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Truthfulness

Once, Mahdi and his father went for a walk. On their way they saw two kids playing. One of them said, “Do not lie, for if you do, God will send you to hell.”

Mahdi’s father stepped forward and said, “Do not say such a thing; God will not send anybody to hell. It is your actions that will do so.”

When they left, Mahdi asked his father, “I did not understand what you said. What do you mean by saying that lies will lead people into hell?”

His father said, “What would happen if somebody ate poisonous food or drugs?”

Mahdi said, “They would become poisoned and ill.”

His father said, “OK, what happens when one eats healthy and nutritious food?”

Mahdi replied, “Their condition will be healthy and strong.”

Mahdi’s father said, “Sins and good deeds are similar. If someone commits a sin, it is like taking poison. Of course, the poison will make him ill. If you act virtuously, it is like eating healthy, nutritious food – and so you will be in good health.”

“Therefore God does not take the liar to hell, but the lie itself does, because God is kinder to people than their parents. He never wishes harm for us, but He guides us like a doctor who gives advice on maintaining sound health. For example, he may advise one not to drink icy water after hot tea, or to brush one’s teeth every day. Therefore, God wishes us to perform certain duties in order to be comfortable in this world as well as the next.”

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