



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

LYING – IS THERE SUCH A THING AS A WHITE LIE IN ISLAM?

O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth. He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam) he has indeed achieved a great achievement (i.e. he will be saved from the Hell-fire and made to enter Paradise). 33: 70-71

One of the most noble traits of a slave of Allah is to be truthful in many things that they say and do. In fact, Allah mentioned the quality of truthfulness is higher than one who is a martyr:

And whoso obeys Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam), then they will be in the company of those on whom Allah has bestowed His Grace, of the Prophets, the Siddiqun (those followers of the Prophets who were first and foremost to believe in them, like Abu Bakr As-Siddiq), the martyrs, and the righteous. And how excellent these companions are! 4: 69

Directly opposite to being truthful is “lying”. It is somehow become a norm to lie in order to achieve many things. Believe it or not, their lying makes some sense, when you look at it through their eyes.

1. The lie does matter ... to them. The number one reason people lie when it just doesn't matter is because they actually *do* think it matters. While everyone around them thinks it's an inconsequential issue, the liar believes it is critically important. They may be putting undeserved emphasis or pressure on themselves, or on the issue, but you won't know unless you ask something like, “It seems like this issue is really important to you – why?”
2. Telling the truth feels like giving up control. Often, people tell lies because they are trying to control a situation and exert influence toward getting the decisions or reactions they want. The truth can be “inconvenient” because it might not conform to their narrative.
3. They don't want to disappoint you. It may not feel like it to you, but people who tell lie after lie are often worried about losing the respect of those around them. They

want you to like them, be impressed, and value them. And they're worried that the truth might lead you to reject or shame them.

4. Lies snowball. I remember a cartoon kids watched years ago about how lies grow. We tell a little bitty lie, but then to cover that lie, we have to tell another one, then another, and another – each gets bigger and bigger. Finally, we're arguing about the colour of the sky, because to admit *anything* creates the potential of the entire house of cards tumbling. If a chronic liar admits to any *single* lie, they feel like they're admitting to *being* a liar, and then you'll have reason to distrust them.

5. It's not a lie to *them*. When we are under pressure, our thinking about the big picture can be challenged. Our memory of things is actually quite unreliable: Multiple studies demonstrate that our memories are influenced by many things, that they change over time, and that they are essentially reconstructed each time we think about them. Often, repetitive liars feel so much pressure in the moment that their memory becomes simply unreliable. When they say something, it's often because they genuinely *believe*, at that moment, that it is the truth. Their memory has been overwhelmed by stress, current events, and their desire to find a way to make this situation work. Sometimes, this can become so severe that the person almost seems to have created a complete alternate world in their head, one that conforms to their moment-by-moment beliefs and needs.

6. They *want* it to be true. Finally, the liar might want their lie to be true so badly that their desire and needs again overwhelm their instinct to tell the truth. "Be the change you want to see in the world," Gandhi never actually said. But sometimes, liars hope that they can make something come true by saying it over and over, and by believing it as hard as they can. In today's environment of "alternative facts," it's hard not to see this as somewhat justified.

The first of Allah's creation to lie is iblis – when he lied to Adam (AS) and his wife and tricked them into eating the fruit which Allah has forbidden. {20:120}

In Islam, lying in sharia is a major sin. Anything that is untrue and deliberately intended to mislead another person is a lie. A lie, therefore, can be anything spoken or written that is totally or partially baseless, unreal, made-up, distorted or exaggerated; for example, if someone were to deliberately state that a five foot pole was a ten foot pole, then this would be a lie. Similarly praising someone out of proportion is a form of a lie.

Lying and falsehood are widespread problems and are roots of other problems that occur on an individual and public level. Lies are spoken and written in the media and in politics, in business and in personal dealings, by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, although the degree, magnitude and frequency may vary.

Lying is against human nature and physiology, and like any other disease, it has its own unique signs and symptoms. The act of lying produces inner conflicts between various control centres of the brain. The moment one begins to lie, his body sends out contradictory signals to cause facial muscle twitching, expansion and contraction of pupils, perspiration, flushing of cheeks, increased blinking of the eye, tremors of the hand, and an increased heart rate. These constitute the basis of lie detector instruments. In addition, certain unconsciously made movements are noticeable in those who lie, like the constant covering of the mouth, touching of the nose, rubbing of the eye, scratching the side of the neck, rubbing the ear, etc. One of the clearest signs is that the liar keeps his palms closed and his eyes in another direction to the person he is lying to, in an attempt to avoid eye to eye contact. A liar is aware of his body's signals and finds lying easier when nobody can see him, such as when he is on the phone or writing.

That's why when I was acting as a wali to a revert sister, I prefer to see the future spouse in person so I can grill him on his Islamic practices and see if he was telling the truth or he was stretching the truth.

The Quran on Liars

Allah Says (what means): "...Indeed Allah does not guide one who is a transgressor and a liar." [Quran 40:28]

And (what means): "...Indeed, Allah does not guide he who is a liar and [confirmed] disbeliever." [Quran 39:3]

Almighty Allah also Says (what means): "...The curse of Allah be upon him if he should be among the liars." [Quran 24:7]

The Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) on Lying and Liars

Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said:

"Indeed, truth leads to virtue and virtue leads to Paradise, and a truthful person continues to speak the truth until he becomes the most truthful person. Lies lead to evil and evil leads to Hell, and a liar continues to lie until he is listed as a high ranking liar before Allah." [Al-Bukhari]

The Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) explained that lying could cause one to end up in the Hell Fire. He (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "Avoid falsehood, for falsehood leads to wickedness and wickedness to Hell; and if a man continues to

...speak falsehood and makes falsehood his object, he will be recorded in Allah's presence as a great liar. And adhere to the truth, for truth leads to good deeds, and good deeds lead to Paradise. If a man continues to speak the truth and makes truth his object, he will be recorded in Allah's presence as eminently truthful." [Abu Dawood (Sunan Abu Dawood vol. 3, no. 4971), authenticated by Al-Albani]

Yoosuf Ibn 'Abdullaah, may Allah be pleased with him, said that he asked Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) : "O Messenger of Allah! What do you think is the most dreadful thing for me?" Yoosuf, may Allah be pleased with him, continued: "The Messenger caught hold of his tongue and said: "This." [At-Tirmithi]

Bahz Ibn Hakeem related that the Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "Destruction is for the man who tells lies for the amusement of other people. Destruction is for him." [At-Tirmithi]

Sufyaan Ibn Usayd, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "The biggest breach of trust is that you tell a thing to your brother who believes it to be true, whereas you have lied to him." [Abu Daawood]

Is Lying Ever Justified?

There are very few justifications for lying in Islam. The Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) directed us to tell the truth, even under the harshest circumstances of oppression. However, one may choose not to tell the truth when:

* He is being oppressed and there is a real danger to his life if he speaks the truth. Shaykh As-Sa'di رحمه الله narrated the following story: "A cruel king ordered an innocent villager present in his court to be executed due to the villager's lack of manners. Hearing this, the villager began cursing the king in his native language. The king asked his minister, who understood the man's language, to tell him what the man was saying. The wise minister, instead of telling the truth, told the king that the man was sorry for his conduct and was praising his greatness and pleading for his mercy. The king was affected and therefore spared the life of the innocent villager." Shaykh As-Sa'di called this: "A lie with wisdom."

* To promote harmony between spouses. For example, if one's wife asks him if she is beautiful or if he loves her, there is no harm in answering in the affirmative, even if this is not the case.

* While making peace between two quarrelling parties, so that the ordeal would not ignite into something worse. The mediator in such a case may falsely tell one party that the other is speaking highly of them.

* To make the unbelievers realise the truth. When Prophet Ibraaheem, may Allah exalt his mention, broke all the idols except the largest of them, the unbelievers entered the temple and saw the smashed idols. Ibraaheem, may Allah exalt his mention, had placed the axe in the hand of the chief idol. The disbelievers asked: "Who broke our gods?" He, may Allah exalt his mention, said: "Ask the chief idol, he has the axe." They replied: "Do you not know that he cannot speak or act?" Ibraaheem, may Allah exalt his mention, replied: "This is what I have been telling you, so worship Allah rather than these stones that cannot harm or profit you."

Virtues of Telling the Truth

Truthfulness is commanded by Allah as a part of faith and is an indispensable quality of the believers. It is mentioned in over one hundred places in the Quran. Some examples are when Allah Almighty Says (what means): "That Allah may reward the truthful for their truth..." [Quran 33:24]

"O you who have believed! Fear Allah and be with those who are true." [Quran 9:119]

"O you who have believed! Fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice." [Quran 33:70]

"The patient, the true, the obedient, those who spend [in the way of Allah], and those who seek forgiveness before dawn." [Quran 3:17]

"The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not but strive with their properties and their lives in the cause of Allah. It is those who are the truthful." [Quran 49:15]

It is not necessary to relate any prophetic traditions about the truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) as his whole life was nothing but the epitome of truth. He (SalAAllahu alayhi wa sallam) was called al Ameer - the trustworthy one - because he was always very honest and truthful. Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) was confirmed as a truthful person even before he became a Prophet. During his prophethood, even his enemies confirmed that he was truthful and trustworthy. Some of the disbelievers would deposit their belongings with him as an indication of their trust in him.

CAN WE LIE DURING A JOKE OR TO MAKE PEOPLE LAUGH?

Islam does not prohibit joking. It is known through many narrations that Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) approved joking, and he (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) would himself play and joke with his companions and small children. Simak ibn Harb asked Jabir ibn Samurah (radhi allahu anhu), "Did you sit in the company of the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam)?" He said: 'Yes, very often. He (the Prophet) used to sit at the place where he observed the morning or dawn prayer till the sun rose or when it had risen; he would stand, and they (his Companions) would talk about matters (pertaining to the days) of ignorance, and they would laugh (on these matters) while (the Prophet) only smiled.' [Saheeh Muslim (1413)]

There is no harm in joking by words and anecdotes, if they are truthful and real, especially if it is not done often. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to joke but he would only speak the truth. If it is with lying, then it is not allowed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Woe to the one who speaks and tells a lie in order to make the people laugh at it. Woe to him. Then again, woe to him." This was recorded by Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi and al-Nasal with a good chain.

"I guarantee a house in the surroundings of Paradise for a man who avoids quarrelling even if he were in the right, a house in the middle of Paradise for a man who avoids lying even if he were joking, and a house in the upper part of Paradise for a man who made his character good." (Abu Dawud, Adab 7; Tirmidhi, Birr 158; Nasai, Jihad 19; Ibn Majah, Muqaddima 7)

The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "Let he who truly believes in Allah and the Last Day speak good or be silent." [Saheeh al-Bukhari]

It is from the tricks of Shaytaan that he first makes sins look insignificant and minor in the eyes of the believers, and then gradually deceives them to commit those sins. Lying is one of them, and people do not show much concern about its prohibition, however, lying is a characteristic of hypocrisy, Abdullah Ibn Amr Ibn Amr al-Aas (radhi allahu anhu) narrated that the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "Whoever has the following four characteristics will be a pure hypocrite; and whoever has one of these four characteristics will have one characteristic of hypocrisy unless and until he gives it up; whenever he is entrusted he betrays, whenever he speaks he tells a lie, whenever he makes a covenant he proves treacherous, and whenever he quarrels he behaves in a very imprudent, evil and insulting manner." [Saheeh al-Bukhari]

Lying is therefore one of the traits of a hypocrite and a hypocrite will be at the lowest depth of hellfire 4: 145

IS LYING ALLOWED IN BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS OR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS?

Being truthful means speaking the truth and also saying things that reflect reality.

Being truthful is one of the necessities of a human society, one of the virtues of human behaviour, and brings great benefits, whilst lying is one of the major elements of corruption in human society, and the cause of the destruction of social structure and ties, one of the most evil features of bad conduct, and causes widespread harm. Hence Islam commanded truthfulness and forbade lying.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

O you who believe! Be afraid of Allaah, and be with those who are true (in word and deeds). [al-Tawbah 9:119]

Ibn Katheer (may Allaah have mercy on him) said (2/414): It means: be truthful and adhere to truthfulness, and you will be among its people and will be saved from calamity, and this will make a way out for you from your problems.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

if they had been true to Allaah, it would have been better for them. [Muhammad 47:21]

Abd-Allaah ibn Masood (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: You must be truthful, for truthfulness leads to righteousness and righteousness leads to Paradise. A man will keep speaking the truth and striving to speak the truth until he will be recorded with Allaah as a *siddeeq* (speaker of the truth). Beware of telling lies, for lying leads to immorality and immorality leads to Hellfire. A man will keep telling lies and striving to tell lies until he is recorded with Allaah as a liar.

(Reported by Muslim, 4721)

This hadeeth indicates that truthfulness leads to righteousness (*al-birr*), an all-embracing concept that includes all kinds of goodness and different kinds of righteous deeds. Immorality is basically an inclination towards deviation from the truth, and the immoral person (*faajir*) is one who is inclined to turn away from the path of guidance. Hence immorality and righteousness are diametrically opposed.

Al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allaah be pleased with them both) said: I memorized from the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt, for truthfulness is certainty and tranquillity, whilst lying is doubt and confusion.

(Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 2520; al-Nisaa'i, 8/327; and Ahmad, 1/200)

In the lengthy hadeeth of Abu Sufyaan describing his meeting with Heraclius, Abu Sufyaan (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: [Heraclius] said, What does he [meaning the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)] command you to do? I said, He says: worship Allaah alone and do not associate anything in worship with Him, and abandon that which your forefathers did. He commands us to pray, to be truthful, to be chaste and to uphold the ties of kinship.

(Reported by al-Bukhaari, 1/30 and Muslim, 1773).

Hakeem ibn Hizaam (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: Two parties to a deal have the option of changing their minds until they part; if they are open and honest, their deal will be blessed, and if they conceal and tell lies, the blessing of their deal will be diminished.

(Reported by al-Bukhaari, 4/275 and Muslim, 1532.)

Truthfulness includes being truthful towards Allaah by worshipping Him sincerely; being truthful towards ones own soul by making it adhere to the laws of Allaah; and being truthful with people in one's words and by keeping one's promises, and in dealings such as buying, selling and marriage, so there should be no deceiving, cheating, falsifying or withholding of information. Thus a person should be the same on the inside and the outside.

As regards lying, it is highly forbidden, and is of varying degrees of abhorrence and sin. The most obnoxious form of lying is falsely attributing things to Allaah and His Messenger, because this involves fabrication about the religion and is an act of outrage against Allaah. Hence one of the characteristics of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is that he truthfully conveyed that which Allaah commanded him to convey. So Allaah said (interpretation of the meanings):

who does more wrong than one who invents a lie against Allaah, to lead mankind astray without knowledge. Certainly Allaah guides not the people who are zaalimoon (polytheists and wrong-doers, etc.) [al-Anam 6:144]

And who does more wrong than he who invents a lie against Allaah? Such will be brought before their Lord, and the witnesses will say, These are the ones who lied against their Lord! No doubt! The curse of Allaah is on the zaalimoon (polytheists, wrong-doers, oppressors, etc.). [Hood 11:18]

Equally bad is lying about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), as he is reported to have said in the mutawaatir hadeeth: Whoever lies about me deliberately, let him take his place in Hell.

(Agreed upon).

The basic rule with regard to lying is that it is not permitted, but there are certain circumstances in which Islam permits lying to serve a greater purpose or to prevent harm.

One of these situations is when a person mediates between two disputing parties in order to reconcile between them, if reconciliation cannot be achieved in any other way. Um Kalthoom (may Allaah be pleased with her) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: He is not a liar who reconciles between people and conveys something good or says something good.

(Reported by al-Bukhaari, 2495).

Another example is a mans speaking to his wife, or a woman speaking to her husband, with regard to matters that will strengthen the ties of love between them, even if that is accompanied by exaggeration. Asma bint Yazeed said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: Lying is not permitted except in three cases: a mans speaking to his wife to make her happy; lying at times of war; and lying in order to reconcile between people.

(Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 1862; he said: it is a hasan hadeeth. See also Saheeh Muslim, 4717).

One of the most important forms of both being truthful and lying is in the area of promises and covenants. Being truthful in promises and covenants is one of the characteristics by which the believers are known. Both promises and covenants involve saying something about an issue to confirm that you will do it, especially with regard to one's duties towards Allaah. Allaah says, praising some of His slaves (interpretation of the meanings):

Those who are faithfully true to their amaanaat (all the duties which Allaah has ordained, honesty, moral responsibility and trusts, etc.) and to their covenants. [al-Muminoon 23:8]

and who fulfil their covenant when they make it [al-Baqarah 2:177]

Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allaah [i.e., they have gone out for jihad (holy fighting), and showed not their backs to the disbelievers], of them some have fulfilled their obligations (i.e., have been martyred), and some of them are still waiting, but they have never changed [i.e., they never proved treacherous to their covenant which they concluded with Allaah] in the least. [al-Ahzaab 33:23]

PUNISHMENT IN BARZAKH ON LIARS

Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) warned us against lying by describing the severe punishments of Allah for the liars. He (sallallahu alaihi wa-

sallam) related a dream in which he (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) saw people being punished; among them were two persons, whose cheeks were torn away from the mouth to the ear. He said: "I saw (in a dream), two men came to me. They said, 'The person, the one whose cheek you saw being torn away (from the mouth to the ear) was a liar and used to tell lies and the people would report those lies on his authority till they spread all over the world. So he will be punished like that till the Day of Resurrection.'" [Saheeh al-Bukhari (vol. 8, no: 118)]

Always Remember Before you speak! Everything we say is being recorded in our actions and that one wrong word can take us to Hell Fire. Allah says: {Not a word does he (or she) utter, but there is a watcher by him ready (to record it).} [Qaf 50:18] } The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "Sometimes, a person says a thing which pleases Allah, and in return Allah raises his status (rewards him), and hsometimes a person says something which displeases Allah, and it takes him to Hell." [Saheeh al-Bukhari]

HOW TO REMOVE THIS BAD HABIT OF LYING?

1. Seek knowledge
2. Seek Allah's Guidance
3. Perform all prayer with khushoo (29: 45)
4. Seek refuge from shaytanffg
5. Be conscious of the unseen - Allah, as the Al Baseer, al Aleem, etc, the angels, etc
6. Know the consequences of lying - in barzakh and hell fire
7. Think properly before you say - so that you may not accidentally lie
8. Speak less - "Silence is golden"
9. Avoid joking too much and making people laugh
10. Verify the source of information. An incident such as the slander of Aisha(RA)

May Allah Guide us to be among the truthful believers.