

The Liar

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Once upon a time, there was an emperor. In case you didn't know, this emperor was a liar, plain and simple. Everyone knew that. He contradicted himself all the time. Well, actually, it would be a lie if we say that everyone knew that. The emperor himself had never thought of himself as a liar. If you think that this is pathetic, you don't know much about the history of dictatorship. This pattern has been repeated over and over ... even to this date.

Now, the emperor was a big fan of mindfulness. The emperor often preached, "You must practice mindfulness. You must live at each moment." Of course, he was a great practitioner of "mindfulness." He lived only at each moment. He never remembered anything from the past. He never thought about the future either. It was as simple as that. By the way, are you at any rate familiar with mindfulness as understood and practiced today? If so, you should be able to tell that there is something wrong with this kind of "mindfulness."

Anyway, how come such a truly "mindful" emperor routinely contradicted himself? Well, this was because every bit of his "memory" was created on the fly at every moment. This was his "mindfulness." And more often than most of the time, the fabricated memory contradicted the fact. So, it was impossible for the emperor to tell the truth as commonly understood. But this didn't bother the emperor. Again, he was very, very "mindful." So, he never even imagined that he was lying. To him, it was everyone else who was lying.

One day, the emperor fired a minister accusing that the minister lied. Following the standard resignation procedure of that country at that time, the minister made the last

statement under oath. For the first time in his life, he actually blamed the emperor as a liar. This was an immediate hit among the people of the country. Everyone, of course, everyone but one, cheered. The minister became an instant celebrity.

Of course, this infuriated the emperor. He could not stand it. And he thought that it was the act of making a statement under oath that made the fired minister so popular. The emperor thought that he must do the same to make himself popular again. So, he volunteered to make a statement under oath against the minister.

The day came. The supreme judge asked the emperor, "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?" The emperor said, "Yes, I do." But exactly at that moment, nature called. He needed to excuse himself right away. The best he could think of was to cancel the session by saying, "Actually, no, I don't." This immediately made the judge rule that the emperor committed perjury. So, the emperor had to finish his business in the dungeon toilet.

While still sitting on that hard seat, his "mindfulness" slipped. All of sudden, he recalled the oath statement and wondered, "What was that thing? That God thing. Why didn't He help me?" Oh, yes, as you might have guessed, he did swear at Him.