



Lies
Truth

LYING

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 3

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand what it means to be truthful in speech and action
- Understand that lying is forbidden in Islam
- Understand that there are levels of lying and the most horrible are lies against God and His Prophets
- Understand that lying to deceive others is a major sin
- Understand that lying as part of a joke or to 'have fun' is also not allowed
- Understand briefly the consequences of lying in this world
- Be reminded of the punishments of lying
- Know some basic reasons why people lie and how you can stop lying
- Understand that lying just leads to more lying
- Know that listening intently to a liar or speaker of falsehood is also not permissible

LESSON 1: LYING IN ACTIONS

In today's lesson we are going to discuss the severity of lying and how ugly and lowly this act is considered in Islam. Unfortunately, lying has become easy and is becoming more and more common in our day-to-day lives. However, although we do not see the physical consequences of lying; the damage it does to our soul is irreversible. This is because lying leads to other bigger sins. The lesson below will hopefully help you better understand what Islam has to say about lying.

WORDS = ACTIONS

To be sincerely truthful is to be sure that our words fully match our actions. For example, we say we are Muslims and followers of Ahlul Bayt (AS) – but do our actions show that? Do we handle situations like the Prophet (SAW) handled situations? Or do we lie our way out of things as the disbelievers do?

Muhammad ibn Umar ibn Hanzaleh narrated that Imam Sadiq (a.s) said:

"One who is only verbally in agreement with us, but is opposed to our deeds and words is not one of our followers. Shiites are those who not only agree with us in words, but they also accept our writings and follow us in action. They are our true followers." (Mishkatul Anwaar – Hadith No. 331)

Imam Sadiq (AS) says that those who only say they believe but their actions show otherwise, are not classified as believers. Therefore, being truthful is not only speaking the truth but also matching our actions to what we say.

Another example is when we mourn and beat our chests for Imam Husain (AS) but then neglect our prayers and listen to music. It is not enough to just mourn for Imam Husain (AS) and cry for him when we do not follow his ways. We are only deceiving ourselves! If we truly and sincerely love Imam Hussain (AS) we would not only mourn and cry for him, but also act upon his teachings and follow the principles he stood for.

NO LYING:

Telling lies is forbidden in Islam. The sad and unfortunate thing is that we do not realise how often we lie. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an, in Surah al-Hajj; verse no. 30:

وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ

Shun lying speech (false statements)

The term 'shun' meaning avoid that is used in this verse is the same term Allah (SWT) has used when referring to alcohol. This would mean that just like we avoid even coming near to alcohol, we should avoid, shun and not even come close to lying! For example, just like we wouldn't sit at a table where alcohol is being served we shouldn't lie nor have any connection or association with those who lie.

THE WORST LIE:

There are many levels to lying. We lie and deceive ourselves and we also lie to deceive others. The greatest and most horrific level is lying against Allah (SWT) and His prophets.

We are lying against God and His Prophets when we misquote them. An example is when we quote a hadith (saying) without knowing the real words and the origin of that hadith. The words of God (SWT) and His prophets are so holy that we cannot just make something up and attribute it to them just to add credit to our words. This is Haram as it is a form of lying.

Homework:

- 1) Why do you think that Allah (SWT) has really discouraged lying and labelled it as a MAJOR sin? What are the harmful effects of lying?

- 2) Give other examples of when our actions are not truthful to what we say. What can we do to correct it?

Review Questions

Q1. Lying in action means:

- a) Lying when you are walking
- b) When ones actions do not match up with their beliefs
- c) Lying all the time

Q2. The worst lie is:

- a) Lies against parents
- b) Lies against oneself
- c) Lies against Allah (SWT) or His Prophet

LESSON 2: CONSEQUENCES OF LYING

To deceive someone is to cause someone to believe something that is not true and it is often done just to gain some personal advantage.

For example, if my parents ask me if I have prayed and I lie and say 'yes', when in fact I haven't yet prayed, this is deception. The funny thing is that when someone lies they are only deceiving and harming themselves. We cannot deceive Allah, because He knows what is in our hearts.

CONSEQUENCES OF LYING:

Lying is almost like a never ending sin. If we lie once, we have to lie another ten times to cover up that first initial lie. Lying is the key to all other sins. Imagine all the sins to be locked up in a warehouse; lying would be the key to the door of that warehouse. The following incident happened at the time of the Prophet (saw). It may help you better understand the consequences of lying:

There was once a man who was a thief and was known to be immoral. He took the road towards the Mosque and went to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and sat opposite him. He put his head down and with shame said '**O Prophet of Allah! Punish me for I have committed many sins! What can I do to stop sinning?**'

The Holy Prophet said to this man '**Never lie**'.

The man waited for further instructions, but to his amazement the Prophet didn't say another word. The man looked at the Prophet and asked '*is that it?*'

The Prophet repeated '*Don't lie*'.

He became happy; he thought he can do anything he likes now; he just has to be sure not to lie.

He was only steps away from the mosque as the idea of stealing from a house came to his mind; he was planning a strategy that would be safe; he would climb the walls at the back, gather the money fast and run away...

Suddenly, he came to a stop and realised how hard it will be to follow the instructions of the Prophet. He said to himself '*if after the robbery, someone asks me, "Did you steal?" what will I say to them? Will I say "No"? But this is a lie.*' So he started thinking of other bad acts he can do; however none of them can be carried out without having to lie; lying was the key to ALL his sins. From then, that man never sinned again.

PUNISHMENT OF LYING:

Lying is a mortal sin which takes one to Hell and punishment – unless one truly repents and never lies again! Allah (SWT) curses those who lie, saying in the Holy Qur'an

فنجعل لعنة الله على الكاذبين

"And invoke the Curse of Allâh upon those who lie"

The curse of Allah (SWT) is the worst punishment that anyone can be a recipient of!

CONCLUSION:

To conclude, today's lesson consisted of many important and valuable lessons that we need to ponder over. We have discussed that even lying as a joke and to deceive someone is not allowed therefore we need to be extra careful next time we 'joke' around with someone. We also learnt how we can avoid lying by concealing the truth and that lying leads to bigger sins and is the key to all evils!

With these lessons and examples in mind, let us all make a promise to ourselves to stop lying and think twice

before we speak... We will notice that if we stop lying, we will eventually stop committing other sins too, by God's Will.

Homework:

- 1) When you lie, are you successful in deceiving others? Explain your answer using examples other than the ones used in the lesson.
- 2) How can you avoid lying? Explain your answer using examples.

Review Questions

Q1. The worst consequence of lying is:

- a) People will not like us
- b) We will be deceiving yourself
- c) Allah (SWT) will curse us and therefore will withhold his blessings from us

Q2. Lying as a joke is:

- a) Allowed if we are not hurting anyone
- b) Allowed if we make sure to say the truth later on
- c) Is never allowed and is therefore a mortal sin

LESSON 3: WHY DO WE LIE?

In our last lesson, we learnt that lying is a major sin. In this lesson, we will look at some of the major reasons people lie, and how we can avoid lying.

WHY DO WE LIE?

With different situations in our lives come different reasons as to why we may lie and hide the truth. However out of these, there are three main reasons as to why we may lie:

- It has become so common and second nature for us that it is no longer considered as something wrong or disliked.
- As an excuse to get us out of trouble as one may fear the consequences of telling the truth – This is probably the most common reason for lying. For example, a young student might be talking in class when they are not supposed to. When the teacher asks them if they were, they usually lie to get out of trouble.

- To reach our goal or something we desire quicker: For example, telling your parents that you are going to the library to study when in fact you are going out with a friend. One would lie in this scenario because he knows that if they told the truth they probably wouldn't be allowed to go.

However, when we lie, any blessing or pleasure we might have gained from that thing we wanted will be ruined. Our Imams (as) tells us that:

"When someone tries to achieve a goal by disobeying Allah, this will cause him to miss out on what he hopes to gain and to face what he feared even quicker"

None of these reasons are valid! There is no acceptable reason to lie. Lying is *ḥarām* and should be avoided.

HOW CAN LYING BE AVOIDED?

The answer to this, like most things in our lives, can be learnt from our Imams (AS) as they are the perfect examples and role models:

Once, Imam Sadiq (AS) was walking with his son, Ismail, and a friend. When they reached the Imam's house, the Imam (AS) did not invite the man inside. Later on, Ismail asked the Imam (AS) as to why he did not invite the man inside at least as a formality. To this the Imam (AS) said that Allah (SWT) does not like people who pretend.

From this story, we learn the key and the secret of how we can avoid lying – and that is to put Allah (SWT)'s pleasure before anything and everything! If we do this, we will not care what people think, we will not care about wealth and other worldly pleasures, we will not care about whether we will lose out telling the truth – in fact, we would not even think of lying because it would displease our lord!

To train ourselves to stop lying, we have to remember a few important points:

- The pleasure of God is more important than our pleasure or the pleasure of people. Therefore, we should please God by telling the truth, even if this might seem bad for us at first glance.
- Lying leads to more lying, and so if we lie that first time, we will have to keep weaving lies and this will make us stressed and anxious. In the example where a person lies about going out with friends, he usually has to make up a

whole story about what he did with his friends, who was with him etc...

- The truth always appears, and liars always get found out. Allah (swt) says in the Holy Qur'an in Surah Bani Israel (chapter 17) Verse no. 81:

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ ۚ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ
كَانَ زَهُوقًا

And say: "Truth has come and Bātil (falsehood) has vanished. Surely! Bātil (falsehood) is ever bound to vanish.

The verse tells us that falsehood is not something that will last and that truth will always prevail. Just look at the examples of those who gained pleasures through lying – like Fir'aun. Fir'aun (pharaoh) used to tell the people that he is God and that everybody should worship him. However, that falsehood and that lie were vanquished when Allah (SWT) caused his army to drown when He split the seas for the Musa and his followers, who were truthful.

LYING SHOULD NOT BE TOLERATED!

Lying is so discouraged in Islam that Islam teaches us to even speak out against those who lie. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an in Surah Baqarah; verse no. 42:

وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنتُمْ
تَعْلَمُونَ

And mix not truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth while you know (the truth).

The verse tells us that we should not conceal or hide the truth when we know it. Perhaps this simple example will help us understand better in what situation we can stand up against lying:

Lying is so discouraged in Islam that Islam teaches us to even speak out against those who lie. We should also not listen to liars or obey or follow them. Our Imams teach that if we listen to people who speak falsehood, and who follow Satan, it is as if we are worshipping Satan.

This means that if we are in the habit of listening to music and songs that speak about sinful things that we are worshipping Satan. It also means that we should not follow or take as leaders people who are obviously liars, like many of the politicians in Western countries.

Instead, we should listen to truthful people, who teach us about our God, our Prophets and our religion. This is the Truth, and we should listen to them, so that we are worshipping Allah and not Satan.

Homework:

1) Can you think of any other reasons as to why people may lie? Use examples to explain your answer.

2) What do you think is the proper way of dealing with a liar? Should you be rude and aggressive or polite?

Review Questions

Q1. People lie to:

- a) Get out of trouble
- b) Get something they want
- c) Both a & b

Q2. We can train ourselves to stop lying by:

- a) Remembering that what God wants is the most important thing
- b) Remembering that lying will lead to more lying
- c) Both a & b