

Untruth

Untruth denotes the disconformity of speech with reality. It is surely the source of evils. From this cause, the Islamic Sharia has banned untruth, censured the untruthful, and threatened them through numerous texts in the Quran and Sunna:

“Allah does not guide a transgressing liar.” (40:28)

“Woe to every sinful liar!” (45:7)

“Those who do not believe in the miracles of Allah invent lies and they are liars.” (16: 105)

In the Farewell Pilgrimage¹, the Prophet (S) said: “Forging lies against me has been common to a great extent. However, it will increase. He who forges lies against me intentionally should find himself a place in Hell. When you receive any hadith, you should first measure it according to the criteria of the Quran and my Sunna. If it conforms to them, you will then adopt it. If not, you should then throw it away².”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “Persistence on telling untruths brings about poverty.”³

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “Allah has made locks for the evil and made drinking wine the master key of all these evils. Untruth, in fact, is eviler than drinking wines.”⁴

“Telling untruths is the destruction of faith.”⁵

“Ali Ibn al-Hussein (a) used to say to his sons: Avoid telling untruths, whether they were significant or venial, or in serious or humorous situations, for a man who tells a trivial lie will surely dare to tell a big one. Know that the Prophet (S) said: A servant persists on telling only the truth until Allah records him as truthful. The teller of lies, on the other side, keeps on telling untruths until he is recorded with Allah as liar.”⁶

Jesus (a) said: “He who tells very much untruth will lose brightness.”⁷

Disadvantages of Untruth

- Untruth brings about ill reputation and indignity. The liar will never be believed even if he tells truths. His testimonies, too, are not admitted, and his promises are not trusted. One of the manners of the liars is that they forget their previous untruths and invent new ones totally contrary to the previous. A liar often invents a number of contrasted untruths as a support of a previous one.
- Untruth causes mutual mistrust and creates feelings of apprehension.
- Untruth produces waste of time and efforts that are exerted for distinguishing between reality and falsity.
- Untruth has many disadvantageous spiritual effects.

Reasons of Untruth

- Habit: An individual may have the habit of telling untruths because of ignorance, influence of the surroundings, or feebleness of the religious restraint. A wise man said: “It is so difficult to wean him who found sweet the suckling of untruth.”
- Greed: It is surely one of the strongest incentives of untruth.
- Enmity and envy: These two things have very often induced to invent false accusations and fabricate libels against enemies. The righteous individuals who promote themselves against plunging in the wrong have frequently had to suffer the tragedies of false accusations.

Sorts of Untruth

False Swearing: False swearing is the most dangerous sort of untruth, because it is a double crime it is flagrant daring against the Almighty Lord and a shocking crime that eradicates the rights.

The Prophet (S) said: “Beware of false swearing, for it changes countries into deserted wastelands⁸.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “False swearing brings poverty to the descendants⁹.”

Perjury: Like the previous, perjury is a serious crime resulting in denial of the rights and commonness of disorder in the society.

The Prophet (a) said: “Before the perjurer finishes his false testimony in front of the judge, his place is Hell is prepared. The same thing is said about him who conceals a testimony¹⁰.”

The holy Quran, also, warned against false wording:

“Stay away from wickedness, idols, and false words.” (22:30)

Damages of false swearing and perjury

- The false swearer and the perjurer do badly to themselves by exposing them to the wrath of God.
- The false swearer and the perjurer do badly to those who encourage them to swear falsely, because such persons support in the fields of wronging people’s rights and insulting their dignities.
- The false swearer and the perjurer do badly to those against whom they swear falsely because they deprive them of their rights.
- The false swearer and the perjurer do badly to the community as a whole, because they spread disorder and destroy the religious and moral values.
- The false swearer and the perjurer do badly to the Islamic Sharia, because they challenge its sacred constitution.

Breach of Promise

Fulfillment of promises is one of the noble traits with which the intelligent people adorn themselves:

“Mention in the Book (the Quran) the story of Ishmael; he was true to his promise, a Messengers and a Prophet.” (19:54)

As he promised a man, Ishmael the prophet confined himself in one place for a whole year waiting for him so as to keep his promise.

It is unfortunate that breach of promise, nowadays, has become a common phenomenon among Muslims who neglected its disadvantages that weaken the mutual confidence, corrupt the social relations, and harm the public interests.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “The promise of the believer is a ransomless vow. He who reneges breaks his word with Allah and exposes himself to His dislike. This is the meaning of Allah’s saying: ***Believers, why do you preach what you do not practice? It is most hateful in the sight of Allah if you say something and do not practice it. (61:2-3)***[11](#)”

The Prophet (S) once, promised he would wait for a man near a rock. When the heat of the sun became so intense, the Prophet’s companions suggested to him to stand in the shadow until that man would come. “No,” said he, “I promised him to wait near this rock. If he does not come, that will be his fault^{[12](#)}.”

Mocking Untruth

Some people find nice to invent mocking lies in order to laugh at others.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “For anyone who forges lies against a believer for the purpose of disgracing him, demeaning his personality, and sticking ill reputation to him, Allah will move him from His guardianship to the Shaitan’s. The Shaitan¹³, however, will not welcome him¹⁴.”

Treatment of Untruth

- The previously mentioned disadvantages of untruth, in addition to the material and ethical inconveniences, should be taken in consideration.
- The merits and virtues of truth should be kept in mind.
- Mental training on telling truth and avoiding telling lies should be permanently practiced until untruth is completely erased.

Justifications of Untruth

Untruth is an unwilling vice that is forbidden by the Islamic law. But, there are certain circumstances in which telling untruths becomes allowable. In case a vital interest cannot be achieved unless untruth is committed, the Islamic Sharia permits it. As an example on such vital interests we cite the salvation of a Muslim individual from killing or capture, the protection of the honor of a Muslim, or the guard of his property.

In such cases, untruth becomes obligatory, according to the Islamic law. Correspondingly, when untruth becomes the only means for achieving a more important mission or remedial goal, it is then preponderant or allowed. Reconciliation between people, the propitiation of wives, and trickeries of wars are matters for which telling untruth is allowable.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “The teller of any untruth will be interrogated on the day of Resurrection except the untruths that are told in three situations: stratagems of war, reestablishing the ruptured relations between two parties of the reconciler, in this case, tells one party something that was not said about him by the other party and does the same thing with the other party so as to make peace between them, and promises to the wives¹⁵.”

¹. The Farewell Pilgrimage is the last hajj of the Prophet (S).

². Quoted from a-Tabirsi; Alihtijaj.

³. Quoted from as-Saduq; al-Khissal.

⁴. Quoted from al-Kafi.

⁵. Quoted from al-Kafi.

⁶. Quoted from al-Kafi.

- [7.](#) Quoted from al-Kafi.
- [8.](#) Quoted from al-Kafi.
- [9.](#) Quoted from al-Kafi.
- [10.](#) Quoted from al-Kafi and Mel La Yahdhuruh ul-Faqih.
- [11.](#) Quoted from al-Kafi
- [12.](#) Quoted from Ilal ush-Sharayii.
- [13.](#) Shaitan is the Devil; Satan.
- [14.](#) Quoted from al-Kafi
- [15.](#) Quoted from al-Kafi.

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