

This is the first and foremost quality a believer must have. Being trustworthy implies being honest, fair in dealings and punctual (both in terms of regularity and timeliness) as well as keeping promises and commitments. In other words, trustworthiness is the quality of honouring and fulfilling at any cost all commitments a person makes whether made formally or informally, verbally or in writing, and whether they are expressed or implied.

Being known for trustworthiness is such an important personality trait for a Muslim that it cannot be overemphasized. Before our Prophet was even appointed as a messenger by Allaah SWT, he was well known for these qualities. It had become one of his distinguishing qualities so much so that he was called Al-Ameen (trustworthy) -- mentioning 'the trustworthy' was enough to identify our Prophet. Thus, this quality was so important that Allaah chose it to be the outstanding feature of His Last Messenger.

Allaah SWT commands:

Verily, Allaah does command you to render back your Trusts to whom they are due. An-Nisaa 4:58

When listing in the Holy Qur-aan the qualities of the people who succeed in the eyes of Allaah SWT and the people who are steadfast worshippers of Allaah, they have been mentioned as those:

Who faithfully observe their trusts and covenants. Al-Mu'minoon 23:8 and Al-Ma'aarij 70:32
These trusts and covenants have been mentioned in general terms to cover all sorts of material, moral, social and legal obligations and commitments a person needs to observe and fulfill.

On fulfilling the promises, the Holy Qur-aan further instructs:

Fulfill promises, because you will be held accountable for promises. Measure fully when you measure and weigh with a right balance (accurately). That is the most fitting and the best in the end. Banees Israeel 17:34-35

One of the indications of people having Taqwa is that:

They fulfill the promises they make. Al-Baqarah 2:177

The criticality of this requirement being expected of a believer is well underscored by the report that there was hardly any address of the Prophet that did not include the following admonition:

The person who is not trustworthy is devoid of faith (Eeman) and the one who does not keep promises has no Deen. Reported by Baihiqi in Shu'abul-eeman.

In fact, as indicated by the following Ahaadeeth, he described the person who breaks promises and betrays trusts as a hypocrite:

There are four traits which whoever possesses is a pure hypocrite; and whoever has any one of them has a trait of hypocrisy, until he gets rid of it: When entrusted, he embezzles (cheats); when speaks, he lies; when promises, he reneges (breaks them); and, when quarrels, he abuses (uses foul language). Abdullaah Ibn Umar in Bukhaari and Muslim

A hypocrite is known by three traits: When he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he reneges; when he is entrusted, he cheats (embezzles). Reported from Aboo Hurairah in Bukhaari.

From this you can see that a person cannot claim to be a Muslim without being trustworthy. The strong language suggesting that not honouring trusts and covenants is totally unacceptable in and completely at odds with Islamic faith is indicated the following words of the Prophet:

There can be no faith without Amaanah (trustworthiness, honesty), no Salaah without Tahaarah (Ritual purity, cleanliness and wudhoo), and no Deen without Salaah. Salaah has the same significance in Deen as head in human physique. Reported from Ibn Umar in Targheeb with reference to At-Tabaraani.

Considering human nature, a believer can have any traits except for dishonesty or lying. Reported by Ahmad and Baihiqi from Aboo Umaamah

On the other hand, the believers who sincerely practice their faith, are given the good news like the following:

If loving Allaah and His Messenger or being loved by Allaah and His Messenger pleases a person, then he must tell the truth whenever he speaks, give back the trust when entrusted, and behave superbly to his neighbours. Reported by Baihiqi in Shu'abul-eeman from Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Abee Quraad

You guarantee me consistent practice of six actions, I will guarantee you Jannah: Be truthful when you speak, fulfill promises when you commit, pay up when you are entrusted, protect your private parts, lower your gaze (turn away from inappropriate sights), withhold your hands (from doing improper things). Reported by Baihiqi in Shu'abul-eeman from 'Ubaadah Ibn Saamit

A truthful and honest businessman will be in the company of prophets, their sincerest companions and martyrs. Aboo Saeed in At-Tirmidzee, Ad-Daramee, and Ad-Daru-qutnee
The following are examples of Ahaadeeth that cover non-material aspects of trusts.

For the person who is given confidential information for seeking advice, the Messenger of Allaah said:

A consultant is a trustee. Aboo Hurairah in At-Tirmidzee

If someone tells you something, looking all around while talking, it is a trust. Reported by At-Tirmidzee and Aboo Dawood from Jaabir Ibn Abdullah

Proceedings of meetings are trusts unless the discussion is about illegal killing, illegal sex, or misappropriation of someone's assets. Reported by Aboo Dawood from Jaabir Ibn Abdullah

Hence, confidentiality must be maintained for whatever you are taken into confidence, unless the subject matter is a criminal or unislamic activity.

Similarly, promises must be fulfilled as if settling a debt:

Promise is a debt... Reported by At-Tabaraani from 'Ali and 'Abdullaah Ibn Mas'ood

However, people only have to go to a reasonable extent in fulfilling their promise:

If a person promised to meet the other at a certain place and time, and one of them arrived but the other did not show up until the time of Salaah, the person who has been waiting can go to pray Salaah without incurring any sin. Reported by Razeen from Zaid Ibn Arqam, as quoted in Ma'ariful Hadeeth by Manzoor nu'maani

