

If we are to measure the worth of someone, what yardstick are to use ? Should look at his material possessions to determine ? Are we to be impressed by the accumulation of wealth, the beautiful clothes he wears, the expensive cars he owns and drives, or by the beautiful speeches in high-pitched English he makes ?

(1) If we are to consider his accumulation of wealth and his material possessions as a yardstick to measure his worth, it is possible he may have obtained by illicit means, by robbing others, by sucking the blood of the poor. If we are to consider his outward disposition, his sweet words and perhaps excessive humility and courtesy, it could be out of his hypocritical and show-off nature, lacking in sincerity and truth in his heart, which we are unable to witness.

Again, man's material possessions are but of passing nature. A rich man of today is a pauper of tomorrow. Not every rich and one of valuable possessions is admired but on the contrary looked down upon by his society.

(2) To find the right answer to the question I have raised, let us first recall the history of our Holy Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. of the times before he openly declared the message of Islam, at the age of forty.

The Prophet lived among the most barbarous and ignorant people of Arabia, who killed, plundered and even buried their daughters alive. He did not participate nor freely mingled with the Kuffar - the unbelievers of the Qoraish. Yet the Prophet's sublime character, his straight dealings and trustworthiness was such that even his enemies trusted him. They entrusted him with their goods. He became popularly known as Al-Sadiq and Al-Ameen i.e. the Truthful the Trusted. It was his this supremely clean character and quality that enabled him to impress the most difficult people of the truth in Islam. It was his impeccable character which enabled him to bring about a profound change in the way of life and thinking of the Arabs, in a short period.

His initial approach to the unbelieving Qoraish was to obtain their affirmation of their full trust in whatever he said. He asked them whether they would believe if he were to tell them that a large army of their enemies was hiding behind the mountain ready to attack them. When they agreed, <sup>and confirmed their trust in him,</sup> the Prophet invited them to to discard the worship of idols and instead to believe in 'La Ilaha Illa Allah' i.e. there was no God but Allah and that this was going to ensure them of salvation

Thus we see how it was the quality of trustworthiness, the impeccable character of the Holy Prophet which had raised his worth and eminence among the most difficult people of the world. It was this supreme quality of the Prophet that enabled Islam to succeed and spread far and wide.

Now let us study more of this subject in the light of the Holy Qura'n and the sayings of the Holy Prophet.

In Chapter 4 ayat 58, the Holy Qura'n enjoins upon us in these words:

(37)

" Verily Allah commands you to return the things on trust to their owners"

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ أَنْ تُرَدِّي الْأَمْثَالَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا

To return goods on trust to their owners is a strict command from Allah. There can be no excuse or evasion. Why because Islam came to teach peaceful co-existence and maintenace of mutual trust.

The Holy Prophet also taught us in clear ~~times~~ terms by saying:

(4)

"He has no faith who is dishonest and untrustworthy"

لَا إِيمَانَ لِمَنْ لَا أَمَانَةَ لَهُ

"He has no religion who keeps no pledge"

لَا دِينَ لِمَنْ لَا عَهْدَ لَهُ

Thus a person who is untrustworthy and keeps no promise, does not fulfil his pledge is to be considered as having no faith nor any religion. Obviously the one who grabs others property, & misappropriates lacks faith in Allah as the All-Pwerfu and Provider of sustenance.

On the effect of maintaining or breadh of trust, the Holy Prophet said:

"Trustworthiness increases(leads to) sustenance(income)"

الْأَمَانَةُ تَجْرُ الرِّزْقَ

"Betrayal increases(leads to)poverty"

الْخِيَانَةُ تَجْرُ الْفَقْرَ

Obviously one's enconomic upliftment depends upon the trust he enjoys among the people of the society he lives in. Once he spoils his name by breach of trust or break of pledge, people around him are bound to keep aloof and have no dealings with him.

(5)

How rigidly strict is the Islamic rule of abstaining from breach of trust can be seen from these words of Imam Ali b. Husain Zainul Abedeen A.S.

"By the One (Allah) who sent Muhammad (S.A.W.) truthfully as a Prophet, should the assassin of my father Husain b. Ali A.S. entrust me the sword with which he had killed, I would certainly return it to him"

فَوَاللَّهِ بَعَثَ مُحَمَّدًا بِالْحَقِّ نَبِيًّا لَوْ أَنَّ قَاتِلَ أَبِي الصَّبِيِّ ابْنَ عَلِيٍّ سَمِعَنِي عَلَى السَّيْفِ الَّذِي قَتَلَهُ بِهِ لَأَدَيْتُهُ إِلَيْهِ

As such no wonder therefore the criteria/ of judging a person and measure his worth is not by his outward actions but the degree of his trustworthiness. This was explained by the Prophet to his ocpanions in these words:

(4)

"Do not look at the excessive prayers, fasting and other good deeds of a person but look at his truthfulness and trustworthiness"

(5) A story is told of an Arab in Spain, who had given refuge to someone in his house. He had committed a murder and was being hunted hence he had sought refuge to hide himself. After some time, people came to <sup>that</sup> their house to look for him. On revealing the details, it was found that in fact he had murdered the son of that very Arab who had given him refuge in his house. And despite this fact, the Arab refused to release him nor take a revenge on the grounds that the person was on trust with him, having promised to give him shelter. As such he could not be released.

Ali b. Abi Talib A.S. says that only shortly before the death of the Prophet (SAW) I heard him saying:

(6) "Oh Ali ' Return the trusts to the good and bad of whatever small or big it may be even be it thread and needle"

يَا أَيُّهَا الْحَسَنُ أَدِّ الِإِمَانَاتِ إِلَى الْبِرِّ وَالْفَاجِرِ فَيَمَا قَلَّ وَجَلَّ حَتَّى فِي الْخِطِّ وَالْمُخِيطِ

For the Prophet to remember people's things on trust while on his deathbed and not to leave out even small things like thread and needle, shows the paramount importance of taking care of and to return properties of others.

To summarise what I have so far said on TRUSTWORTHINESS and BREACH OF TRUST in the light of Islamic teachings:

- (18)
- 1) Man's true worth does not lie in his valuable possessions and high disposition but it lies in his sense of responsibility and how much he can be trusted by others.
  - 2) The Prophet of Islam did not declare the message of Allah until he had impressed the difficult and ignorant people around him of his absolute trustworthiness and truth, thus enabling Islam to spread.
  - 3) The faith and religion of one does count on his outward deeds, his prayers, his fasts or charity but his being trustworthy and reliable.
  - 4) Trustworthiness leads one to prosperity and lasting progress whilst breach trust to lack of support and backwardness.
  - 5) The paramount Islamic duty of returning other people's property be it even a very small thing.

(17) How do we treat other's property lying with us?  
 Do we care to return a book we borrow, a small loan we take from others. If we do then we are honest & reliable  
 Do we care to guard the things belonging to masters or boxes in places of our service. If we do then we are honest & safe  
 Do we care to avoid wastages in public places, like mosque, or Suanbars. If we do then we are truly straight accordi