

Being Truthful: the Qur'an and the Example of the Prophet (SAW)

As-salámu 'alaikum wa rahmatul láhi wa barakátuh!"

"A-úthu billáhi minash shaytánir rajeem. Bismilláhir rahmánir raheem.

Al hamdu lillahi nahmaduhu wanasta'eenahu, wanastagh-firuhu, wanatoobu ilayhi, wana'oothu Billaahi min shuroori an-fusinaa, wamin sayyi aati a'maalinaa.

May- Yahdillahu fa huwal muhtad, wa may- yudlill falan tajidaa lahu waliyan murshida. Wa ash-hadu an Laa ilaaha ill-Alláh, wahdahoo laa shareeka lah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhoo warasooluh"

In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In today's khutbah I would like to discuss what Islam teaches about lying and honesty by pulling in ayahs and hadiths which will serve as perfect exemplars for our actions.

Muslims are required to adhere to ethics and to adopt a strong moral code as a compass. This can best be seen from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). He, the Prophet (SAW), said that he was sent to perfect ethics, morality and good human conduct. Allah the Almighty (SWT) guides us to pray and ask for good morals in the Holy Quran in this way:

"Ey Allah make me the follower of good morals as no one can guide to the path of good morals except You, and keep me away from bad morals, and no one except You can save me from them."

It is well known that Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) life was and is without doubt the best example of good morals, as the Qur'an confirms in Ayah 159 of Surah Al-Imran: ***"By an act of mercy from Allah, you [Ya Rasul Allah] were gentle in your dealings with [unbelievers] them ... "***

Sahih Bukhari records the dialogue between Abu Sufyan bin Herb, the Quraysh representative, and Heraclius, the Roman Emperor. Though a non-Muslim at that time, Abu Sufyan could not help but attest to the nobility, honesty, integrity, generosity and truthfulness of the Prophet (SAW). Truth has a great power and force.

Islam's emphasis on nobility, ethics and morality can impress any open-minded person who has an objective and unbiased approach. That is why within a few years Islam revolutionized what had been a corrupt society. The Prophet (SAW) once said that good moral conduct is a virtue.

Teaching of morals in Islam has two elements. On one hand it exhorts people to practice virtues, on the other it commands them to give up the vices. There is a long list of vices, and one of them is to lie or utter falsehood. Imam Navavi (Rehm A) has defined a "lie" as a report contrary to facts. The report may be given deliberately or out of ignorance. If it is deliberate and intentional than it is an outright sin, while if given in ignorance it is not.

Lying is the worst vice. It may be by tongue or by action or both and in all cases it is highly condemnable. Lying weakens the *Iman* (faith) and exhibits inner hollowness. Lying is against the teachings of all prophets. Whoever lies, his heart is dulled. Lying renders the heart incapable of receiving guidance. Ayah 3 of Surah Al-zumar says: "Allah does not guide any ungrateful liar..." The Prophet (SAW) said: "Lying leads you to sin and sin takes you to Hell. Persistence in lying is recorded in the history sheet to be used as a witness against the liar on the Day of Judgment."

Lying has many faces in our society and new ones are being invented. The one which is especially common these days is to create a big story on a mere whim or suspicion. This form of lying is not only belief in something which is untrue but the action of passing it on to others without doing an objective inquiry or investigation.

Think before you say something about others. Be very cautious and extremely careful while making comments about a person in his absence. Avoid suspicion and mistrust and think good of people. May Allah (SWT) clean our hearts, and enable us to watch our tongue and our acts, Amin!