37989 - He fasts and lies

the question

There is a man who is accustomed to telling lies ever since he was a child. He is trying to overcome this bad habit but he forgets and tells lies, then he asks Allah’s forgiveness again. Does that have any effect on his fasting?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Al-Bukhaari (1903, 6057) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever does not give up false speech and acting upon it, and ignorance, Allah has no need of him giving up his food and drink.”

The phrase “false speech” includes lying, backbiting, spreading slander and bearing false witness, and every kind of speech that is haraam.

Acting upon it means doing evil and immoral actions. See Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi.

Ignorance means committing all kinds of sins. This was the view of al-Sindi in Haashiyat Ibn Maajah.

Al-Haafiz said:

With regard to the phrase “Allah has no need of him giving up his food and drink”, Ibn Battaal said: This does not mean that he is to be told to stop fasting, rather it is a warning against false speech and the other things mentioned along with it… this is an indication that (his fast) is not accepted… what is meant is that a fast that is contaminated with falsehood is rejected and that a fast that is free of that is aceepted.

Ibn al-‘Arabi said: This hadeeth implies that whoever does the things mentioned here will not be rewarded for his fast. What is meant is that the reward for fasting cannot outweigh the sin of false speech and the other things mentioned here.

What is meant is that all sins have an effect on the fast and thus reduce the reward for fasting. The reward may be cancelled out altogether if there are too many sins.

So you have to continue to strive against yourself until you give up this evil habit. Every time you sin you have to repent and seek forgiveness, for the one who repents from sin is like one who did not sin at all.

May Allah help us to do that which He loves and which pleases Him.