



## KEEPING PROMISES: VALUE REFLECTED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF RISALE-i NUR

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### ABSTRACT

Keeping promises is an overlooked yet essential values during current rise of Society 5.0. It is defined as an act of commitment and social practices. This leads towards current modern society we're living in; with technology, working and dealing with applications and services – despite the exchange of monetary and values, they all commit towards one higher priority: fulfilling promises. Hence it is obvious how 'promises' are part of outcome and deliveries needed during current rise of Society 5.0. This review paper will elaborate how keeping promises is an important value discussed from the perspective of Risale-i Nur, a thematic interpretation of the Quran by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, influential Muslim scholar in Turkey and philosopher of the late Ottoman. The value of keeping promises not only essential for Muslim but it is also defined integrity as well as contributes towards personal benefits. Overall, it is obvious how 'promises' are part of outcome and deliveries needed during current rise of Society 5.0 and technology involvement in personalized education nevertheless it is reflected how we are all living in this world; working, living, enjoying benefits and enduring trials as given and commanded by The Ultimate Owner, Allah SWT, hence we should be in the best manner, act according to the rules, and maintain our faith, integrity, and truthfulness because the rewards are accordingly and measured to bits by The Most Just and Fair.

**Keywords:** society 5.0, value, keeping promises, Risale-i Nur, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi.

### INTRODUCTION

The rule of keeping any particular promise is to accept the fact that it is to be fulfilled despite it isn't obligatory to keep all the promises made (Smith, 2011). According to Dunn (1984), to make promise only signify commitment is due and keeping them is an act of manner. This is also discussed thoroughly by Sheinman (2011) that defined making promises is individual acts as well as social practices known as "moral phenomena" including moral obligations, rights, or powers as studied by philosophical and elaborated how it is a "commitment relations" with explained theories and deeper understanding of it. Nevertheless, keeping promises had always been part of human nature; be it in social interaction, working environment, industrial and business flow as well as in the highest hierarchy of human existence. It is essential not only in personality integrity but also applies bigger image such as business promising certain products in return of money, organizations promising work done for their services, and the list goes on. This leads towards current modern society we're living in; with technology, working and dealing with applications and services – despite the exchange of monetary and values, they all commit towards one higher priority: fulfilling promises. As we are embracing modernize era and growing technology at accelerating pace, new gadgets and tools are constantly made with guaranteed solutions and advancements. These guarantees and warranties came with purposes and certain promises that the usage will lead towards making everyday tasks easier and faster. Hence it is obvious how 'promises' are part of outcome and deliveries needed during current rise of Society 5.0 and technology involvement in personalized education.

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Society 5.0 is known to be the aftermath of Industrial Revolution 4.0 where technologies not only change the way of business and industry, but also changing lifestyle, way of thinking and overall personal behavior where the aim of it all is towards sustainable and valuable society (Strackowska-Luckey, & Luckey, 2022). According to Elihami et al. (2022), this reformation will require intervention from the role of character education in Islamic education reforms aimed at Society 5.0. Similarly, Din (2021) highlighted how the reformation had cause education crisis such as “excellence without a soul” due to Society 5.0 not only achieved with technology, it also revolved around living with modernity. This is where the tendency towards extreme had cause burnout, risen issues of mental health and risking the joy of living which goes against the purpose of technology that aim to ease daily tasks. This is where practicing religious moderation can help maintains internal harmony among to obtain peaceful living conditions and living life harmoniously (Sulaiman et al., 2022). Sulaiman also added how focusing on strengthening the religious moderation is an important indicator of efforts in building successful culture and honourable character of individuals as well the whole nation.

In short, heading towards Society 5.0 means going towards various technology application and approaches in education. An example by Pape and Vander Ark (2021) indicates that competency-based education is the core personal learning strategies that hold promise to raise achievement for all because expectations are high for every student. This includes various promises made such as The Promise of Reaching All Learners and Policy Actions and Investments to Personalize Learning (Pape & Vander Ark, 2021). Such initiatives requires promises that needs to be fulfilled towards learning in modern ages. Hence, this paper will elaborate how keeping promises is one of the precious values for individuals and later benefits the community which later grows into bigger and stronger chain of civilized and content society.

### **Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and Risale-i Nur Collection**

Imam Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1877-1960) was an influential Muslim scholar in Turkey and philosopher of the late Ottoman who produced a thematic interpretation of the Holy Quran, known as the Risale-i Nur, who aimed to restore and enhance Islamic spirituality after the fall of the Ottoman Turkish Empire under secularism (Thomas, 2019). Significantly, Nursi was once invited to give a sermon in Damascus which was witnessed by nearly 10,000 audience and included was 100 religious scholars at the time (Tampubolon, 2018). The Damascus Sermon, not only valuable and effective, it had also described the spiritual illnesses that were prevalent at the time which highly relevant to the current mental health issue, accompanied by spiritual medicines as cures (Thomas et al., 2018). Nursi elaborations on spiritual sickness and the cure for them in both Damascus Sermon and throughout Risale-i Nur Collection, with guidance from the Holy Quran, are referred as the “pharmacy of the Quran” which reaches Muslim audiences to pay attention to the revelation of the Quran as the basis of the Islamic faith. Risale-i Nur Collection, also known as “Treatise of Light”, has now been translated to more than 50 languages globally (Tuna, 2020) and read by students in *madrasah* (religious school) as Nursi’s recommended it to be the shortcut in studying *tawheed* (monotheism). Othman et al. (2022) had also pointed how elaboration of values from the perspective of Risale-i Nur has helped Turkey save its people and become an advanced Islamic nation. With proper planning, these values are able to help current society, anywhere in the world, to achieve success; since values are important component in both education and development for individuals (Din, 2020).

Despite Nursi aims to revive strong faith and increase spirituality with the light from the Quran, Risale-i Nur Collection is also helping readers to become better Muslim and helping individual towards better personality. Barton and Miller (2015) had summarized how spirituality had a strong and direct link with life satisfaction including religious practice and applying moral values such as gratitude, forgiveness, and empathy. Din et al. (2022) also highlighted how the elements of values able to increased after implementing intervention through either conventional teaching or traditional learning process.

From the perspective of Risale-i Nur, various components of values had emerged. These values contributes towards individual development such as below:-

1. Honesty, a strong opponent for falsehood and against deceit (Nawawi & Din, 2022)
2. Kindness, which is multiplication of goodness that bind the community as it grows (Nawawi et al., 2022)

3. Sincerity that goes a long way for personal and general benefits (Nawawi et al., 2021) and
4. Six important values highlighted in Damascus Sermon which are hope, passion or enthusiasm, honesty and kindness (as mentioned before) as well as love and unity (Nawawi et al., 2020)

The following will elaborate how keeping promises is important from the perspective of Risale-i Nur.

### **Keeping Promises as Muslim**

Nursi also remind disbelievers if one should question Judgement Day because God does not need the urgency to break the promises or in any of need of the promises He made. For example, if Allah promised eternal life in the heaven; it is us that needed that the most; because to 'live forever' has always been our greatest wish while God is in no need of that heaven for, He is The Eternal One and The Creator of all. Nursi (2021) called out disbeliever who argued the promises of God as delusionist and ignorance because breaking promises does not suit the High and Almighty God. As a Muslim and true believer, we should always be aware of the words we spoke and cautiously concern with promises we made with others. Knowing that God, Allah SWT, is always seeing, listening, and witnessing our actions, therefore when one makes a promise, one should always keep it and go towards fulfilling it. Fearing Allah should also be one of the motivations to fulfill the words we promised to others as mentioned in the Quran below...

*Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder. For indeed, there are stones from which rivers burst forth, and there are some of them that split open, and water comes out, and there are some of them that fall down for fear of Allāh. And Allāh is not unaware of what you do — (Quran, 2:74; Saheeh International)*

Fearing Allah and knowing that Allah is keeping record of every single thing we do, hence as a Muslim, speaking ill, being dishonest and making false statement or blank promises are prohibited. Similarly, when one is making promises and being truthful to it, it should be done with sincerity and purposely for Allah's sake.

### **Keeping Promises Defined Integrity**

Sagoff (1995) defined 'integrity' as good quality to possess by individual since it is a virtue of character, intrinsically good and lead towards confidence of others upon the individual. Sagoff also added how the value of integrity can be recognized when both parties involved support the same action and the same value, clearly acknowledged, and specified which later avoid conflicts or problems. This definition closely relates towards keeping promises or fulfilling an agreement between two people or two parties due to an agreement between two side with similar values and shared goals. In the meantime, Cochrane (2019) claimed integrity behaviour encompasses of three aspects which are moral awareness, reasoning, and behaviour. Despite the standard of application remains questionable due to such behaviour's measurement can be difficult. This definition defined how integrity highly influenced by morals and values encompassed by individual, and such values also included one ability to keeping up promises.

Nursi stated how keeping promises aligned with this concept. In one example in the Tenth Word (Nursi, 2021), if a mighty king or a well-known figure made a promise, it is surely believed to be made true because for the king, whatever promised must be easy for the king to do meanwhile it must also be significant to the receiver due to the trust casted upon it. Hence, if one breaks the promise, means it has gone against its nobility as a king or a great figure. This demonstrate how 'making a promise' should be done when the task promised is easy for the individual, this not only secure one integrity, but also making it easier to fulfil the task as promised. The sample gave by Nursi (2021) also means that fulfilling promises not only obligated due to its obligatory, but also due to the fact that it is important to the other party who expected the first party to be true to it. As faithful Muslim, integrity should be part of our aim and nurtured it in ourselves. Nursi (2011) also highlighted in the chapter discussing Miraculousness of the Quran how Allah send down His words in such integrity for the readers to apply it in daily lives. Nursi stated...

*And although the Qur'an was revealed in order to guide and lead to various aims, it possesses such perfect integrity, such a careful balance, such a fine order that it is as though the aim was one.*

The statement indicates how Quran came down as a guide towards religious goals, but nevertheless still held a perfect consistency, refined balance, and beautiful rules which reflects the main aim of it. Therefore, as believer, one should hold on towards higher values and maintain integrity including being true to words and promises made.

### **Keeping Promises as Personal Benefits**

Barton and Miller (2015) concluded their studies insisting that relationship with Higher Power along with the sense of a sacred world (or having a belief and being religious) gives basic positive virtues upon meaning of life and optimism in the vast majority of people. This applies correctly for Muslim where each good intention counts as good deed, and it benefits the individuals in term of rewards (personal reward in this lifetime and will be beneficial for the afterlife). This also applies for all human beings, despite personal beliefs or religions, being truth to one's promises not only benefits both parties in the deals but also benefits individuals involved respectively and contributes toward healthy wellbeing.

Think of it as an agreement made where both individuals involved had agreed upon the promises, conditions, actions, and consequences which will benefits both sides. If one individual break the promises or going against the agreement, it only prove that the individual is lying and had low integrity which consequently gives bad impression and allowing more degrading judgement upon oneself. Meanwhile if the individual sticks to the agreement and fulfilled the obligation as agreed upon, not only it benefits both parties but also adding values, integrity, honour, and good impression for personal achievement. Keep in mind that breaking promises indicates a person as dishonest and potentially lying which only hurting, fooling oneself, not the other way around. Keeping promises promotes growth be it spiritually and mentally (Guillory, 2000). It also equipped self with higher values and higher willpower. This only means that the individual can be trusted and trustworthy.

### **CONCLUSION**

*As for you, you are just a helmsman on the ship, so do your duty well and take the wage and pleasure that come with it. Think of just how precious is the life-ship and how valuable its benefits; then think of just how Generous and Merciful is the Owner of the ship. So, rejoice and give thanks and know that when you perform your duty with integrity, all the results the ship produces will in one respect be transferred to the register of your actions, that they will secure an immortal life for you, will endow you with eternal life – Said Nursi*

As simply quoted, it is reflected how we are all living in this world; working, living, enjoying benefits and enduring trials as given and commanded by God, The Ultimate Owner, hence we should be in the best manner, act according to the rules, and maintain our faith, integrity, and truthfulness because the rewards are accordingly and measured to bits by The Most Just and Fair. In conclusion, it is also justified how keeping promises are essential traits for individual especially Muslim, as it defined integrity as well as beneficial for personal achievement and for greater good.

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