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# **Truthfulness Is a Survival Compass in a World in Crisis**

Enjoy Psychological Stability, Gain Time and Effort,  
and Hit the Mark

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## **Introduction**

Perhaps no one can stand before the public and say, "I am the truthful one," because Allah the Almighty has reserved this attribute for His Divine Entity and for His chosen messengers and holy servants. We, however, should possess this noble attribute, because it is the reason for our redemption and success, and the aspiration of all those who want to bring about useful changes.

When comes the day in which we speak words of honor, give truthful promises, and lead a life based on exhorting one another to truth? As long as we adhere to honor, honesty, and truth, we are a living nation that will never die, for there is neither honor nor truth when intentions, words, and deeds are devoid of truthfulness.

One of the poets said,

"Truthfulness is the best thing you may have it,

Neither exploits nor noble descent can match it."

The poet Ahmed Shawqi said,

"One cannot be deemed truthful

Unless his actions testify to his words."

Human beings' civilization, history, and future are contingent on a truthful word, for with right and truthfulness, we live a decent and

happy life. Neither noble deed nor blessing can exist without the truthfulness of words and the sweetness of their meanings.

Any one of us is able to cultivate truthfulness and sobriety in order to reap trust and honesty, for truthfulness is glory, and telling lies is humiliation. Moreover, truthfulness is the spring of hearts, the uprightness of physical constitution, the fruit of magnanimity, and the light of conscience. If one cannot learn truthfulness from others, let him not try to teach them his unique style of telling lies.

My words may not necessarily be acceptable, but they must be true. Truthfulness has a scent not smelled by noses, but felt by hearts. Its effects, however, appear in establishing peace, spreading trust among brothers, and developing the bonds of love and intimacy within and between families and friends.

In brief, Islam calls us saying, "O people, there is a refuge in truthfulness, and disappointment in lying and fraud. There are two paths in this life: the path of truthfulness that a prudent and balanced person chooses, and the path of lying that a double-minded, ignorant, and foolish person chooses. The first one leads to tranquility and deliverance, and the second one leads to doom and destruction."

## **Types of truthfulness**

Truthfulness is a higher psychological faculty and willpower by which man can prove his good manners without affectation. It is saying things that match the reality, and it symbolizes man whose mind controls his vain desires; man who hates lying, deceit, hypocrisy, and misleading. It is the symbol of purity in the human soul, which renders the truthful person an object of appreciation and respect.

The minimum truthfulness is that the tongue and the heart have such a rapport that they do not disagree with each other. It should appear in words, in actions, and in all circumstances.

The word 'truthfulness' has six meanings:

1. Truthfulness in words: it is to be truthful with Allah and with people.
2. Truthfulness in actions: it is to do one's best in a particular matter and be outwardly and inwardly truthful and far from insincerity.
3. Truthfulness in intentions: intention is the spirit of action; therefore, one should purify it and remove its causes of evil, for the truthful one in his intention will be always sincere.
4. Truthfulness of determination: it is a strong emphasis on doing good deeds whenever possible.
5. Truthfulness of fulfillment: it is to fulfill one's promises of doing what is good without any going back on one's word.

6. Truthfulness in achieving all the stages of religion: it is the highest degree of truthfulness, such as the truthfulness in fear of Allah and hope in His mercy, and asceticism, love, and trust in Him in everything and all other noble traits. It is sufficient for truthfulness as a cause of praise that Allah, the exalted, said, **“O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with the truthful ones.”**

(At-Tawbah: 9)

Man's relationship with his Lord has remained dependent on truthfulness and sincerity in his acts of ritual worship and his commercial and civil dealings. Had it not been for truthfulness, everything would have become trivial and tainted with many dispraised traits, which lead the one having them to perils and crises.

Man usually cannot bear the various acts of worship such as standing to perform prayer and supplications at night while others are sleeping, fasting in very hot times, fighting in the way of Allah despite all its rigors and troubles. Man can never bear all these acts without being truthful with himself and his Almighty Lord through thanking the Granter who conferred blessings on him.

These acts would lead man to the stages of real worship of free people, rather than those of traders and slaves, as Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) described when he said, **“People in their worship are of three types: some worship Allah, because they fear Him, and this is the worship of slaves; and some worship Allah in desire of His reward, and this is the worship of traders; and some worship Allah out of their love**

**for Him, and this is the worship of the free, and it is the most excellent worship."**<sup>1</sup>

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1. *Al-Wasael*, vol. 1, p. 62

## **Truthfulness is confined to Allah, the prophets, and the believers**

Allah, the Exalted, described His divine Entity as truthful in two ways:

- a. His words are true: everything was revealed and sent down by the Maker, Glorified and Sublime be He, about the matters of this world and the Hereafter is unquestioned, **“And who is more truthful in statement than Allah.”** (An-Nisa: 87)
- b. His promise is true: all that Allah promised His prophets and His righteous servants such as victory, superiority, and so forth has been fulfilled, and all that He promised the infidels such as destruction and abandonment has been fulfilled as well; for instance, the fulfillment of His promise to conquer Mecca, **“Certainly Allah had shown to His Messenger the vision with truth: you shall most certainly enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah pleases, in security.”** (Al-Fath: 27. Trans. Shakir)

The former nations denied their prophets and messengers despite the strength of arguments and evidence proving their true prophethood and messages. In the same way, the Master of Prophets was denied as well, as if sarcasm and denial were handed down from generation to generation.

For that reason, the Holy Quran repeatedly emphasized the truthfulness of the Prophet Muhammad and the rest prophets,



renewing this fact in most of its chapters and verses such as, **“On seeing the confederate forces, the believers said, ‘This is what Allah and his Messenger had promised us, and Allah and His Messenger are true; and it only increased their faith and submission.’”** (Al-Ahzab: 22)

Allah praised many prophets and described them in the Quran as truthful such as Abraham, Ishmael, Joseph, Enoch (*Idris*), and the Final Prophet Muhammad (May Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him and his progeny). He was better known for his deep-seated truthfulness and trust among his tribe and his people. When he came back to his wife Khadijah after the first revelation, she said to him, “You always say the truth.”

In its description of the believers, the Holy Quran stipulated that truthfulness is one of their deep-rooted traits, **“The patient, the truthful, the obedient, those who spend beneficently, and those who ask forgiveness in the watches of the night.”** (Al-Umran: 17) **“Among the believers there are people who are true in their promise to Allah.”** (Al-Ahzab: 23)

Truthfulness has been knocking on the doors of the prophets, the holy servants, and the righteous believers, sitting in the shade of their blessed lofty tree, for it is to them like the head to the body. By means of telling the truth and speaking justly, the messengers convey their divine messages, and through truthfulness and submission, the believers receive the rulings of the heaven and the

mercy of Allah directly from the mouths of the prophets in a way that guides to goodness and righteousness.

Truthfulness is a feature inseparable from the process of propagation and guidance, and it sits on the throne of the noble features of the messenger in conveying the message as it is without straining or attracting and without any increase or decrease. When these noble features reach their highest point, they will need high summits to reach their well-deserved place in a seat of truth with a most Powerful King.

These high summits are exclusively reserved for prophets. The other places from below the summit down to the foot are shared by the believers according to the faith, degree, and perfection of each one of them. Therefore, the degrees and positions of the companions with Allah, the Exalted, the prophet, and the holy Imams differed according to the degrees of their truthfulness in dealing with the prophethood, the message, and the doctrine.

## **Truthfulness is the sign of a believer**

Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Quran, **“And who is more truthful in statement than Allah?”** (An-Nisa’:87). The prophetic narration said, **“Truthfulness is the raiment of religion.”**<sup>2</sup>

This brief presentation of the verse and the narration shows the importance of truthfulness in the life of the believing individual who should have the good moral qualities that reflect the right divine education derived from Allah’s law and the religion ordained for His servants for whom He intended good in this world and the hereafter.

Truthfulness is an attribute of the Creator, the Exalted, and He wants it to be one of His servants’ attributes as well. Truthfulness is generally required in the words and actions of all human beings. It is elaborately required of the believer at the level of "words" because lying is not one of his attributes and morals.

It is also required at the level of "intention and will" because the purity of intention means to be truthful with Allah, the Exalted associating none with Him in your intention; otherwise, the action will not be truthful.

At the level of "determination," the believer should not retreat or hesitate when he intends to do something to please Allah the Exalted.

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<sup>2</sup> *Uyoun al-Hikam*, vol. 5, p.271.

At the level of "actions," the believer should be truthful in all his affairs of earning money or dealing with others around him, because his truthfulness and integrity is his way to gain the trust of people and open their hearts to him. For that reason, a narration stated, **"Do not be deceived by their prayer and fasting, for one may be used to praying and fasting and if he left them, he would feel uncomfortable; rather, test them with the truthfulness of their speech and their administration of trust."**

This narration and the like clarify that those who perform many prayers and fasting without being truthful and trustworthy should not deceive us. Their truthfulness should reveal that their acts of worship are intended only for Allah rather than being conducted out of hypocrisy, dispute, or gaining people's trust for purposes that have nothing to do with Allah (Glorified and Sublime be He).

Hence, the true believer should behave truthfully and trustfully with Allah and with people in all his dealings to accustom himself to this great attribute that adorns human and raises his position first with Allah, and second with people, even at the expense of a benefit that might go to waste or a scourge that might befall him.

However, to miss the benefit or to be afflicted with a scourge in religion is much easier than lying. He probably obtains the benefit or fends off the scourge, but he may endanger his faith and commit

sins and forbidden acts, thus deserving the divine punishment prepared for the liars.

Every yellow metal seems to be gold at first glance. However, when probed by a touchstone, its nature, whether pure or adulterated, will be clearly exposed. In the same way, the truthfulness of the believer is his touchstone by means of which he can know whether his acts of worship, dealings, words, actions, and silent permissions and disapprovals are in line with the commands of Allah or they are fake or admixed with fraud and righteousness.

Truthfulness and faithfulness function as a wide door through which the rest of good deeds enter. If they are reformed, then everything else is reformed, but if they are corrupted, then everything else is corrupted.

One cannot imagine a believer filling his nights with prayer and his daytime with fasting, and struggling in the way of Allah, but at the same time, he is ready to lie or fabricate to gain mundane benefits. However, if there is such a believer, then he must be deceptive and his acts of worship will not avail him. He will not reap but fatigue, misery, and suffering, without gaining any reward for what he has done.

## **The exploits of truthfulness**

Among the necessities of social life and its basic fundamentals are the prevalence of mutual understanding and cooperation between the elements of the society and its members, to be able to carry the burdens of life, achieve its goals and objectives, and then to lead a happy and decent life and to coexist peacefully. Without proper mutual understanding, close cooperation, and the exchange of trust and confidence between individuals, these ultimate goals cannot be realized.

It is understood that the tongue is the tool of understanding, the starting point of meanings and ideas, and the interpreter that translates the different concepts and objectives going on in the minds of people. It plays a critical role in the life of the community and the interaction of its thoughts and feelings. On the truthfulness or lying of the tongue, the social happiness or misery is based.

If the tongue is truthful and faithful in translating the emotions and purposes of the soul, it will convey the message of understanding and confidence, and will be a pathfinder of good, and a messenger of love and peace. However, if it is deceitful and falsifier, it will be a pathfinder of evil, a cause of antipathy, mutual hatred among members of society, and a major element in demolishing its structure.

For that reason, truthfulness has been one of the necessities and urgent needs of society, and it has had noticeable effects and a positive impact on people's lives. It is the system of a happy society, a symbol of its high morals, and evidence on the integrity and nobility of its members. It is also a strong motive for having a good reputation, receiving good praise and appreciation, and earning the trust and confidence of people.

Moreover, truthfulness has remarkable effects on saving precious time, and gaining physical and psychological comfort.

If buyers and sellers were honest in their dealings, they would save themselves the trouble of bargaining, and the loss of precious time in pursuing the true state of affairs and looking for the truth.

If employers agreed on observing the truth, their agreement would safeguard the people's rights, and ensure their security and prosperity. If people were used to telling the truth, they would reap its enormous benefits, and substantial gains. However, if lying prevailed in a society, its moral values would depreciate, its members would be afflicted with dissatisfaction and discontent, and it would be hard for them to cooperate and understand one another. Such a society is prone to scattering and collapse.

It has been narrated that there was a man used to disobeying Allah. He was filled with flaws and he tried to fix them, but in vain. Then, he went to a scholar for advice about fixing his flaws. Thereupon, the scholar ordered him to fix only one flaw, which is lying and advised him to say the truth whatever the case may be, and the man gave him his solemn word.

After a while, he wanted to drink wine, so he bought it and filled a glass. When he raised it to his mouth, he said, "What should I tell the scholar if he asks me, 'have you drunk wine?' Should I lie to him? No, I will never drink wine. The next day, the man wanted to commit another sin, but he remembered the promise he gave to the scholar, and as a result, he did not commit that sin.

Whenever the man wants to commit a sin, he refrains from committing it so as not to lie to the scholar. With the passage of time, the man gave up all his flaws thanks to his commitment to the attribute of truthfulness.

The cooperating and harmonious society whose members love one another usually builds up deep-seated mutual trust between its members. Nothing can develop that trust between the society members like truthfulness in words and actions, and keeping away from the destructive nature of lying and hypocrisy.

Man may win a round through telling a lie or through committing an act of fraud to cheat people, but his true nature will soon be



disclosed and his position will be unmasked in no time. He will lose his lifetime because his brothers will not trust him anymore. That is life where the rope of lying is short, and it always leads to loss, problems, horrors, and dark tunnels for which there is no reason and may cause the liar calamities and tribulations many times over.

However, if someone always tells the truth, his outcome, even though late, will be good, because the best outcome is always for the truthful people who, in the end, captivate hearts as well as things.

## **Truthfulness, lying, and showing off**

Truthfulness is an attribute that everyone wishes to be described with even those who lack it. It is a source of success in human society; therefore, the heavenly religions took great care of it, spread its outstanding merits, and called people to be marked with it.

Truthfulness and Lying are polar opposites. Lying is a reprehensible quality; even those who have it deny it and try to disown it and strip it off in front of people. The Quran and Sunnah<sup>3</sup> call for truthfulness, but in the meantime, they forbid lying and warn those who insistently perpetrate it of fire.

Showing off, on the other hand, is one of the psychological diseases that afflict some people making them seek worldly benefits. Their only concern is that people see them pay money, provide services, or perform some acts of worship, forgetting the major goals that man can reach with good deeds.

A person with considerable insight into life is the one who is guided by the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Greatest Messenger such as following the Book and wisdom, speculating the horizons and his own soul, taking lessons from the history of nations and peoples, pondering the stories of the prophets, contemplating the

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<sup>3</sup> Sunnah is the transmitted record of the teachings, actions, and sayings, silent permissions or disapprovals of Prophet Muhammad and his progeny (peace be upon them). (*Translator*)

devastation and extinction that the wretched people faced along with the injustice and arbitrariness that the prophets suffered at the hands of the tyrants of their times, and the enmity of their people who showed open hostility to them except for some loyal and truthful companions who are few in every time and in every place.

Using his effective remedies for life's challenges and problems, the truthful person looks at his surroundings with penetrating insight, perfectly sure of the fact that the life of the abusers is merely a series of problems, and that they are unable to solve one of them. Their today's problems are the very problems they have faced since thousands of years. The more the time passes, the more their problems complicate. What is the use of a life filled with knotty problems where there is no slight hope of solving even one of them? Those who lead such a life, nonexistence would be better for them.

However, the truthful and sincere person is one of the people, but he does not experience a detectable effect of any such problems on his life. If he has any problem in his life, it is his deep yearning to know himself and the universe around him.

This yearning naturally drags him to the true knowledge that all problems crash on its threshold. He is sure that the one who ignited this yearning in his soul will lead him to the answer that gladdens his heart. This yearning is the savior who saves him from the problems of the world, and the guide that leads him to his objectives. In the same

way it saved him, it would save the people, and wherever it led him, it would lead them.

Man is created for life not for death, for knowledge not for ignorance, and for freedom not for slavery, so that everyone knows that life, knowledge, and freedom lie in truthfulness, and that death, ignorance and slavery is the fate of those who develop lying and showing off into second nature to them in this life.

Truthfulness, lying, and showing off are various topics mentioned in the Quran and the prophetic Sunnah, and in all the heavenly books. These topics are found in our minds, for the mind enjoins truthfulness and makes people love it, and forbids and rejects lying and calls for sincerity in intentions and actions so that people fall not into showing off.

## **The benefits of truthfulness**

Truthfulness is the foundation of the believer's life, and the balance of Allah, the Exalted, in which words, deeds, and intentions are weighed. The Holy Quran has repeatedly commanded us to adhere to truthfulness, **“O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with the truthful ones.”** (Al-Baqarah: 119).

The fruits of truthfulness manifest themselves in the verse in which Allah, the Exalted said, **“Allah will say, ‘This is a day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness.’ they have gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide in them forever, Allah is pleased with them and they will be pleased with Him. That is the great attainment.”** (Al-Maedah: 119).

Moreover, Allah in His Holy Quran gives the truthful good news of a special throne in a seat of truth with a most Powerful King, and promises the believers high positions in the hereafter, for He is the Truthful in His promise, **“Surely, the righteous will be in gardens and rivers in a seat of truth with a most Powerful King.”** (Al-Qamar: 54-55).

**“O you who have believed! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness of Allah's sake, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives; if he be rich or poor, Allah is nearer to them both in compassion; therefore let not your desires cause you to commit injustice; and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allah is aware of what you do.”** (Al-Nisa':135). This verse calls all people for sticking to truthfulness,

especially in testimony to establish the truth and refute falsehood. This can be achieved only through full compliance with giving true testimony and keeping away from committing perjury, lying, fraud, and falsehood.

Behaving in that way would recognize rights, administer justice and victory for the oppressed, and let down liars and frauds, a matter that the Holy Quran repeatedly confirmed in its blessed verses. We always hear that the true believer always tries to follow the truth and guidance and to avoid misguidance and low desires.

To stick to justice and giving upright testimony for Allah, the Exalted is the very way of being truthful in words and actions. The truthful one is he who tells the very truth without equivocation nor deception nor misrepresentation nor renunciation. He always tells the truth even if it causes harm to himself, to his parents, to his relatives, to his friends, to his tribe, to his colleagues, or to the people with whom he has mundane mutual interest, and the like.

All these considerations are ephemeral in front of the truthful when he tells the truth, for he puts nothing before his eyes but the satisfaction of Allah, the Almighty, the establishment of the truth, and the uprooting of falsehood, thereby accepting the results with remarkable magnanimity even if they are to his detriment. He considers the pleasure of giving upright testimony for Allah greater than an ephemeral pleasure based on falsehood.

Unlike the truthful one, the liar who fabricates stories and commits perjury may win the round, but he will live with a guilty conscience until the end of his life. He feels compunction, because he obtained an acquittal or gave false testimony in favor of falsehood at the expense of others' rights and to the detriment of the oppressed whose souls and breaths will keep chasing the perjurers and those who benefited from their testimony. They will finally break their backs, embitter their life, shorten their ages, and blacken their days rendering them void of any value or increment.

In addition, they will suffer severe punishment on the Day of Judgment when neither wealth nor children will be of any benefit except for him who comes to Allah with a pure heart.

Then, with truthfulness, people will be safe from fraud, treachery, robbery, and all the bad vices that lead to the destruction of human societies. However, by means of truthfulness, everyone has a right will enjoy it, the realities of things will reveal themselves, and there will be no doubt nor loss nor cheating nor betrayal.

Telling the truth is a great pleasure known only to the truthful people, whereas telling lies is a dispraised and rationally ugly trait. Lying results in killing the people's trust in one another, and its prevalence in any society leads to the downfall of human values and principles.

The Sharia has prohibited it and considered those who keep perpetrating it deserving of severe punishment, for it is one of the big

sins that lead those who always commit it to be worthy of eternal misery in hell.



## **Conclusion**

Truthfulness is the greatest virtue. He who tells the truth, increases the blessing of his deeds owing to the fact that truthfulness is a survival compass that saves from all lapses and setbacks. It is a source of every virtue that brings tranquility to the soul, and brings the roads close to the truth without applause or fabrication, where one can find psychological stability, gain time and effort, and hit the mark without affectation, inquiry, and loss of life.

How great the benefits of truthfulness are! They are too numerous to be listed on a paper like this. If the attribute of truthfulness prevailed among us, we could easily feel its practical usefulness and taste its sweet palatable fruits.

The most important and striking feature of the happy community is its keen interest in rectifying, refining, and purifying the human conduct in a manner whose miraculous nature and idealism have subjugated human beings in every time and in every place up to the highest level of perfection that Allah, the Almighty intended for them, out of their being His vicegerents in His land.

In view of the fact that truthfulness is one of the noblest moral traits and the best factor in the perfection of human soul, the Holy Quran emphasized this trait and how the Pure Entities (peace be upon them) integrated into it. All those who yearn for purity have only to knock on the door. We ascend the ladder of glory as far as we

ascend the ladder of truthfulness because of the direct proportion between them. This fact requires us to shoulder the burdens of the human perfection elements, and truthfulness undoubtedly heads the list of these elements.

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