

What Is Truth?

Its Manifestations and How to Follow It

What Is Truth, and How Can We Walk on the Path of Truth?

What is truth?¹ Some words are commonly used in everyday life, yet their precise meaning is not always clear, such as the word “truth.” We use this word extensively in our daily conversations. For example, we say “The truth is bitter,” “All truths are not to be told,” “If you want the truth, ask a child,” “A half-truth is a whole lie,” etc.

Since the word truth has diverse usage, it is somewhat perplexing and ambiguous. For this, if you ask an ordinary person, ‘What is truth?’ he probably would not be able to give a clear answer to this question, despite understanding its concept. But what is truth exactly? What does it have to do with our discussions on humanology? Why is it important to know it?

“Truth” is one of the terms that is used in religious teachings, ethics, law, and politics. Truth stands in opposition to falsehood. So when we say something is true, it means that it is the very thing that it must be. Truth

¹ . In Arabic, the word for truth is “*haq*,” which also means “right” and “reality.” In Islamic contexts, when *haq* is used, it also refers to the rights that must be observed legally or ethically, such as the rights of parents, teachers, neighbors, God's rights over humans, reciprocal rights among individuals, property rights, citizenship rights, freedom of expression, animal rights, and more. Thus when confronted with the seemingly simple question, “What is *haq*?” we encounter two answers, each implying different meanings of “*haq*.” One signifies “being true,” while the other denotes “having a right.” In the latter sense, *haq* indicates possessing a privilege that is respected either by collective conscience, like the rights of parents and teachers, or recognized by law with legal and judicial protections, such as citizenship and property rights.

is entirely in line with the mathematics of creation and the mathematics of the human soul.

The Importance of Knowing the Truth

Discussing the concept of “truth” is not merely a linguistic and theoretical endeavor to increase our knowledge, rather we discuss it because of its importance in our lives in this world and the hereafter. As we mentioned before, the scale of our deeds in the hereafter is based on the truth.² It means whoever has acquired more truth in this world and lived more in line with the standards of truth will find the scale of his deeds heavier. On the other hand, one who has distanced himself from the truth will find the scale of his deeds lighter and will be empty-handed.

In fact, in the hereafter, truth works like a bank account. Just as having a fat bank account in the world signifies greater wealth, anyone who is more compatible with truth will be wealthier in the hereafter. But what is truth and what are its evaluation standards?

In fact, truth is something that is accurate, correct, and exact, and it must be so. For example, it is correct to take care of our bodies and keep our bodies active and fresh by nourishing them and exercising. It is correct to appreciate the efforts of others. If washing our bodies is detrimental to

² . “The weighing on that Day will be the true weighing.” (Quran, 7:8)

our health, it is correct to perform *tayammum*³ instead of making *wudu*⁴ or *ghusl*.⁵ It is correct to keep our imagination pure and do not overfeed it with animal desires because they hinder the development and feeding of our supra-rational dimension. It is correct to prioritize the nourishment for our human part and give it foods, that is, solitude and connection with God, and not let our soul remain hungry and weak. There are plenty of examples about adhering to the truth in material and spiritual aspects. So you can definitely add many instances to the above list.

Now let us dig into the most important aspect of truth as a scale that evaluates the actions of humans in the hereafter.

Defining the Truth Using the Law of Proportion

Once again, it is essential to refer to the Law of Proportion and the relationship between the world and the hereafter to find the answer to ‘What is truth?’ and ‘How is it evaluated in the hereafter.’ We stated that the relationship between the world and the hereafter is like the relationship between the mother’s womb and the world. After the baby is born, the world immediately questions and evaluates him and measures his compatibility with the truth, but what is truth? In this world, the truth means the baby’s compatibility with all the scales required for a

³ . *Tayammum*, derived from the Arabic word “*amma*” meaning “to repair,” is an Islamic practice of purification for prayer. It involves wiping the face and hands with clean soil, sand, or dust. *Tayammum* can replace ritual washing (*wudu* or *ghusl*) when clean water is unavailable, or if someone has skin conditions, illness, or hardship that prevent them from using water.

⁴ . *Wudu* is the Islamic practice of ritual washing that involves cleansing specific parts of the body, purifying oneself for prayer.

⁵ . *Ghusl* is a full-body ritual purification in Islam, required before performing certain activities and prayers.

comfortable and painless life, including healthy eyes, ears, hands, feet, tissues, and internal organs. If these organs are entirely healthy and in harmony with the living conditions of the world, it means that the fertilization has happened in the true way and the fetus has appropriately spent the prenatal period.

The same rule applies to the hereafter. It means that just as the scale for fetal health in the world is based on the truth, the scale of our deeds in the hereafter is also based on the truth. What is truth in the hereafter? Truth in the hereafter is the compatibility and harmony of the soul with the characteristics and living conditions of the hereafter. It means that the stronger someone's connection with truth is and the more he aligns himself with the standards of truth, the healthier his soul or his heart will be in the hereafter. As a result, he will be prepared to use the blessings of Heaven. On the other hand, the more someone distances himself from the truth, the more his heart will be unsound and the more his pain and suffering will be in the hereafter.

In fact, someone who has not lived in accordance with the standards of truth is like a fetus with one or several underdeveloped organs. However, his undeveloped body will become fully apparent when he comes out of the womb and enters the environment of the world.

According to the points we have stated, the best deed in the world is commitment and adherence to the truth.⁶ This is because the commitment to the truth is the only thing that shapes our inward self in

⁶ . Imam Ali: "The best of deeds is adherence to the truth." (*Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim*, vol. 1, p. 817)

proportion to the living conditions of the realm of *Malakut*. But to commit to the truth, we must first know what truth is exactly; this it is not so easy because there are always some forms of falsehood that manifest themselves as truth. Maybe a significant number of our actions, upon which we depend and believe are grounded in truth, and anticipate being rewarded for in the hereafter, are actually rooted in falsehood. Maybe we never realize it and spend our lives doing futile and wrong actions! So in order to distinguish between truth and falsehood, we need to have a real-life role model. It means that truth must be manifested in something or someone, so that the precise boundary between it and falsehood can be distinguished.

What and Who Are the Manifestations of Truth?

The highest manifestation of truth that encompasses all other manifestations is God Himself. God is at the pinnacle of worthiness, and His Holy Essence is the greatest and undeniable truth in the universe. In fact, truth is one of the divine names and most of the times we call God with this very name i.e., Truth or *Haq-ta'ala*. The most comprehensive manifestations of truth after God are the Quran,⁷ Islam,⁸ and the Fourteen Infallibles (PBUT). In fact, these are like the three sides of a triangle that guide us towards the truth. If any of these sides are

⁷ . "And we revealed to you the Book, with truth." (Quran, 5:48)

⁸ . "It is he who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, to make it prevail over all other religions." (Quran, 48:28)

removed, it will be difficult or even impossible to recognize and walk on the path of truth.

The Quran is the book of truth, and besides being one of the most important nourishments for our supra-rational dimension, it contains formulas and rules that introduce the truth and make it easy to recognize it. So we should be committed to reading the Quran carefully and constantly because it is one of the scales for recognizing the truth. However, the Quran alone is not enough for knowing the truth because it only expresses general formulas and does not delve into details, yet we usually have problems in distinguishing truth from falsehood regarding minor issues and everyday matters, not general issues; for example, most of the time, we find ourselves unable to differentiate between two good deeds and determine which one is true and worthier. Due to a lack of awareness, we might do a deed that seems right on the surface, but may not be suitable for the current situation. Therefore, in addition to the Quran, we require a real-life role model whose lifestyle, behavior, and words are consistently aligned with truth and free from error. As we mentioned before, these role models are none other than the Fourteen Infallibles (PBUT), who are the Imams of truth and the manifestations of the Straight Path.

In this lesson, we found the answer to 'What is truth?' and understood why it is essential to know it. We identified the Quran and the Infallibles as the two pillars manifesting the truth and emphasized following them.

There is another manifestation of truth that is Islam, called the religion of truth. We will discuss this in detail in the future.