



St George's Day Message 2018



”A scout is honest and reliable.”

This is the second paragraph of the Swedish Scout and Guide Law.

What does that mean to me – and to you? Do I always speak truthfully? Do I always do what I have promised? Or – what about this little “white lie”? Or when I “forgot” what I had promised to do? Can it ever be OK to tell a lie – and, if so, when? And wasn't it more fun to do something else than what I had promised?

In these times we have seen many new concepts concerning this. We speak about “fake news” and “alternative truths”. And about breaking promises because it will “harm me” if I keep them. “Me first”, to travest a foreign head of state.

And on social media – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and whatever they may be called – we see reports about this and that, with or without source references. Or with unidentifiable sources – they may even be false? Or “reports” or outright allegations concerning individuals or circumstance we cannot possibly know anything at all about.

How should we treat all this? On social media, we may “like” and “share”. But if what I “like” and “share” turns out to be false and/or untrue – then what? Doesn't that make me an accomplice to the fact – culpable of spreading lies?

Sometimes we write “*I've heard that ...*”. OK – what have we heard? How do we know it to be correct and that we can trust the source? This reminds us about the chain letters of “old times” (?), containing allegations like “*a woman in Farawayland broke the chain and perished in a fire a week later*”.

If we want to stick to our promise to obey the scout and guide law, perhaps we should stop a bit and think before uncritically “like” and “share” what we read on the social media or otherwise get to hear. When in school, we learned something about “source criticism” – a good concept to apply.

Be prepared!

Yours in scouting and fellowship
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