

clean & healthy. Habitual liars make countless calculations in their minds. They are far from thinking & behaving sincerely & honestly. **All liars continually plan & calculate.** None of their behaviour or speech is sincere. Those who indulge in a sort of lying, which they reckon innocent, and which in one sense is so; for it hurts nobody but themselves. This sort of lying is the spurious offspring of vanity, begotten upon folly.

One motive for people telling lies: pride. We all want people to think well of us. But we know ourselves that we are not all that much, all that intelligent, all that gifted for people to admire us. What lives of untruth people live. The pretense, the make-believe. You ask someone a question. They don't know the answer. They lack humility to admit that they don't know.

Sin has many tools, but a lie is a handle which fits them all. Lust: What does lust have to do with lying? The answer is **EVERYTHING!** Seductive deception...escaping into a responsibility-free fantasy relationship with others time after time. Lust is the motive for so much untruth especially in this sex-preoccupied world. "Sex education" is required under the pretense of protecting children from AIDS. What clever lies. Children must be protected from immorality.

Meet WMAAL 2007-OC1. W, for short, is a pool of mortgages collected by Washington Mutual and sold to investors in May, 2007. These were not subprime mortgages. W has one determining feature: 88 percent of the borrowers were allowed to state their income. Instead of asking the borrower to bring in a paystub, or a W-2, or any proof of income, the lender simply allowed the borrower to write down a number. The industry has a nickname for such stated-income loans...**"liar's loans,"** because most people lie. An examination of 100 "liar's loans" found that 90 borrowers had overstated their actual income. About 60 borrowers inflated the actual number by at least 50 percent. People who made \$2,000 a month were getting loans based on a supposed income of at least \$4,500 a month. This **epidemic of lying** in the US is **"an astounding breakdown of social norms."**

In 1998, then-President Clinton announced to the world, "I did **not** have sexual relations with Miss Lewinsky." His lies & those of Bush & Blair goes to show on what foundation their Western civilization is built. If their leaders lie, so does their

media. Reporter Jayson Blair's tenure at the NY Times goes down in infamy. In 2003, he admitted he **fabricated dozens of stories**, made up quotes & filed reports from cities around the nation when he was actually still in NY. Many, like this reporter, lack the moral understanding to refrain from lying which is a perversion of the natural faculty of speech.

Sir Walter Scott's famous couplet "Oh, what a tangled web we weave / When first we practise to deceive!" describes the often difficult procedure of covering up a lie so that it is **not** detected in the future.

Confessions: Teen: "I have seen that in the past 4 years **ever since going mobile I have been telling lies a lot.** Most of the lies are about where I am at present when anybody calls." *Is the cell phone making us liars?* Student: "I also lie...coz I have some contacts about which no-one knows...and also it has **affected my studies.**" On Facebook, IM, texting... millions lie. Sending an SMS "I have to go, the waiter is here" when you are not at a restaurant is a lie.

How did lying become so acceptable? **Guard what is between your jaws & you will be guaranteed Paradise** applies only to a FEW souls. 70% of teens lie while using their phones. Lies swirl around us, spinning complex webs of meaning that delude the great & small, the manipulated & manipulators. We fall into despair & fail to find happiness in the hollowness of the deceptive game of lying.

Pathological liars are generally sociopathic, lack a clear sense of right & wrong & show an absence of remorse when harming others. Sociopaths tell some of the best lies, since they don't feel bad about doing so & don't show signs of guilt or worry. Sociopaths lie for self-gain & their lies veer toward manipulation.

Compulsive liars lie as the first option, even when there's no reason or advantage for doing so. Childhood experiences, such as living in an abusive environment where lying is necessary for survival or emotional well-being, is responsible for compulsive lying. Narcissists lie to gain undeserved glory & esteem in the eyes of others. Borderline personalities experience wild mood swings & out-of-control behaviours, like drug abuse, gambling or promiscuous sex. This type tell lies in an effort to deal with the fallout from these behaviors. Histrionic personalities desperately crave love & attention & will tell lies that, though not accurate, may reflect the emotional truth of the situation. "I'm so sick I could die"; "If you leave me, I'll kill myself."

"What must I do to win salvation?" Dimitri asks Starov in "The Brothers Karamazov." Starov answers: "Above all else, never lie to yourself."

Al-Ghazali: "Lying is the mother of all great sins." If a person is known as a liar, no trust in their words remains, they lose prestige & their opinions become worthless. Lying does nothing but decay friendships. The ugliness of lying is the cause of bringing about all other forms of ugliness. Honesty is the real, solid foundation of the Islamic religion, the tie that binds people of superior morality together & the most exalted state of mind. Encourage truth & honesty, the basis of community life, inside ourselves & use it to treat our spiritual ills. Truth & trust go hand in hand, and lying & loss of trust do also.

Muhammad (p): "A believer's tongue is located behind their heart. Whenever they want to talk, they first present the words to their heart. If the heart approves of what they want to say it issues an order to the tongue to utter the words. However, if the heart does not issue a permit, then the lips stay sealed. But a hypocrite's tongue is the leader of their heart...they speak without the approval of their heart." For a liar who has violated truthfulness, who holds in scorn the Hereafter, **there is no evil that they cannot do.**

Much of our success in life, the amount of joy we experience & the depth and quality of our relationships is dependent on our ability to cultivate a healthy thought life based on truth. Without truth, we shall meet our fate with a sulky whining disposition, blind to life's beauty.

Moral force is the greatest power. Seek a life of meaning, self-worth, transcendence & an ethical code through these Quranic warnings: "**Woe to every sinful liar.** Who hears the verses of Allah, then persists arrogantly as if they have not heard them. So give them tidings of a painful punishment." (45:7-8) "Still they will swear by Allah: 'If only we could, we would surely have gone forth with you.' They bring ruin upon themselves. Allah knows well **that they are liars.**" (9:42) "**Destroyed are the falsifiers** who are lost in deception." (51: 10-11) Over & over the Quran warns about lying.

The requirement in Islam of truthfulness & integrity is so high and the agreement between our outsides and insides must be so meticulous that even equivocation, telling half the truth, and evading the straightforward fact is termed as *kadhib*, a lie.

Liars dwell in the very heart of **immorality.** Truth-tellers dwell in the very heart of **immortality.**

THE TRUTH ABOUT LYING...

Lies

CASUAL DUPLICITY PICKS AT THE THREADS OF OUR SOCIAL FABRIC

"When honesty is lost, then wait for the the Day of Judgment" said the truthful Muhammad (p). There is a taint of death, a flavour of mortality in lies. Augustine defined a lie as any statement meant to deceive another.

No lie, he wrote is ever justified, for it sets up a dichotomy between what we say & what is in our hearts.

It was a position that would be adopted by Immanuel Kant, not only because the lie harmed others, but because, it destroyed the liar. A lie not only deceives others, turning them into objects to be manipulated & used, rendering them less than human, but a lie erodes trust. Trust is the cement that holds communities & relationships together. Lies lead to cynicism. This cynicism spreads outwards like a disease until it blights the landscape.

"By a lie a person throws away and, as it were, annihilates their dignity as a person," Kant wrote in Doctrine of Virtue. Long before Kant, Muhammad (p) preached on the ultimate end of the consequences of truth telling & the exact harvest of our deeds: "Be honest because honesty leads to goodness, and goodness leads to Paradise. Beware of falsehood because it leads to immorality, and immorality leads to Hell."

The only moral obligation one is under with reference to lying is not to do it. Employers ask us to lie for them on many occasions. The secretary who "covers" for the boss when he doesn't want to be disturbed. The salesman who makes claims for his product which are not true. Both are lying. Our "embellishments" for friends that gets them a job based on a bogus résumé are nothing but lies. As is "cooking" the books for illegal wealth. Politicians have lost control worldwide as the lies they told over the years are now reaping its just rewards. Lies are flowing like a waterfall through digital means like texting, instant chat & social networking. We, by our own deceitful tongues & flight from the truth, have annihilated our souls...is there any surprise then at the impending universal destruction by God?

If only we could pick out the Pinocchios from the trustworthy. If their noses would only grow at each lie. Many would not be able to prostrate.

Many would not be able to prostrate.

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GUARD

WHAT IS BETWEEN YOUR JAWS & YOU WILL BE GUARANTEED PARADISE

The Australian philosopher Tony Coady probably speaks for most philosophers when he writes, “**Dishonesty** has always been perceived in our culture, and in all cultures but the most bizarre, as a **central human vice**.” But, he adds, “we should note that this perception is consistent with a certain hesitancy about what constitutes a lie & with the more than sneaking suspicion that there might be a **number of contexts in which lying is actually justified**.” Plato defended “the noble lie,” and the English ethicist Henry Sidgwick suggested that a “high-minded lie” in the **direction of humility** might do us all a great deal of good.

Hiding things can be beneficial...if it tends to spiritual good. Here’s one context. In the Quran (40:28): A believer, a man from among the people of Pharaoh, who had **concealed his faith**, said: “Will you slay a man because he says, ‘My Lord is Allah?’ when he has indeed come to you with Clear Signs from your Lord? **If he be a liar, on him is the sin of his lie**: but, if he is telling the Truth, then will fall on you the calamity of which he warns you. Truly Allah guides **not one who transgresses & lies!**”

Another context where “lying” seems to be seen as acceptable is in extreme circumstances involving life & death. From the Quran (16:106): “Anyone who, after accepting faith in Allah, **utters unbelief, except under compulsion** their heart remaining firm in Faith, but such as open their breast to Unbelief, on them is Wrath from Allah. Theirs will be a dreadful Penalty.”

It’s a sensible & reasonable thing in those circumstances to take onto your own shoulders the burden of telling a lie, because you accept the wrongness of it for yourself, for which you feel remorse. But the defining issue in terms of making that kind of judgment is what **lay behind your motivation?**

So for the exceptions above, let’s deal with the worrying worldwide trend & precipitancy

towards casual duplicity, a despicable vice. Truthfulness leads to societal anchor...Lies leads to moral decay...humans acting, behaving & looking like wild beasts. The trouble with lying & deceiving is that their efficiency depends entirely upon a clear notion of the truth that the liar & deceiver **wishes to hide**. In this sense, truth, even if it does not prevail in public, possesses an ineradicable primacy over all falsehoods. Lying is immoral & is unwarranted, unnecessary & ultimately harmful. It is one species of forbidden speech...others are slander, scoffing & mocking.

Honesty leads to temporary pain, but a lie will hurt forever. Every lie that goes through your mind is **slow, self-inflicted psychological & spiritual death**. The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven. Defeat every lie with the truth. Honesty is truly the best policy for everyone (and not just for some, nor just for some of the time) & under essentially all circumstances. This way is the only real hope you have for a healthy life here & in the hereafter.

The modern philosopher of the media, M. McLuhan in a letter wrote: “The modern media are engaged in a **Luciferian conspiracy against the Truth**.” Amen! Exaggeration is a diseased branch of lying & the media is the mother of this diseased branch. We need to develop a healthy skepticism of self-proclaimed experts who close their eyes to everything that doesn’t fit their politically correct ideology. There is too much at stake for us to ignore the beguiling voices that conceal the truth about the evil in our world. God warns us: (2:204) “**There is a certain type of person who charms you in this worldly life with their glib talk (marked by ease & fluency of speech or writing that often suggests or stems from insincerity, superficiality). They call God to witness that they cherish good intentions in their heart, whereas, in fact, they are the deadliest opponent of the Truth.**” Those who exploit do so through layers of deceit...like politicians, hiring charming & eloquent interlocutors. Wrong wears the crown in public life & it must be wrested from such lying heads. Lies so easily trip off the tongue, that you can believe it is the lubricant that greases the gears of society’s work ethics. Lying is an offense against truth. **It’s moral schizophrenia.**

Deceiving others with the canny use of words is seen as clever. Lying is considered integral to many

occupations; virtual magnets for deception. Lawyers, without a qualm of conscience, construct far-fetched theories on behalf of their clients. Reporters misrepresenting themselves in order to gain access to good stories. Public figures lie. Governments lie. One of the distinctions of our age is that lying no longer carries the stigma it once did. It has become institutionalized. It is the way many of us live now because we figured out that if we are persuasive enough, lying works. Countries are invaded based on lies. Millions of lives have been shattered in Iraq on the **lies** of American gov’t officials. And they still walk “free.”

It’s not just about gov’t & the public interest that comes to the fore, but it’s where a politician is tempted to lie for their own advantage. Now the kind of slippery slope of the argument goes like this: Our country would be better governed by our party, therefore anything that has our party re-elected or maintained in power, is better for the country. Therefore anything we do for the party’s interests, and my interests, are really in the interests of the country, and therefore **I can lie** to preserve my own political position, because in the long run, we’re better than the other lot. **There’s no excuse for that, that’s just naked self-interest masquerading as public interest.**

Politicians are masters of the “economy with the truth” art. It is popularly used as a euphemism for deceit, whether by volunteering false information (lying) or by deliberately holding back relevant facts. Advertising personnel are masters of Puffery: an exaggerated claim, such as “the highest quality at the lowest price,” or “the best price, the best service, the best signal.” Such statements are not true.

Lies & its corollaries, (Deceit, Denial, Deception, Fabrication...in short, the occultation of TRUTH, starts with a very simple personal, self decision – and that personal decision is called an INTENTION. On Judgment Day, everything will be adjudicated by the intention one carries in their heart, says the Prophet (p). Lies are always preceded by an intention to cover the Truth & for many reasons...it can be cowardice, fear, self protection, gaining of approval, gaining interests, achieving a goal, covering up one’s tracks because of wrong behaviour, justifying the inexcusable. There are different types of lies & several

levels of lying...ranging from the seemingly “innocuous” lie to the compulsive, pathological liar (the male gender is quite proficient at the compulsive lying business; the female gender at the manipulation business), so leaving classifications aside, lying is **Lying**. It has a devastating impact on all types of relationships. If you’re in a budding relationship & you are lied to once, it’s a misunderstanding, the second time, it’s a moment of huge reflection; upon the third lie, **leave** before you are too involved. A relationship built on lies cannot last for very long, let alone be blessed with “mercy & love” that Allah promises to place between spouses (30:21)

These kinds of deceptive practices tear at the fabric of our society & ultimately result in increased suspicion & further division. Honest persons feel that they are in a realm of a farcical & quixotic quest for some holy grail of honesty that nobody will ever be able to achieve (at least without abundant disclaimers, footnotes & caveats). However, honesty is a grand principle, a lustrous jewel.

Lies work not only to deceive others but most dangerously to **deceive ourselves**. Lying may be done **not** by spoken or written words but by silence or gestures. The most effective lies are spoken by the human face without opening the lips. Our deliberate silence in certain situations can also be deceptive & every bit as devastating as a spoken lie. This leads to broken friendships: “I’m not upset that you lied to me, I’m upset that from now on I can’t believe or trust you.”

Satan said: “Your Lord has only forbidden you this tree, lest you become angels or among those who live forever.” He swore to them: “**I am one of those who give you good advice.**” (7:20-21) Note how slick the words (the lies) are. Satan deceived Adam (p) & Eve by ingenious lying. In addition, he presented himself as extremely well-intentioned. He said that he had done them a favour by giving advice, a “fact” upon which he swore an oath. **Swearing oaths & claiming to be well-intentioned would later come to be among all liars’ most defining characteristics.**

The sin on which hypocrisy is built is falsehood. The spiritual state of liars is extremely confused, for their minds & consciences are not

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