this is permitted if this knowledge is not required for action, and is not needed by the people in their worship and actions, like the reports on the tribulations, and the virtues of actions and the likes, where there is no harm [or corruption] to one's religion if he is ignorant of it.

This is supported by what is in Saheeh al-Bukhaari, from Abi Hurayrah who said, "I memorised from the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam, two vessels [meaning a lot], one of which I spread, and the other, if I had spread it, then this pharynx would have been chopped".

al-Haafith Ibn Hajr, rahimahullah said about this:

"The scholars held the vessel which was not spread to be the ahadeeth which mention the names of the evil rulers, their conditions and their times, and Abu Hurayrah used to hide some of it, and not be open about them, fearing himself from them, like his saying, "I seek refuge from the beginning of the sixties", referring here to the khilaafah of Yazeed bin Mu'aawiyah, because it was in year sixty of the Hijrah, and Allah answered the supplication of Abi Hurayrah, so he died before it". [al-Fath, 1/126]

Makhool [Pronounced Mak-Hool], rahimahullah said: 'Abu Hurayrah used to say: "Perhaps there is a bag that Abi Hurayrah had not opened"', ath-Thahabi, rahimahullah said regarding these words:

'I say: This is evidence on the permissibility of hiding some of the ahadeeth which cause fitan in the principles or branches, or in praising or dispraising, as for a hadeeth relating to what is halaal or haraam, then it is not permissible to conceal it at all; for it is from the guidance and clear proofs, and in Saheeh al-Bukhaari, is the statement of 'Ali, radiallahu 'anhu: "Talk to people about what they know, and leave off what they would deny, would you like Allah and His Messenger to be made liars?," likewise had Abu Hurayrah narrated that vessel he would have been harmed, nay, he would have been killed'. [as-Siyar 2/597]

As Allah, the Most High, says: "Verily, those who conceal the clear proofs, evidences and the guidance, which We have sent down, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, they are the ones cursed by Allah and cursed by the cursers."

What is understood from this ayah proves that the knowledge that is not like that - i.e. not from the clear proofs, evidences and guidances - then it is permissible to hide it, depending on the benefit [intended by it].

al-Qurtubi, rahimahullah says about this ayah:

'When He said "the clear proofs, evidences and the guidance" this went to prove, that whatever is other than this, then it is permitted to conceal, especially if there is fear associated, and Abu Hurayrah had left that when he was afraid, so he said, "I memorised I memorised from the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam, two vessels [meaning a lot], one of which I spread, and the other, if I had spread it, then this pharynx (al-bal'oom) would have been chopped", collected by al-Bukhaari. Abu 'Abdullah said, "the pharynx is where the food moves down," our scholars said: And this, that Abu Hurayrah did not narrate and feared himself for have [in them discussions on] the tribulations, killings, and is all related to the matter of trials, and the specific mentioning of apostates and hypocrites and the like [of knowledge] that is not related to the clear proofs, evidences and guidance, and Allah knows best'. [Tafseer al-Qurtubi, 2/184-186]

ash-Shaatibi, rahimahullah says:

'And from this, it becomes known that not everything that one knows from the truth, he is required to publicise, even if it is knowledge of the Sharee'ah and what benefits in knowing the rulings on things, rather all this is categorised; some of it it is compulsory to publicise: And this is the vast majority of the knowledge of the Sharee'ah; and some of it, he is not required to publicise at all, or not publicise specifically regarding a condition, or a time or a person - then he mentioned various evidences and said - and the likes of other evidences proving that not every knowledge is publicised and announced even if it is the truth, and Maalik says regarding himself, that he has ahadeeth and knowledge that he did not speak about nor narrate, and he used to hate talking about things that cannot be followed by action, and he reported that those before him used to hate that aswell, so be aware of this issue' [al-Muwafaqaat, 5/167-172]

The Third Level:

Where one conceals the truth that is obligatory to make known, but he does not show any falsehood in its place, then this is forbidden, is warned about and could even be disbelief at times, and a major sin in others, and Allah warned the one who hides [this knowledge] with a stern warning, as is in the hadeeth, 'Whoever is asked for knowledge and he conceals it, Allah will place upon him a leash from fire on the day of Judgement'

As Allah says, "Verily, those who conceal the clear proofs, evidences and the guidance, which We have sent down, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, they are the ones cursed by Allah and cursed by the cursers."

In this ayah is evidence for what one can conceal and what one cannot conceal, by way of what is pronounced and what is understood:

For Allah, subhanah, has stated that the warning and promise is for those who 'those who conceal the clear proofs, evidences and the guidance', and this proves that the principles of the religion, and what Allah has revealed from the guidances and what the people need it is not permissible to conceal in any condition.

Further, what is understood from this ayah is that whatever knowledge that is not from the above [type], then it is permissible to hide depending on the benefit, as was mentioned in the part on the second level.

al-Qurtubi, rahimahullah says:

'So it is general in everyone who conceals knowledge from the religion of Allah that is necessary to spread, and this is explained in his saying, sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam, "Whoever is asked for knowledge and he conceals it, Allah will place upon him a leash from fire on the day of Judgement"'. [Tafseer al-Qurtubi, 2/184-186]

There is an exemption from this, and this is for the one who is in a state of weakness where one is excused, so he cannot be manifest with the truth, like the one between the disbelievers and cannot say the truth, nor migrate, then he is from the weak ones whom Allah, subhanah excuses, like the believer of aal-Fir'awn, whom Allah mentions 'A believing man from aal-Fir'awn concealing his belief said', and like the wife of Fir'awn and an-Najaashi and the weak ones from the Muslims who did not migrate, as is in the saying of the Most High, 'Except the weak ones among men, women and children who cannot devise a plan, nor are they able to direct their way. For these there is hope that Allah will forgive them, and Allah is Ever Oft Pardoning, Oft-Forgiving.'

The Fourth Level:

And it is to add to hiding the truth, saying falsehood, and this one is worse than the one before him, for the one before him hid the truth without showing falsehood, but this one gathered the two, and if the issue [that he is doing this to] is part of the principles of the religion, then [this] leads to apostasy, and something like this is not permitted except in cases where disbelief is permitted, like when one is coerced.

Shaykh al-Islam, rahimahullah says:

'The believer if he is amongst the disbelievers and corrupt ones, and he is unable to wage Jihaad with the hand against them, then he should with his tongue if he can, otherwise with his heart, and he should not say with his tongue what is not in his heart; either he openly declares his religion, or he hides it, and with that, he does not agree with them on their religion, rather, his intention is to be like the believer of aal-Fir'awn and the wife of Fir'awn, and he did not agree with their religion, nor did he lie, nor did he say what is not in his heart, rather he used to hide his belief, and hiding ones religion is something, and making a false religion apparent is something else, and this Allah did not permit at all except for the one who is forced; in which case saying what is disbelief becomes permissible, and Allah has differentiated between the hypocrite and the forced one, and the Raafidah their condition is the same as the condition of the hypocrites and not like the ones forced to do disbelief and his heart if content with belief; and this coercion is not to be found in the majority of the sons of Adam, infact a Muslim may be imprisoned or alone in the lands of the disbelievers and no one forces him to say a word of disbelief, and he himself does not say it, and he does not say by his tongue what is not in his heart, and he might need to be soft with some of the disbelievers so that they assume that he is from them, and despite that he does not say what is not in his heart, rather he hides what is in his heart, and there is a difference between lying and concealing, and concealing what one feels is used by the believer where Allah excused him [and allowed him to use it], like the believer of aal-Fir'awn, as for the one who says what is disbelief, then there is no excuse for him except conceit.' [Minhaaj as-Sunnah, 6/424-425]

He also said, rahimahullah:

'Forbidden matters are of two categories:

'One: What the Legislator did not permit anything from, whether necessary or unnecessary, like polythiesm, open illicit actions [fornication, etc], speaking about Allah without knowledge, and oppression, which are mentioned in His saying, the Most High, "Say '(But) the things that my Lord has indeed forbidden are AlFawahish (great evil sins, every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse, etc.) whether committed openly or secretly, sins (of all kinds), unrighteous oppression, joining partners (in worship) with Allah for which He has given no authority, and saying things about Allah of which you have no knowledge.'"

'These things are prohibited in all the Legislations, and with its impermissability Allah sent all the Messengers, and did not make any of it permitted, in any situation, and it is for this reason that it was revealed in this Makkan surah [al-A'raaf] and He specified those things with prohibition rather than others' [al-Fataawa, 14/471]

[Translators Note: This piece was taken from 26-31 of at-Tankeel Bi Ma Fi Bayaan al-Muthaqafeen Min al-Abateel, part 1]