

yāayyuhā alladhīna āmanū awfū bil-‘uqūdi (Maida 1) O ye who believe! Fulfil obligations, your promises’

We live in a world where promises are broken every single day. People change plans at the last minute, parents fail to keep their word to their children, colleagues miss a deadline, friends do not repay their loans, these instances are very common. Just 50 years ago, a broken promise could shatter someone; today, it's often accepted as a normal part of life. Commitments are disregarded. This widespread disregard for commitments **weakens and destabilizes the very fabric of a society or a community.**

Breaking promises erodes **trust** and can significantly **harm relationships**, whether personal or professional. When a promise is broken, it often leads to feelings of **betrayal**, making it difficult to trust that person again. Consistently breaking promises also **damages our reputation**, making it harder for us to be taken seriously in the future. Beyond interpersonal effects, broken promises can contribute to **stress, anxiety, and disappointment** for all involved. Even breaking promises to ourselves can lead to self-doubt, lack of confidence or uncertainty about one's competence and self worth and make it harder to achieve personal goals.

Allah hates and finds it repulsive that a person makes statements that they have no intention to actually fulfill. In the first verse of Surah al-Ma'idah, Allah called upon the believers: "O you who believe! Fulfil your promises." In Surah Maryam, Allah also praised Prophet Ismail for fulfilling his promise: "He was true to his promises; He was a Messenger and a Prophet." In Surah al-Isra: He said "And keep the promise; the promise is a responsibility." Breaking promises is considered a serious sin in Islam and, according to Hadith, is one of the defining traits of a hypocrite—something that stands in direct opposition to the qualities of a true believer. Failing to uphold a promise is regarded as a manifestation of hypocrisy. We are taught to honor every commitment, whether it is made to others, to ourselves, or to Allah Ta'ala. Neglecting or breaking a promise is closely linked to dishonesty and hypocrisy. It is narrated that the Prophet 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." Imam Al-Ghazali explains that this hadith is applicable to those who promise while intending not to fulfil it, or those who, without an excuse, decide later not to fulfil the promise. Those who promised but could not fulfil those due to proper reasons are not hypocrites. But we should be careful not to present a false excuse, as Allah knows our inner thoughts and intentions.

When we say something we should be really careful, because as soon as we say something it is written. Allah, the Almighty says in surah Qaf: "Not a word does he utter, but there is a watcher by him ready (to record it)". So, before we make a promise we should think whether we can fulfil it and we should always keep promises. When

we make a promise to someone, we are making that promise to Allah, so we must speak carefully".

One of the companions of Resulallah said that, "I was a young boy, I was playing outside, and my mother said to me, 'Come home, let me give you something,' trying to entice him to come inside the house.

And the Prophet (saw) heard her calling her son, 'Did you actually intend to give him something?' And she said, 'Ya Rasulullah, I was going to give him a date,' something to get the child back into the house. And the Prophet (saw) said, 'Had you not been telling the truth, Allah would have written a lie upon you. Don't say things you don't intend to do.'"

When we embrace Islam, we make numerous **promises to Allah**. These vows encompass every facet of our lives, from fundamental acts of worship—affirming that "we will only worship You and we only ask from You"—to our social conduct. We pledge not to lie, steal, hurt, or cheat, and to follow the exemplary life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Essentially, our promises cover **everything from how we live to how we behave**. It's crucial to understand that **we will be tested on everything that we have promised**. Sometimes, we make promises during moments of vulnerability or uncertainty. We might declare, "If I'm in that situation, I'll act a certain way". We say, "Oh Allah, if You grant me this position, I'll do such-and-such," or "If I reach this financial milestone, I'll give back," or "If You bring this person into my life, I'll change," or "If this problem is resolved, I'll do better." We make these heartfelt promises repeatedly, yet often fall short of fulfilling them. Allah-u Taala will indeed test us precisely based on those words.

Breaking our promises with Allah-u Taala creates a distance between us and our creator. It's easy to make promises to ourselves and to Allah, especially in moments of sincerity or desperation. But how often do those intentions translate into lasting action? We must call for a deep, personal reflection on the promises we've made and often broken, guiding us toward a more honest and committed spiritual path.

There are a number of steps we can take in order to become a sincere person who keeps their promises. Sincerity is a quality that Allah likes most. First we must remember all the promises that we have made to Allah and recommit them now. It is about consciously aligning our actions with our deepest intentions. Then we must repent for broken pledges. Acknowledge the times we have "dropped the ball" and failed to follow through. We must **seek sincere repentance** for these unfulfilled promises. This step is about humbly recognizing your shortcomings and asking for forgiveness. Then, **dig deep to understand the underlying reasons** for our inconsistency. Recognizing the traits and mindset that lead hypocrisy is crucial. Then we must seek righteous company who are dedicated, inspiring us to maintain our commitments. Finally, ask Allah for firmness and consistency in your faith and actions.

May Allah make us among those who are **truthful and sincere in our commitments**. We seek refuge in Allah from being a people who say what they have no intention to do. Oh Allah, make us a people whose intentions are even better than what they are able to materialize in their output. Let our tongues match our hearts and let our deeds match our tongues." We ask Allah subhana wa ta'ala to write us from people of truthfulness. May Allah make us truthful in everything that we say that we plan to do. May Allah allow us to fulfill our promises to Him, and may Allah subhana wa ta'ala fulfill His promise to us, as Allah subhana wa ta'ala never betrays His promise.

Yurdaer Al Latif Al Jerrahi