



TRUSTWORTHINESS

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 3

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand what it means to be trustworthy
- Understand that trustworthiness has several meanings in the social context
- Understand the responsibility of the trustee
- Understand that our body is a trust from Allah (SWT) and we have to look after it
- Know that being trustworthy is an obligation in Islam and there are no exceptions to it

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness is one of the most important obligations in Islam. On a social level, trustworthiness means to fulfil the trust that a person has been given. For example, if someone gives you money to keep safe before they go on a journey; to return this money exactly the way he had entrusted it to you is an example of being trustworthy. Another example is when someone tells you a secret: a trustworthy person would keep the secret safe and wouldn't spread or tell anyone.

Trustworthiness is one of the most important social rules in Islam. It is highly encouraged in Islam for a believer to practice trustworthiness. The best example of being trustworthy is of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW); he was so trustworthy in his trade and business that the people would call him al- *Ṣādiq Al-Amīn*, the Truthful and Trustworthy.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TRUSTEE

When someone entrusts us with something, there is a responsibility we have to fulfil. This includes returning the trust to the rightful owner in the condition it was given to us. For example, if someone gave you their laptop to take care of, it becomes your responsibility to return the laptop in the same condition that you received it, unless something that is out of your control happens despite you being careful.

Secondly, it is the responsibility of the person being entrusted to not use the trust for personal gain. For example, if someone gives you a certain amount of money to look after then you must not use that money

for yourself and should return the exact same amount to the rightful owner. However, if the owner allows you to use it then it is allowed.

These responsibilities are towards *anyone* who entrusts you with something; regardless of their religion or beliefs.

TRUSTWORTHINESS: AN OBLIGATION WITH NO EXCEPTIONS!

Islam encourages us to be trustworthy towards EVERYONE – whether Muslim or not.

Imam ‘Ali (as) has said:

*“Do not betray a man who trusts you, even if he betrays you.
And do not disclose his secrets even if he discloses yours”ⁱ*

We learn from this narration that even in the worst cases we cannot break anyone’s trust! In fact, the prophets and Imams used to return trusts to their direct enemies!

Imam Zainul Abidin (as) says that even if the killer of his father, Imam Husayn (as), were to leave the sword with which he killed Imam Husayn (as) with the Imam as a trust, the Imam would fulfil the trust and give it back to him.ⁱⁱ

Another example is during the Prophet ‘s (SAW) time-during the war against the polytheists in Arabia. The Prophet (SAW) went to a polytheist by the name of Şafwan Ibn Umayyah, whose business was to sell shields. The Prophet (SAW) asked to borrow 70 shields to use in the war. Şafwan asked the prophet “Will I get these shields back from you?” to which the Prophet (SAW) answered “It is a trust which I guarantee”. Just like the Prophet (SAW) promised, he returned all 70 shields to Şafwan.ⁱⁱⁱ

We learn from these examples that we must fulfil all trusts, even if they are given to us by non-Muslims or enemies.

OUR BODY IS A TRUST FROM ALLAH (SWT)

Just like people may entrust us with their belongings, Allah (SWT) has also entrusted us with a body and soul. Our duty is to take care of them while we are alive and return them to Him in the state in which they were meant to be returned.

Let’s look at an example to help us understand things

Some ways we can take care of our physical bodies is by doing exercise regularly, not over eating or over sleeping etc. We should also take care of our soul by praying, staying in a state of purity, fasting etc...

WHAT DID WE LEARN TODAY?

- 1) Trustworthiness is an extremely important social rule in Islam and is highly encouraged as shown by our Prophets and Imams.
- 2) Our body and Soul is a trust from Allah (SWT) which we must take care of to the best of our ability.
- 3) And finally, trustworthiness is an obligation with no exceptions. Even if our enemy entrusts us with something, we must fulfil that trust.

Review Questions

Q1. Trustworthiness applies:

- a. To all trusts
- b. Only to trusts given to me by a Muslim
- c. Only to trusts given to me by a trustworthy person

Q2. If I am given a trust, my responsibility is:

- a. Nothing, the person chose to leave it with me and that’s their risk
- b. To take care of it as best as I can according to the conditions the person set
- c. To take care of it but use it for my benefit also

ⁱ [Scales of Wisdom; P 115]

ⁱⁱ [Biharul Anwar; Volume 75; P114].

ⁱⁱⁱ [Wasa’il ush-Shia; Vol 19; P92].