34725 - Ruling on one who tells lies about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

the question

What is the ruling on one who fabricates things about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Telling lies about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is a great evil and a serious sin, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Telling lies about me is not like telling lies about anyone else. Whoever tells lies about me deliberately, let him take his place in Hell.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 1229. It was also narrated by Muslim in the Introduction to his Saheeh, without the phrase “Telling lies about me is not like telling lies about anyone else.”

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Do not tell lies about me, for whoever tells lies about me will enter Hell.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 106. And he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever narrates a hadith from me that he thinks is false is one of the liars.” Narrated by Muslim (1).

A number of scholars are of the view that the one who deliberately tells lies about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is a kaafir.

Al-Haafiz ibn Hajar said in al-Fath: If it is said that lying is a sin except in cases where one is trying to bring about reconciliation and the like, and that Hell is threatened for those who sin, what is there to distinguish the one who tells lies about the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from those who tell lies about anyone else?

He answered this from two angles:

1 – That according to one scholar, Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Juwayni, the one who tells lies about him deliberately is a kaafir. But this view was classed as da'eef (weak) by his son Imam al-Haramayn and those who came after him. Ibn al-Muneer, however, favoured this view, based on the idea that the one who tells lies about him by describing forbidden things as permissible, for example, either regards that forbidden thing as permissible or misleads others by making them believe that. Regarding forbidden things as permissible is kufr and leading others to kufr is also kufr. But this view is subject to further examination. The majority of scholars are of the view that this does not constitute kufr unless one believes that this forbidden thing is permissible.

2 – That telling lies about him is a major sin, and telling lies about anyone else is a minor sin, so they are different. The fact that the same warning is given to the one who tells lies about him and the one who tells lies about anyone else does not necessarily mean that they will both end up in the same place or that if they do, they will stay there for the same length of time. The words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) – "Let him take his place in Hell" – indicate that (the liar's) stay there will be lengthy. Rather the apparent meaning is that he (the one who commits this sin) will not be brought forth from it because he no other abode. The definitive evidence shows that abiding therein (in Hell) for eternity is a punishment that is given only to the kuffaar. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) differentiated between telling lies about him and telling lies about anyone else and said: "Telling lies about me is not like telling lies about anyone else.""(From al-Fath, 1/244)

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) discussed this matter at length and mentioned the ruling on one who tells lies about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) verbally, the ruling on one who tells lies about him in a report and the ruling on one who narrates a hadith knowing it to be false. He was of the view that the one who tells lies about him verbally is a kaafir. He said in al-Saarim al-Maslool 'Ala Shaatim il-Rasool (2/328-399), after quoting the hadith of Buraydah:

A clan of Banu Layth in Madeenah was of two minds. A man had proposed marriage to one of their

womenfolk during the Jaahiliyyah but they did not accept his proposal. He came to them wearing a hullah (a suit of clothing) and said: “The Messenger of Allah gave me this hullah to wear and told me to rule over your wealth and your blood.” Then he went and stayed with that woman whom he loved. The people sent word to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he said: “The enemy of Allah is lying.” Then he sent a man and said: “If you find him alive – although I do not think that you will find him alive – then strike his neck (kill him). And if you find him dead then burn him with fire.” He said: This is what the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said concerning “one who tells lies about me deliberately.” Shaykh al-Islam said: “This is a saheeh isnaad according to the conditions of al-Saheeh and we do not find any fault in it.”

Then he said: There are two opinions concerning this hadith:

1 – That the apparent meaning should be followed and the one who deliberately tells lies about the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) should be killed. Among those who were of this view were some who said that the one who does that becomes a kaafir thereby. This was the view of several including Abu Muhammad al-Juwayni. Ibn ‘Aqeel quoted his Shaykh, Abu’l-Fadl al-Hamdaani, as saying: “The innovators, liars and fabricators of hadith are worse than the heretics because the heretics want to attack Islam from without but these people want to attack it from within. They are like people who try to destroy a city from within whilst the heretics are like those who are laying siege to it from without, and those who are inside open up the fortress. So they are more dangerous to Islam than those who do not appear outwardly to be Muslims.”

The main point of this opinion is that telling lies about him (the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)) is tantamount to telling lies about Allah. Hence he said: “Telling lies about me is not like telling lies about one of you.” What the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded is what Allah commanded, and it must be followed just as the commands of Allah must be followed. Whatever he told us must be believed, just as whatever Allah told us must be believed. Whoever rejects what he told us or refuses to follow his command is like one who rejects what Allah told us or refuses to follow the command of Allah. It is well known that the

one who tells lies about Allah by claiming to be a messenger or prophet of Allah, or tells false things about Allah, such as Musaylimah and other fabricators of his ilk, is a kaafir whose blood may be shed, and the same applies to one who tells lies about the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Thus it is clear that telling lies about him is tantamount to disbelieving in him. Hence Allah mentions the two things together in the verse where He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And who does more wrong than he who invents a lie against Allah or denies the truth, when it comes to him?” [Al-‘Ankaboot 29:68]

Indeed, telling lies about him may be a greater sin than disbelieving in him, so Allah mentioned that first, just as the one who is sincere towards him is higher in status than one who believes what he says. If the liar is like the denier, or worse, then the one who tells lies about Allah is like the one who disbelieves in Him, and the one who tells lies about the Prophet is like the one who disbelieves in him.

Thus it becomes clear that disbelieving in him is akin to lying, because denying what he says implies that one thinks that what he says is not true, which is tantamount to saying that the religion of Allah is false. It makes no difference whether one rejects one thing or everything that he says. Rather the person who does that becomes a kaafir because that implies that he thinks that the message and religion of Allah are false. And the one who tells lies about him deliberately introduces into the religion something that is not part of it, and claims that the ummah is obliged to believe this report and follow this command because it is the religion of Allah, knowing that it is not part of the religion of Allah.

Adding something to the religion is like taking something away from it. There is no difference between rejecting a verse of the Quran or deliberately adding some words and saying that this is a soorah of the Quran.

Moreover, if a person deliberately tells lies about him meaning to mock him or belittle him, by claiming that he issued commands that he did not issue, and that it is not permissible for him to

issue, this is tantamount o attributing foolishness or false statements to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and claiming that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is a liar, and this is blatant kufr.

If someone claims that Allah enjoined fasting of another month other than Ramadaan, or a sixth prayer, etc, or that bread and meat are haraam, knowing that he is lying, then he is a kaafir according to scholarly consensus.

Whoever claims that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined something that he did not enjoin, or that he forbade something that he did not forbid, has told lies about Allah, like the one described (in the paragraph) above, with the additional factor that he clearly says that the Messenger said that. He is issuing a fatwa without pointing out that this is ijtihaad. In conclusion, whoever deliberately tells a blatant lie about Allah is like one who deliberately disbelieves in Allah and is even worse. It is obvious that the one who tells lies about the One Whom he should venerate is mocking Him and disregarding His sanctity.

The one who tells lies about him (the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)) is inevitably seeking to dishonour and belittle him by lying. It is well known that the one who lies about him as Ibn Abi Sarh did when he said, “He used to learn from me,” or by attributing evil actions and foul words to him, becomes a kaafir thereby. The same applies to the one who tells lies about him, because he is attributing to him a command or a narrative or an action. If he attributes to him a command that he did not issue, he has added something to his sharee’ah, which cannot be part of it and which he could not have uttered, as he said: “I have not omitted anything that will bring you closer to Paradise but I have enjoined it upon you, and there is nothing that will keep you further from Hell but I have commanded you to do it.” If he did not enjoin it, then it is not permissible to enjoin it. Whoever narrates that he did enjoin it has attributed to him something that it is not permissible to enjoin and that is tantamount to attributing foolishness to him.

Similarly, if he transmits a narrative from him, if this was something that he should have told us he would have told us, because Allah completed the religion. If he did not tell us of it then it is not

something that he should have told us. Similarly with regard to actions that are falsely attributed to him; if the action is something that he should have done then he would have done it, but if he did not do it then it is better not to do it.

The point is that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the most perfect of mankind in all senses. Whatever he did not say or do, it is better not to say or do it, and whatever he did do, it is better to do it than not to do it. If a man deliberately tells a lie about him or narrates something from him that did not happen, then whatever he says is tantamount to attributing shortcomings to him, because if it was something good he would have done it, and whoever attributes shortcomings to the Messenger is a kaafir.

It should be noted that this view is very strong but a distinction should be made between the one who tells lies about him verbally and the one who tells lies about him that he claims to have heard from someone else, such as saying: “So and so the son of So and so told me such and such from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).” In this case he is telling lies about that man and attributing the hadith to him. But if he says “This hadith is saheeh” or “It was proven that he said that”, knowing it to be false, then he is telling lies about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). But if he fabricates it and narrates it in silly manner, this is subject to further discussion, especially since the Sahaabah are regarded as being dignified and of good character and if one of them were to lie it would cause a great deal of harm to the religion. Therefore the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) wanted to kill the one who told lies about him and he hastened to punish him so that would be means of preventing any of the hypocrites being counted as one of the Sahaabah of good character.

But if a person narrated a hadith knowing it to be false, this is haraam, as it was narrated in a saheeh hadith that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever narrates a hadith from me that he knows is false is one of the liars.” But he is not a kaafir unless he adds to that narration something that implies kufr, because he believes that his Shaykh narrated it, but he knows that his Shaykh is lying and it is not permissible for him to narrate it. So he is in the same position as one who witnesses a deal, a testimony or a contract knowing it to be

invalid. This testimony is haraam, but he is not bearing false witness per se (shahaadat al-zoor).

Then he mentioned the second view and said:

2 – The liar is to be punished severely, but he is not regarded as a kaafir and it is not permissible to kill him, because the factors that determine who is a kaafir and is to be killed are well known and this is not one of them. It is not permissible to affirm something for which there is no basis. Whoever says that he is not to be executed has to stipulate that telling lies about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) does not imply any criticism or defamation of him. But if he says that he heard him say something that implies belittling the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or criticizing him, such as the hadith about “the sweat of horses” and other such silly fabrications, this is obviously mocking him, and the one who says this is undoubtedly a kaafir whose blood may be shed. Those who were of the view that such a person is not to be executed responded to this hadith by saying that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) knew that he was a hypocrite so he killed him for that and not for lying, but this answer does not count for anything.

Then he (may Allah have mercy on him) mentioned some further points of refutation.

And Allah knows best.