



In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

# Submitters Perspective

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## Honesty

*[33:70-1] O you who believe, reverence GOD and utter only the correct utterances. He will then fix your works, and forgive your sins. Those who obey GOD and His messenger have triumphed a great triumph.*

As submitters we know the importance of being honest and truthful people. At the same time we live in a society where white lies and half-truths are part of the world around us. For example, a study was done where researchers recorded test subjects who were strangers to each other for ten minutes. At the end of the test, the subjects generally believed they had been honest in their conversation. But when they reviewed the ten minute conversation, about 60% of the subjects recognized that they had spoken at least one lie during those ten minutes and on an average of 2.92 false things.

Just as interesting as how often humans lie is the question of why we lie in the first place. We tell untruths for several reasons. Sometimes we lie to **gain others' respect.** For example, maybe a coffee-fetching intern tells friends he's a "research assistant." Other fibs help stave off the consequences of making a mistake. Still others will lie to **spare someone's feelings.** While a person's hearts might be in the right place,

and a diplomatic answer may appear to be nicer than the absolute truth, the **fact is they're still telling a lie.** As a submitter, God says we must be honest.

*[3:17] They are steadfast, truthful, submitting, charitable, and meditators at dawn.*

The thing is that even if in the short term you may spare someone's feelings, in the longer term you will end up hurting them. For example, suppose a student who is getting a "C" asks me how he's doing and I say "you're doing ok, a B is in sight." That's not going to help the student. In the moment it may feel better because I spared his feelings, but in the long run it will hurt him.

**Honesty doesn't mean being a nasty person.** Usually the nastiness is based on lies to begin with. For example with that same student who was getting a "C" if I said, "You're failing—get it together. You're hopeless and stupid," that would also be a lie. I may think he's going to study harder now to save himself, but it's still not right. A white lie told either to spare his feelings or to scare this person—are both wrong. For all I know, the poor kid may get depressed or simply give up, saying he can't figure the subject out, and then actually end up failing. The right thing to say is the truth. "You're currently

getting a C. Would you like some help to understand the subject better so you can try and raise your grade?"

In terms of being factually honest a good example is in sura 109, which some people might see as being a harsh sura. But **it's stated in a factual way, not trying to get personal or hurtful.** It does not say, for example, "O you disbelievers – you're scum of the earth and I will rejoice in seeing you suffer in hell."

*[109:1-6] Say, "O you disbelievers.*

*I do not worship what you worship.*

*Nor do you worship what I worship.*

*Nor will I ever worship what you worship.*

*Nor will you ever worship what I worship.*

*To you is your religion, and to me is my religion."*

We don't have to go running around telling atheists, "See you in hell." But if someone asks us, "I am an atheist and don't believe in mumbo-jumbo religion. Will your God, the Most Merciful, put me in hell?", we shouldn't sugar coat the response. One can simply say, "If you maintain atheism until the end, then you'll get what you chose—the absence of God, which is Hell." Maybe it'll help the person, or maybe they'll laugh and

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walk away. But we did our job which was to be truthful and not tell them something that's outside Quran. Now they can't say, "I didn't realize it was so bad."

Truthfulness is a trait of the righteous, and being truthful saves our souls.

*[5:119] GOD will proclaim, "This is a day when the truthful will be saved by their truthfulness." They have deserved gardens with flowing streams. They abide therein forever. GOD is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. This is the greatest triumph.*

*[33:24] GOD will surely recompense the truthful for their truthfulness, and will punish the hypocrites, if He so wills, or redeem them. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

*[49:15] Mu'mens (believers) are those who believe in GOD and His messenger, then attain the status of having no doubt whatsoever, and strive with their money and their lives in the cause of GOD. These are the truthful ones.*

*[7:159] Among the followers of Moses there are those who guide in accordance with the truth, and the truth renders them righteous.*

*[9:33] He is the One who sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, and will make it dominate all religions, in spite of the idol worshipers.*

*[22:62] It is a fact that GOD is the Truth, while the setting up of any idols beside Him constitutes a falsehood, and that GOD is the Most High, the Supreme.*

*[35:5] O people, GOD's promise is the truth; therefore, do not be distracted by this lowly life. Do not be diverted from GOD by mere illusions.*

*[17:81] Proclaim, "The truth has prevailed, and falsehood has vanished; falsehood will inevitably vanish."*

*Righteousness Defined*

*[2:177] Righteousness is not turning your faces towards the east or the west. Righteous are those who believe in GOD, the Last Day, the angels, the scripture, and the prophets; and they give the money, cheerfully, to the rela-*

*tives, the orphans, the needy, the traveling alien, the beggars, and to free the slaves; and they observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat); and they keep their word whenever they make a promise; and they steadfastly persevere in the face of persecution, hardship, and war. These are the truthful; these are the righteous.*

What you notice is that after all the traits, God says, "these are the truthful, these are the righteous." So in other words, the people who believe in God, the last day, do charity, do Salat ... these are truthful people. We are striving to be righteous; we must strive to be truthful.

*[39:33] As for those who promote the truth, and believe therein, they are the righteous.*

Faiz

\* \* \* \* \*

## Forest Fire

Recent forest fires in Arizona saw 19 dead firefighters, by God's will. These fires were described as some of the fiercest fires battled to date. This reminds one of the retribution of the Hereafter, where people will be confined in columns:

*[104:6-8] GOD's blazing Hell-fire. It burns them inside out. They will be confined therein. In extended columns.*

Imagine being confined in such a fire, or worse, being blind, blundering through this fire. As you see, 19 firefighters, trained and ready, died, even though it is their JOB, their livelihood. It is what they do, as God willed for them, yet even they couldn't handle it!

So what makes a person, who is blind/untrained think that he or she can safely walk through this temporary hell without any instruction or guidance?

*[51:11] In their blundering, they are totally heedless.*

*[41:48] The idols they had idolized will disown them, and they*

*will realize that there will be no escape.*

*[3:56] "As for those who disbelieve, I will commit them to painful retribution in this world, and in the Hereafter. They will have no helpers."*

It is like that for most in this world. Their souls are blundering and heedless, not sure when they are going to run into a burning tree, except for the righteous.

*[29:33] When our messengers arrived at Lot's place, they were mistreated, and he was embarrassed by their presence. But they said, "Have no fear, and do not worry. We will save you and your family, except your wife; she is doomed."*

Worst of all, is that people don't perceive, and it's a surprise when they open their eyes on the Day of Judgement, to see themselves in the middle of such a fire! Eternally! Without God's guidance, one is left in the fire lost and confused, and shockingly for them, this loss and confusion will last forever.

*[51:11-13] In their blundering, they are totally heedless. They question the Day of Judgment. The day they are presented to the fire.*

*[32:12] If only you could see the guilty when they bow down their heads before their Lord: "Our Lord, now we have seen and we have heard. Send us back and we will be righteous. Now we have attained certainty."*

*[39:72] It will be said, "Enter the gates of Hell, wherein you abide forever." What a miserable destiny for the arrogant.*

*[39:38] If you ask them, "Who created the heavens and the earth?" they will say, "GOD." Say, "Why then do you set up idols beside GOD? If GOD willed any adversity for me, can they relieve such an adversity? And if He willed a blessing for me, can they prevent such a blessing?" Say, "GOD is sufficient for me." In Him the trusters shall trust.*

*[30:59] GOD thus seals the hearts of those who do not know.*

## BE THANKFUL

*[2:152] You shall remember Me, that I may remember you, and be thankful to Me; do not be unappreciative.*

We have always learned in Quran to be appreciative about everything that God has given us. We are thankful to God for everything. But are we really thanking God enough?

Everything is given to us by God. We thank Him for a lot of things, but do we remember to thank God for the mountains, the rain, the plants, the wind, the sun, the moon? We learn from Quran that we should be thankful about everything that we have.

**We don't realize but we need to thank God** for these immense blessings that He gave us. Without them we would basically not be able to live on Earth. The mountains give a sense of balance on the Earth. It stabilizes the surface of the Earth without which it would lose its balance. The rain revives our land from heat and dryness coming straight from the Sun. It is the reason we are able to eat our food because without water no food would grow. It beautifies our surroundings in order **for us to appreciate God's creation.** It also is a necessity to our daily lives. Every day, every hour, even every minute we need water to survive.

*[30:50] You shall appreciate GOD's continuous mercy, and how He revives the land that has been dead. He will just as certainly resurrect the dead. He is Omnipotent.*

The plants are the very reason we can breathe. Imagine no oxygen or limited oxygen? How would we feel when breathing became so difficult? The plants are designed to take in the carbon dioxide that we produce and give out oxygen for us to breathe clean air. They do this because God has commanded them to do it for us. And they do it without complaining.

*[16:114] Therefore, you shall eat from GOD's provisions everything that is lawful and good, and be appreciative of GOD's blessings, if you do worship Him alone.*

The wind serves us in accordance with **God's will. It drives clouds from one place to another.** It helps the ships in the sea to sail. It gives us relief from heat. We cannot imagine ourselves sitting in places with no fan or no **wind. We think we'll die of the heat.** But God knows perfectly who deserves it.

*[30:48] GOD is the One who sends the winds, to stir up clouds, to be spread throughout the sky in accordance with His will. He then piles the clouds up, then you see the rain coming down therefrom. When it falls on whomever He chooses from among His servants, they rejoice.*

The sun radiates light so bright for the entire solar system to use. Could we imagine 24 hours of darkness 7 days a week? With no light?

*[28:71] Say, "What if GOD made the night perpetual, until the Day of Resurrection? Which god, other than GOD, can provide you with light? Do you not hear?"*

*[28:72] Say, "What if GOD made the daylight perpetual, until the Day of Resurrection? Which god, other than GOD, can provide you with a night for your rest? Do you not see?"*

It is impossible to live in circumstances like that. But God gives us this blessing of the sun to help us distinguish day from night and to help us calculate our prayer timings. The sun is also a reason for the living organisms to survive on earth. Without sun plants and trees cannot produce anything for us. They eventually die. Similarly with the moon, it gives its own light to find our way in the darkness. The moon helps hold the Earth stable with its gravity (plus without gravity God created we would be floating in the air).

All these reasons and many more are given in Quran. It is very important to be appreciative of all these things in our life because without them we would not be able to survive. God gives us these provisions because He loves us and He wants us to use these provisions and be thankful to Him. Sometimes we tend to forget about

these particular ones and take it for granted that they will be there no **matter what. But it's necessary to be thankful to God for all the provisions He gave us.** In Sha Allah may God help us to be more and more thankful to Him for all that He has given us and be assured that we will get it in **proper measure and that it's replenished at proper intervals.**

Malika

*[14:7] Your Lord has decreed: "The more you thank Me, the more I give you." But if you turn unappreciative, then My retribution is severe.*

*[31:12] We have endowed Luqmān with wisdom: "You shall be appreciative of GOD." Whoever is appreciative is appreciative for his own good. As for those who turn unappreciative, GOD is in no need, Praiseworthy.*

*[39:66] Therefore, you shall worship GOD alone, and be appreciative.*

\* \* \* \* \*

## FROM SCRATCH

Very good cooks are usually proud of the fact that they create their culinary dishes without the aid of packaged foods; they cook "from scratch." But author Carl Sagan insightfully said: "If you wish to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first invent the universe."

God created the system for the apple seeds to germinate and grow, the soil and the rainfall to make them prosper. He created the wheat plants from which we make flour, and protected those plants from birds by giving them spiky stalks. He made the spices and the sugar that flavor this delicious dish.

So to bake truly "from scratch," you have to start at the beginning and create all the systems that function so beautifully together to produce all the separate ingredients. Or, you can appreciate that God has already done that for you and make a delicious apple pie. And remem-

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## The Greatest Triumph

What is the “greatest triumph”? To Hannibal, it was probably successfully crossing the Alps on elephants and thus surprising and defeating his enemy. To General Ulysses S. Grant, it was probably receiving General Lee’s surrender at Appomatox, ending the US Civil War. (Although he might have considered being elected President pretty great too.) To Bruce Jenner, it was winning a gold medal in the 1976 Decathlon, to take the title of world’s best all-around athlete. To Joe Namath, it was probably shocking the sports world by leading his New York Jets to a Super Bowl win in 1969. To a rich man, it’s probably making another multi-million dollar deal.

But all of these “triumphs” are transient, fleeting. Hannibal was later defeated and driven out of Italy. Grant was plagued with rumors of drinking and bad decisions throughout his Presidency. Jenner is now in the news as a gossip item. Namath suffers from terrible pain from all his football injuries. Even the rich man, though he might die a rich man, will find that his wealth and all his big business deals gain him nothing in the Hereafter.

God tells us clearly what the greatest triumph is, what we should all be striving for. It’s not gold medals or championship rings or fame and fortune. Those things are nice to achieve in this

world, and there’s nothing wrong in striving for them, bettering ourselves in these ways, as long as we remember that all of these achievements come not from us but from God. And our goal, our focus, our ultimate striving should be for the Hereafter, to be close to God. This is the greatest triumph.

*[4:13] These are GOD’s laws. Those who obey GOD and His messenger, He will admit them into gardens with flowing streams, wherein they abide forever. This is the greatest triumph.*

*[5:119] GOD will proclaim, “This is a day when the truthful will be saved by their truthfulness.” They have deserved gardens with flowing streams. They abide therein forever. GOD is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. This is the greatest triumph.*

*[6:16] “Whoever is spared (the retribution), on that day, has attained His mercy. And this is the greatest triumph.”*

*[9:72] GOD promises the believing men and the believing women gardens with flowing streams, wherein they abide forever, and magnificent mansions in the gardens of Eden. And GOD’s blessings and approval are even greater. This is the greatest triumph.*

*[9:111] GOD has bought from the believers their lives and their money in exchange for Paradise. Thus, they fight in the cause of GOD, willing to kill and get killed. Such is His truth-*

*ful pledge in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Quran—and who fulfills His pledge better than GOD? You shall rejoice in making such an exchange. This is the greatest triumph.*

*[10:64] For them, joy and happiness in this world, as well as in the Hereafter. This is GOD’s unchangeable law. Such is the greatest triumph.*

*[35:32] We passed the scripture from generation to generation, and we allowed whomever we chose from among our servants to receive it. Subsequently, some of them wronged their souls, others upheld it only part of the time, while others were eager to work righteousness in accordance with GOD’s will; this is the greatest triumph.*

*[40:9] “And protect them from falling in sin. Whomever You protect from falling in sin, on that day, has attained mercy from You. This is the greatest triumph.”*

*[85:11] Surely, those who believed and led a righteous life, have deserved gardens with flowing streams. This is the greatest triumph.*

Since God never breaks His promise (3:9, 30:6), and He has promised us that Paradise is the Greatest Triumph, then we absolutely know that this is what we should strive for. To be close to God for all eternity, to have anything we could wish for (and even more 50:35), this is without question the GREATEST TRIUMPH.

Lydia