

The concept of Truth in the Quran

Friday Khutba by Dr Zahid Aziz, for Lahore Ahmadiyya UK, 30 July 2021

ذِكْرُ بَانَ اللَّهِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الْبَاطِلُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٣١﴾

“This is because Allah is the Truth (*haqq*), and what they call upon besides Him is falsehood, and that Allah is the High, the Great.” — ch. 31, v. 30

This verse occurs after verses which mention Allah’s great power of creation and His creation following the laws He set up for them. The part I want to refer to is the opening: “Allah is the Truth”. Truth is, of course, a quality of, for example, what someone is saying. It is not a thing on its own, like an object I could point to and say: this is the truth. When Allah says that He *is* the Truth (*haqq*) the meaning is that He is so closely associated with the truth, so inseparable from the truth, that we might as well say: He is the truth. It also means that God in His dealings with human beings is straight-forward, direct and open, has no hidden motives, and does not deceive or cheat them.

This statement about Allah occurs in other places in the Quran as well:

فَتَعَلَى اللَّهِ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ “Supremely exalted then is Allah, the King, the Truth” (20:114)

ذِكْرُ بَانَ اللَّهِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّهُ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى وَ أَنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ “That is because Allah, He is the Truth, and He gives life to the dead, and He is Powerful over all things” (22:6).

Truth or *Haqq* is, therefore, one of the names of Allah. This gives rise to the name *Abdul Haqq*, “servant of God”, for people.

Truth is something which everyone tries to find out. To make decisions in our daily lives, we want true information. To form an opinion we want to know the truth about the subject. Scientists carry out deep studies and extensive research to find the truth. Enforcers of the law want to find the truth about what certain people have done or are planning to do.

False information is, at best, useless to us, and at worst it can mislead us into a damaging course of action. Everyone wants to know the truth and only the truth. Yet when it comes to letting others know the truth, people are often “economical” with it, and give you partial information which doesn’t convey the whole picture. Truth is of the highest value and most precious, while anything going against the truth is of no value and to be discarded. This may also be the reason for calling God as the Truth, that He is most desirable and precious, and we should search to find Him.

The Quran also says a number of times that Allah speaks the truth, as in: **قُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ** “Say: Allah speaks the truth” (3:95), **وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ**, “And Allah speaks the truth and He shows the way” (33:4), and **قَالَ فَالْحَقُّ وَالْحَقُّ أَقْوَلُ** “He (Allah) said: The Truth is — and the truth is what I speak” (38:84). The Quran tells us that Allah’s promises are true. After making the promise that those who believe and do good will go to heaven, it says: **وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقًّا وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا** “It is Allah’s promise, in truth. And who is more truthful in word than Allah?” (4:122)

This clearly shows that human beings need to be truthful in order to be closer to Allah. Speaking falsehood takes a person away from Allah. The following incident is related in Hadith: Once when the Holy Prophet was performing *Wuḍū’*, the Companions started rubbing upon themselves the water pouring down from him. He asked them why they were doing this and they replied: “Because of love for Allah and His Messenger.” The Holy Prophet told them: “He who wishes to love Allah and His Messenger, or wishes that Allah and His Messenger love him, *should speak the truth when he talks, faithfully return anything that he is entrusted with, and fulfil the rights of his neighbour*” (*Mishkāt*, book: ‘Good Manners’). Here the first two points are both related to being truthful.

It is stated some ten times in the Quran that Allah created the heavens and the earth *with truth*:

“And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth with truth. And when He says, Be, it is. His word is the truth.” — 6:73

“Allah created the heavens and the earth with truth. Surely there is a sign in this for the believers.” — 29:44

One explanation of the meaning of Allah creating the heavens and the earth *with truth* is that the word *haqq* or ‘truth’ also means something which meets the requirements of wisdom and justice. In accordance with this meaning, God created everything because it was a requirement of wisdom and justice, so that His wisdom and justice are manifested through His creation. But creating with truth also indicates that a study of the world around us will lead us to discover truth. This meaning is substantiated by the words in the last verse: “Surely there is a sign in this for the believers.” Believers are meant to study the creation of God and find truths which they did not know before. Created with truth can also mean that God created the world with a sincere and true intention of benefitting the users of that creation. We often come across cases of buildings which human beings have built using substandard materials, and where they have covered their own tracks to prevent their dishonesty from being discovered. This is done for the sake of making bigger profits. The occupiers of those buildings suffer harm and even death as a result of a construction which was made on the basis of falsehood, and not truth. But God is not seeking to make a profit by His creation and He is not deceiving people by giving them something faulty and substandard.

The Quran says that God sends the truth in the messages through His messengers. But those who reject them use falsehood to argue against it:

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ ۚ وَيُجَادِلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا
بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَمَا أُنذِرُوا هُزُوًا ﴿٤٦﴾

“And We do not send messengers but as givers of good news and warning, and those who disbelieve contend by means of falsehood to weaken thereby the Truth...” —18:56

In many places the coming of truth from God through His messengers is mentioned:

“O mankind, the Messenger has indeed come to you with truth from your Lord, so believe, it is better for you.” — 4:170

“And with truth have We revealed it [i.e., the Quran], and with truth did it come.” — 17:105

“Say: Allah guides to the Truth. Is He then Who guides to the Truth more worthy to be followed, or he who cannot find the way unless he is guided?” — 10:35

It is therefore the duty of Muslims to prove the truth of the message of the Quran to the world. The scholars of the world can set the criteria for determining what is the truth and what is falsehood, and Muslims can show that Islam fulfils the criteria for the truth.

Also the Quran tells us that Allah judges with the truth. He judges people, not on the basis of prejudice, favouritism, emotion or people’s false claims about themselves:

“Say [O Prophet to the unbelievers]: You will not be asked of what we are guilty, nor shall we be asked of what you do. Say: Our Lord will gather us together, then He will judge between us with truth.” —34:26

What a great principle of justice! If we, Muslims, are wrong, we will be held responsible by Allah for our actions; others will not be held responsible for what we do. Likewise, others will be held responsible for their actions, and not us. Each side, Muslims or their opponents, have the right and duty to try to correct the other side but it should not be taken to the limit where you should behave as if you will be held accountable for not setting the other side right.

There is a prayer in the Quran: “Our Lord, decide between us and our people with truth, and You are the Best of Deciders” (7:89). Here the believers among a people are

taught to pray to God to judge between themselves and the rest of their people *with truth*, and not on the basis that God should unduly favour our side because we are believers in Him.

Falsehood has nothing to stand on, and is exposed when confronted by the truth. The Quran says:

“The Truth has come and falsehood vanished. Surely falsehood is ever bound to vanish.” — 17:81

“Nay, We hurl the Truth against falsehood, so it knocks out its brains, and lo! it vanishes.” — 21:18

Similarly, baseless conjecture cannot stand against truth: “Surely conjecture will not avail at all against the Truth” (10:36). This teaches us to base our views on facts, as far as they can be gathered. For example, people have always *conjectured* to explain the working of various phenomena in the world around us, but when these phenomena are properly studied the truth is discovered and the conjectures then appear ridiculous and laughable in the light of facts.

Considering the importance attached to truth in the Quran, one would think that Muslims would be famed in this world for their truth telling. Yet the case is unfortunately the opposite. May Allah help us all to abide by truth.

بَارَكَ اللهُ لَنَا وَنَاوَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعَنَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِالآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، إِنَّهُ تَعَالَى جَوَادٌ كَرِيمٌ
مَلِكٌ بَرٌّ رَوْفٌ رَحِيمٌ-