

## TRUTHFULNESS

It is narrated there was a very sinful man. He had all types of evils in him. Also, he had the feeling he was bad. Despite his efforts, he was unable to quit the evils. Ultimately, he went to a scholar. The scholar welcomed him and asked what the matter was. The sinful man told his situation without mincing a word and expressed his wish to become good. The scholar advised him to give up lying, and always speak truth. The man was amazed that from so many sins he commits the scholar had advised him just to quit telling a lie. How it can help me? He thought. However, he resolved to never lie to anyone. He returned back home. Habitual of doing sins, as he was, he wanted to drink wine. So it was brought forth to him. He was about to touch the wine bowl that he suddenly thought, "What will I answer if the scholar asked me whether I drank wine? I cannot tell a lie. And speaking truth will cause disgrace." Ultimately, he gave up his intention of drinking wine. Similarly, whenever he intended to do any sin he thought what he would respond to the scholar. He visualized the scene of him being disgraced in case he has spoken truth. Slowly, he gave up all the sins and became a good man. This was just the blessing of speaking truth.

**Another** story is related, about a boy who was habitual of lying all the time. Rather he lied to put people in trouble and ridicule them. When taking a bath in a river he would pretend to be drowning and shouted for rescue. When people around there rushed to rescue him, he started swimming and laughed at them. He did so daily. Once, he started drowning. Now he really shouted for rescue, "By God, help me from drowning." People recalled his previous mischiefs and thought he was doing the same. No one paid attention. He drowned. He lost his life for telling a lie.

What is truthfulness? It is that a man says what is true or narrates the story as it is without addition or deletion. Allah has commanded to speak truth:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّٰدِقِينَ﴾ التوبة: ١١٩

Translation of Meaning: "O ye who believe! Be careful of your duty to Allah, and be with the truthful." [At-Taubah:119]

Allah has attributed truthfulness to Himself. The Qur'an has it:

﴿وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا﴾ النساء: ١٢٢

Translation of Meaning: “And who can be more truthful than Allah in utterance?” [An-Nisa:122]

It is so that His book is the truest. Allah says:

﴿هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ﴾ الأحزاب: ٢٢

Translation of Meaning: “This is that which Allah and His messenger promised us. Allah and His messenger are true.” [Al-Ahzab:22]

**Truthfulness** is the attribute inseparable to the lives of the prophets. Allah Himself has testified truthfulness of His prophets and messengers. So He said:

﴿وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَدِيقًا نَبِيًّا﴾ مريم: ٤١

Translation of Meaning: “And make mention (O Muhammad) in the Scripture of Abraham. Lo! he was a saint, a prophet.” [Maryam:41]

Allah said about Ismail (may peace be upon him):

﴿وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا﴾ مريم: ٥٤

Translation of Meaning: “And make mention in the Scripture of Ishmael. Lo! he was a keeper of his promise, and he was a messenger (of Allah), a prophet.” [Maryam:54]

Similarly, He said about Yusuf (*Alaihis Salam*):

﴿يُوسُفُ أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُ﴾ يوسف: ٤٦

Translation of Meaning: “Joseph! O thou truthful one!” [Yusuf:46]

Likewise, He said about Idris (*Alaihis Salam*):

﴿وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِيسَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَدِيقًا نَبِيًّا﴾ مريم: ٥٦

Translation of Meaning: “And make mention in the Scripture of Idris. Lo! he was a saint, a prophet.” [Maryam:56]

**The** Prophet (ﷺ), before he announced his prophethood, was called by his people as ‘truthful’ and ‘trustworthy’. After the beginning of

revelation when the Prophet (ﷺ) became anxious, his wife Hazrat Khadija (*Radhi Allahu Anha*) said consoling him, “Allah will never let you down, for you speak the truth.”

**There** are countless occasions of speaking truth. From various aspects it is a comprehensive quality of all the righteous deeds. Truthfulness with Allah is sincerity; all the deeds should be performed just for the sake of Allah (Ta'ala) without a sense of show off. This is the reality of truthfulness with Allah. It is the first and foremost condition for deeds to be accepted. So, the basis of Allah's obedience and following His commandments, is truthfulness. Sans this, deeds of obedience are futile. Similarly, truthfulness regarding people is to always speak truth. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«كَبُرَتْ خِيَانَةٌ أَنْ تُحَدِّثَ أَخَاكَ حَدِيثًا هُوَ لَكَ مُصَدِّقٌ وَأَنْتَ بِهِ كَاذِبٌ» [أحمد]

Translation: “The biggest breach of trust is that you tell a thing to your brother who believes it to be true, whereas you have lied to him.” [Ahmad]

A man also lies to himself and it is that he is deceived about himself knowingly. He knows the evils he has in him but he does not confess them nor does he try to remove them. Thus he keeps cheating himself.

The Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«دَعْ مَا يَرِيكَ إِلَى مَا لَا يَرِيكَ فَإِنَّ الصِّدْقَ طُمَأْنِينَةٌ وَإِنَّ الْكَذِبَ رِيبةٌ» [ترمذي]

Translation: “Leave what makes you in doubt for what does not make you in doubt. The truth brings tranquility while falsehood sows doubt.” [Tirmizi]

**Virtue of truthfulness:** Truthfulness has always been considered a praiseworthy and liked quality. Allah has praised the people of truthfulness and has called them ‘pious’. He said that the reward for piety is Paradise:

﴿أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ﴾ البقرة: ١٧٧

Translation of Meaning: “Such are they who are sincere. Such are the God-fearing.” [Al-Baqarah:177]

At another place Allah (Ta'ala) says:

﴿ قَالَ اللَّهُ هَذَا يَوْمُ يَنْفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴾ المائدة: ١١٩

Translation of Meaning: “Allah saith: This is a day in which their truthfulness profiteth the truthful, for theirs are Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they are secure forever, Allah taking pleasure in them and they in Him. That is the great triumph.” [Al-Maedah:119]

Truthfulness is the base of peace and security. The success in this world and in the hereafter depends on truthfulness, while telling a lie, deception are the root cause of troubles and evils. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ الصِّدْقَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْبِرِّ وَإِنَّ الْبِرَّ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَصْدُقُ حَتَّى يَكُونَ صَدِيقًا وَإِنَّ الْكُذْبَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْفُجُورِ وَإِنَّ الْفُجُورَ يَهْدِي إِلَى النَّارِ وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَكْذِبُ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَذَّابًا» [متفق عليه]

Translation: “Verily truth leads to virtue and virtue leads to Paradise, and the man who continues to speak the truth and endeavours to tell the truth is eventually recorded as truthful with Allah, and beware of telling of a lie for telling of a lie leads to obscenity and obscenity leads to Hell-Fire, and the person who keeps telling lies and endeavours to tell a lie is recorded as a liar with Allah.” [Bukhari & Muslim]

**Undoubtedly** regarding truthfulness, the Prophet (ﷺ) is the greatest ideal for us. We must follow only him. It is not that only we should embrace truthfulness but also we should make it part of our identity. This is the quality equally appreciated by friends and foes. How wonderful meaning has been described by the Urdu poet:

صداقت ہو تو دل سینوں میں کھنچ آتے ہیں اے واعظ  
حقیقت خود کو منوا لیتی ہے مانی نہیں جاتی

“If there is truthfulness the hearts in chest automatically are attracted; reality has people believed in it and is not believed.”

**Lying:** Contrary to truthfulness, telling a lie is one of the signs of hypocrisy. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«آيَةُ الْمُنَافِقِ ثَلَاثٌ إِذَا حَدَّثَ كَذَبَ ، وَإِذَا وَعَدَ أَخْلَفَ ، وَإِذَا أُؤْتِمِنَ خَانَ» [متفق عليه]

Translation: "Three are the signs of a hypocrite: when he spoke he told a lie, when he made a promise he acted treacherously against it, when he was trusted he betrayed." [Bukhari & Muslim]

So, a true Muslim cannot tell a lie. The Prophet (ﷺ) was once asked, "Can a Muslim be a coward?" He replied, "Yes." And then he was asked, "Can a Muslim be a miser?" and the reply was: "Yes." The Prophet (ﷺ) was then asked: "Can a Muslim be a liar?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "NO! A Muslim can never be a liar." [Malik]

It is a characteristic of a lie that it cannot remain hidden for long; it is exposed sooner or later. Hazrat Ali (*Radhi Allahu Anhu*) said: "A person can try his best to hide a lie, but the slips of the tongue and colour of the face expose it."

People have made categories of lie: lie, black lie and white lie. It is as if lying too has its colours. Similarly they have small lie, big lie, necessary lie, unnecessary lie. Remember every lie is a sin, leading to accountability and worthy of being hated. Every lie will be accounted for. Hazrat Asma bint Yazid (*Radhi Allahu Anha*) narrates that she once asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "If someone of us women stated that she had no desire to have a certain thing even though she had that desire, then would it be considered a lie?" He replied: "Falsehood is written as falsehood and a small falsehood is written as a small falsehood." [Muslim]

Narrated Hazrat Abdullah ibn Aamir (*Radhi Allahu Anhuma*), "My mother called me one day when the Apostle of Allah (ﷺ) was sitting in our house." She said, "Come here and I shall give you something." The Apostle of Allah (ﷺ) asked her, "What did you intend to give him?" She replied, "I intended to give him some dates." The Apostle of Allah (ﷺ) said, "If you were not to give him anything, a lie would be recorded against you." [Abu Dawood]

**The situations when one can lie:** There are just three occasions when a man can tell a lie. Allah will not hold him accountable for the lie rather He will reward him. And they are:

**1. When** lying is for establishing a truce between fighters: Two friends have quarreled. Now someone with an intention to make peace between them goes to one of them and says, “He (the other) loves you very much, mentions you in good words, praises your good behaviour and good conduct.” Then he goes to the other and utters the same word there, too. It changes enmity into friendship and removes ill thoughts from the heart.

**2. If** a Muslim is trapped by enemies and they compel him to expose the secrets, he should then give them false information and lie for the interest of Muslims and their protection.

**3. There** are occasions in the family life that if a man utters frankly and exactly the truth, the family peace is shattered. To take an example, Allah has not created all women equally beautiful; all of them are not fair-complexioned. Now, if the husband says to the wife, “You are ugly, black, I do not like you etc.” Here instead of speaking truth the husband should tell a lie; praise the wife and mention her beauty. He should mention her other qualities beautifully and say, “I love you a lot.” Similar pattern should be followed by the wife. Such a lie will not bring upon accountability; instead they will be rewarded.

In jokes or lauding someone we must avoid lying. The Messenger (ﷺ) has cautioned against such people who out of hypocrisy praise people before them. He (ﷺ) said:

« إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الْمَدَّاحِينَ فَاحْثُوا فِي وُجُوهِهِمُ التُّرَابَ » [مسلم]

**Translation:** “When you see those who shower (undue) praise (upon others), throw dust upon their faces.” [Muslim]

Similarly people resort to lying to ridicule others. The Messenger (ﷺ) has warned such people. He (ﷺ) said, “Woe to the one who talks to make the people laugh and tells lies, woe to him, woe to him.” [Tirmizi]

In another narration the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«أَنَا زَعِيمٌ بِبَيْتٍ فِي رِبْضِ الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ تَرَكَ الْمِرَاءَ وَإِنْ كَانَ مُحِقًّا وَبَيْتٍ فِي وَسْطِ  
الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ تَرَكَ الْكُذْبَ وَإِنْ كَانَ مَازِحًا وَبَيْتٍ فِي أَعْلَى الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ حَسَّنَ خُلُقَهُ»  
[ابوداؤد]

Translation: “I guarantee a house in the surroundings of Paradise for a man who avoids quarrelling even if he were in the right, a house in the middle of Paradise for a man who avoids lying even if he were joking, and a house in the upper part of Paradise for a man who made his character good.” [Abu Dawood]

When Abu Bakr (*Radhi Allahu Anhu*) heard anyone praising him he said, “O Allah, You know me better than I know myself, and I know myself better than these people who praise me. Make me better than what they think of me, and forgive those sins of mine of which they have no knowledge, and do not hold me responsible for what they say.”

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