

Lying — and the harm it does

A lie is cheap to say and expensive to keep. The texts treat it as a habit that is recorded, a mark of hypocrisy, and a thing that empties worship of its worth.



★ Avoid false speech

فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ

“So avoid the uncleanness of idols and avoid false speech.”
Lying is named in the same breath as idols.

Qur'an 22:30

★ Be with the truthful

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are true.” Not only speak truth — keep the company of those who do.

Qur'an 9:119

★ The first of the three signs

“The signs of a hypocrite are three: whenever he speaks he tells a lie, whenever he is entrusted he proves dishonest, whenever he promises he breaks his promise.” Lying heads the list.

Sahih al-Bukhari 2682

★ Until it is written down

“Truth leads to Paradise, and a man keeps telling the truth until he is recorded with Allah as truthful; lying leads to obscenity and obscenity to the Fire, and a man keeps lying until he is recorded a liar.” A habit, not a single word.

Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Birr wa's-Silah wa'l-Adab

★ The gravest of the great sins

Asked about the major sins he named associating partners with Allah, killing, and disobeying parents — then said: shall I not tell you of the gravest of them? False speech, or false testimony. The narrator Shu'bah thought it was “false testimony”.

Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Iman

★ A fast with nothing in it

مَنْ لَمْ يَدَعْ قَوْلَ الزُّورِ وَالْعَمَلَ بِهِ فَلَيْسَ لِلَّهِ حَاجَةٌ فِي أَنْ يَدَعَ طَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ

“Whoever does not give up false speech and acting by it, Allah has no need of his giving up his food and drink.” Hunger without honesty buys nothing.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1903

★ The worst lie of all

مَنْ أَفْرَى الْفَرَى أَنْ يُرِيَ عَيْنَهُ مَا لَمْ تَرَ

“Among the worst of lies is that a man claims his eyes saw what they did not see” — inventing a dream. A lie about the unseen is worse than a lie about the seen.

Sahih al-Bukhari 7043

★ And never about him ﷺ

لَا تَكْذِبُوا عَلَيَّ، فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ كَذَبَ عَلَيَّ فَلْيَلِجِ النَّارَ

“Do not lie about me, for whoever lies about me, let him enter the Fire.” Forwarding an unchecked quotation of his words is where most people meet this.

Sahih al-Bukhari 106

★ The one who is not called a liar

لَيْسَ بِالْكَاذِبِ مَنْ أَصْلَحَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فَقَالَ خَيْرًا أَوْ نَمَى خَيْرًا

“He is not a liar who makes peace between people, saying something good or conveying something good.” The one named exception — and it is for reconciling, not for convenience.

Sunan at-Tirmidhi 1938 • hasan sahih (at-Tirmidhi)