

The Rights Owed to Muslims, the Importance of Maintaining Family Ties and Forty Ahadeeth in this Regard

Q: Ilm-45: What rights do Muslims owe to each other and how should they treat each other? Please explain the Islaamic teachings on this issue.

Answer: The Qur'aan and the Ahadeeth have detailed the behaviour of Muslims towards each other. Please note the following verses of the Qur'aan:

It two groups of Mu'mineen fight each other, then reconcile between them. (However, despite your efforts to reconcile,) If the one group transgresses against (oppresses) the other, then fight that (transgressing) group until they -return to (the obedience of) Allaah's command (to live in peace and harmony with other Muslims). If they return (to the reconciliation process and stop fighting), then reconcile between them with justice. Be just, for Allaah 'loves those who exercise justice.

The Mu'mineen are all brothers (because they all belong to the same Deen), so reconcile (create harmony) between your brother s (whenever a dispute arises). Fear Allaah so that mercy may be shown to you.

O you who have Imaan! Men should not mock other men for perchance they (those mocked) may be better than them (those who mock). Neither should any women mock other women, perchance they (the mocked ones) may be better than them (those who mock). Never find faults with yourselves (with other Muslims) and do not call each other (by derogatory and insulting names. (For a person to be labelled with) The name of sin (to be referred to as a person who commits a particular sin) after (he has accepted) Imaan is indeed evil. Those who do not repent are indeed oppressors (of their own selves because they will be subjecting themselves to punishment).

O you who have Imaan! Refrain from excessive assumption (assuming evil things about people without verification). Verily, some assumptions are a sin (good assumptions about people are however encouraged). Never spy (on people) and never backbite each other. Does any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother, which you so detest? (Backbiting is tantamount in sin to eating the dead flesh of one's brother') Fear Allaah. (If you repent for these sins then remember that) Allaah is Most Pardoning, Most Merciful.

O people! We have certainly created you from a single male (Aadam ALY.) and female (Hawwa) and made you into various families (nations) and tribes so that you may recognise each other (so that each person may know where he belongs and who others are). (Your differences in lineage and race does not give any of you superiority over others because) Verily, the most honoured of you it Allaah's sight is the one with the most Taqwa. Allaah is certainly All Knowing Informed (Only He knows whose Taqwa is best). {surah Hujuraat, verses 9-13}

Note also the following Ahadeeth of Rasulullaah SAW. Said, 'Do

1. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. narrates that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "Do not be jealous of each other, do not deceive each other in trade, do not have hatred for each other and do not turn your backs on each other but, O servants of Allaah, rather be brothers to each other. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim who never oppresses him, never humiliates him and never looks down upon him because it is sinful enough for him to look down upon his Muslim brother. The blood, wealth and honour of a Muslim is forbidden to another Muslim.
2. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "Never sever relations with each other, never turn your backs on each other, never harbour enmity for each other and never be jealous of each other. O servants of Allaah! Rather be brothers as Allaah has commanded you."
3. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. also reports that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "Beware of suspicion because it is the worst of lies. Never look for faults in others, never spy on others. never vie with each other (in mundane matters), never be jealous of each other, never harbour enmity for each other and never turn your backs on each other. O servants of Allaah! Be brothers unto each other.
4. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "Whoever conceals the fault of a Muslim brother, Allaah will conceal his faults in this world as well as in the Aakhirah, and Allaah will assist his servant as long as His servant assists others."
5. Hadhrat Abu Dardaa RADI. narrates that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "Whenever a Muslim defends the honour of his Muslim brother, it will become binding for Allaah to defend him against the fire of Jahannam on the Day of Qiyaamah." Rasulullaah SAW. then recited the verse of the Qur'aan which states, "It is incumbent for us to assist the Mu'mineen.
6. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. also reports that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "A Mu'min has six rights due to him; that he be visited when he falls ill, that his funeral be attended when he passes away, that his invitation be accepted when he invites, that he be greeted when met, that his sneeze be replied to and that he be well wished for whether he is present or absent."
7. Hadhrat Anas RADI. narrates that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "I swear by the Being Who controls my life that a person has no Imaan until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself."
8. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Amr RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. said. "A Muslim is one from whose tongue and hands other Muslims are safe."
9. Hadhrat Anas RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. once said to him, "Dear son! If you are able to pass every morning and evening without any enmity in your heart for any person, then please do so. Dear son! This is my practice and whoever loves my practices loves me and whoever loves me shall be with me in Jannah."

Having a clean heart towards other is a Sunnah of the highest category. We must therefore do our best to emulate this.

10. Hadhrat Nu'maan bin Basheer RADI. narrates that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "In their compassion, sympathy and love for each other, the Mu'mineen are like a single body. When any limb of the body is in pain, the rest of the body responds to its call by staying awake and becoming feverish."

11. Hadhrat Nu'maan bin Basheer RADI. also narrates that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "The Mu'mineen are like a single person. When the eye is in pain, all of the body is in pain and when the head is in pain, all of the body is in pain."

In his famous Gulistaan, Sheikh Saadi RAH. says that all of mankind are like the limbs of the same body and have been treated from the same basic elements. Therefore, just as one limb is affected by the suffering of the others, so too should people be affected by the suffering of the others. When this does not happen to a person, he should excluded himself from the human species.

It is therefore the demand of Imaan a Muslim assists his Muslim brother when he sees him in difficulty and that he makes his brother's pain his own. This is what the Ahadeeth expect of us.

12. Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash'ari RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "Every Muslim is like a supportive wall for another Muslim, each lending strength to the other." Rasulullaah SAW. then interlaced his fingers depict this unity.

It is seen that the bricks of a wall all serve to fortify each other and as soon as one brick starts to crumble away, the rest soon give in and the entire wall eventually collapses. Therefore, when a Muslim is weakened in any way, every other Muslim should regard the weakness as his own and do his best to remedy the situation before they all start to suffer.

13. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar RADI. narrates that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor hands him over to an oppressor. Allaah shall see to the needs of the one who sees to the needs of his brother."

14. Hadhrat Anas RADI. reports from Rasulullaah SAW. that the person whose neighbour is not safe from his evil shall not enter Jannah.

15. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. once said, "By Allaah! He has no Imaan. By Allaah He has no Imaan. By Allaah He has no Imaan." "Who is that. O Rasulullaah SAW. the Sahabah RADI. Asked The person whose neighbour is not safe from his evil, came the reply."

16. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood .RADI. narrates that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "Verbally abusing a Muslim is an act of sin and physically abusing him is an act of Kufr."

17. Hadhrat Abu Ayyoob Ansaari RADI. narrates that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "It is not permissible for a Muslim to sever relations with his brother (Muslim) for more than three days, during which period they both ignore each other. The best of the two is the one who is first to greet with Salaam. "

Hakeemul Ummah Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi RAH. has stated that this Hadith does not refer to all situations because there will be no harm in serving relations with someone guilty of sin. Even if the period of severance is permanent, there will be no harm done because this constitutes enmity for the sake of Allaah. However, when severing relations for worldly reasons, the limit is three days. When relations are severed because one feels that it is below one's dignity to associate with someone, then this is probably due to pride.

18. Hadhrat Abu Khiraash Sulami RADI. reports from Rasulullaah SAW. that severing ties from another for a year is like spilling his blood. A narration of Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. states that the person who severs ties for a year will be guilty of a sin like that of Qaabeel (the first murderer on earth). The only difference will be that the two will be separated in Jahannam, where Qaabeel's punishment will be much more severe.

Haabeel and Qaabeel were two sons of Hadhrat Aadam ALY. The story of Qaabeel committing the first murder on earth when he killed Haabeel appears in Surah Maa'idah. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood RADI. narrates that a portion of the sin of every murder that takes place on earth will accrue to the sins of Qaabeel because he initiated the sin of murder. A narration of Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar RADI. states that Qaabeel will suffer half the punishment of all the people of Jahannam.

We can well ascertain the gravity of the sin when people sever relations for years on end and even prevent others from making an attempt to reconcile them. As stated in Hadith 12, severing relations is Haraam if it is not for a Shar'i reason. Such a person actually deprives himself of Allaah's forgiveness, as stated in the following Hadith:

19. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. said, The doors of Jannah are flung open every Tuesday and Thursday and every servant of Allaah who does not commit Shirk is forgiven except the two persons between whom there is enmity. It is announced that forgiveness for the two will be postponed until they reconcile.

20. Hadhrat Abu Bakr RADI. reports from Rasulullaah SAW. that the person who harms a Mu'min or plots to harm him is cursed.

21. Hadhrat Waathila RADI. narrates that Rasulullaah SAW. said, Never express joy at the suffering of your brother because Allaah may well shower mercy on him and afflict you with suffering.

22. Hadhrat Abu Dardaa RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. once addressed the Sahabah RADI. saying, "Should I not show you something? superior than fasting, sadaqah and salaah? When the Sahabah RADI. begged to be informed, Rasulullaah SAW. said, "Reconciling between two persons. As for causing division between people, it is something that shaves off your Deen.

23. Hadhrat Anas RADI. narrates that Rasulullaah SAW. once said, "Assist your brother whether he is an oppressor or oppressed. "O Rasulullaah SAW. a Sahabi RADI. asked, "While I can understand assisting him when he is oppressed, how do assist him when he is an oppressor?" Rasulullaah SAW. replied, "You will be assisting him if you prevent him from

oppressing."

24. Rasulullaah SAW. also said, "He is not from amongst us who does not have mercy on our youngsters and does not respect our elders.

Hadhrat Anas RADI. narrates that Rasulullaah SAW. said, when a youngster respects an old man because of his dy? Allaah shall appoint people who will respect him when he gets old.

25. Hadhrat Ali RADI. reports that he heard Rasulullaah SAW. say, "When a Muslim visits his (ill) brother in the morning, seventy thousand angels pray for his forgiveness until the evening and when he visits him in the evening, seventy thousand angels pray for his forgiveness until the morning. Furthermore, he earns for himself a garden in Jannah.

26. Hadhrat Thowbaan RADI. reports from Rasulullaah SAW. that when a Muslim visits his ailing brother, he remains amongst the fruit so Jannah until he returns." This means that he becomes worthy of the fruits of Jannah because of his deed.

27. Hadhrat Anas RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. said. "When a person makes wudhu properly and then visits his ill brother, with the intention of being rewarded (by Allaah), he is distanced a journey of seventy years from Jahannam.

28. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "When a person visits a sick person or just visits his brother Muslim for the pleasure of Allaah, a caller calls to him from the heavens saying. 'You have done well, your walking has been blessed and you have built yourself a mansion in Jannah.

Even more important than this are the relations between family members. Maintaining good family relations attracts great rewards and is a source of great blessings in sustenance. The Qur'aan and Ahadeeth stress such relations very much . Here follows some verses of the Qur'aan.

1. Give the relative his right (maintain good relations with relatives), as well as (give their rights to) the poor and the traveller (assist them in their need). And do not be extravagant (do not spend in avenues that are wasteful). Without doubt, the extravagant ones (those what waste) are the brothers of the Shayaateen (because they behave just like the Shayaateen). And Shaytaan (Iblees) was ever ungrateful to his Rabb. {Surah Bani Israa'eel, verses 26, 27}

Relatives should be given both their social and financial rights, Travellers and the needy should also be assisted financially, but money must never be squandered, because of which a person will be compromising on the rights he owes to others and therefore be guilty of sin.

2. Worship Allaah (and do good solely for His pleasure), ascribe none as partner to Him and show kindness to parents, relatives, orphans, the destitute, near (related) neighbours, distant (unrelated) neighbours, the companion by your side (spouses and close associates), travellers and those (slaves) in your possession. Verily Allaah does not like the one who is proud and boastful (Therefore, one should stay away from such people). {Surah Nisaa, verse 36}

3 . So give the relative his right (behave kindly with him and assist him wherever possible), as well as the poor and the traveller (all of whom should be assisted in every possible manner). This is best for those who seek Allaah's pleasure (because assisting Allaah's creation pleases Allaah greatly). These (people who fulfill the rights of others) are the successful people. {Surah Room, verse 38}

4. They ask you (O Muhammad SAW.) what (and on whom) they should spend (their wealth)? say, "The good (wealth) that you spend should be for (should be given to) parents, relatives, orphans, needy and travellers (there is no limit to this list). Allaah is well aware of the good you do (and will reward you accordingly)." {Surah Baqara, verse 215}

5. Verily Allaah instructs (people to carry out) justice, Ihsaan (do things well, as well as doing everything with the consciousness that Allaah is watching), and giving (charity) to relatives. And Allaah forbids immoral behaviour evil and oppression. He advises you so that you may take heed (and thereby save ourselves from ruin and Jahannam). {Surah No Verse 90}

The rights due to relatives are greater than those owed to others and may not be ignored.

Ahadeeth on the subject:

1. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. said. "Maintaining good relations with relatives creates love within families, prosperity in wealth and extension to life.

2. Hadhrat Anas RADI. narrates that Rasulullaah SAW. said, The person who wishes to enjoy blessing in his sustenance and his life should maintain good family ties.

3. Hadhrat Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf RADI. reports from Rasulullaah SAW. that Allaah said, "I am Ar Rahmaan. I have created family ties and have extracted its name from my name (Rahim is derived from Rahmaan). I shall maintain whoever maintains it and shall sever ties with whoever severs its ties.

4. Hadhrat Jubayr bin Mut'im RADI. reports from Rasulullaah SAW. that one who severs family ties shall not enter Jannah.

5. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abu Awfa RADI. reports that he heard Rasulullaah SAW. "Mercy does not descend on people amongst whom is someone who severs family ties (when they do nothing to remedy the situation).

6. Hadhrat Abu Bakrah RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "More than oppression and severing family ties, there is no sin more deserving of attracting punishment in this world together with the punishment due in the Aakhirah."

7. Hadhrat Aa'isha RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "Hadhrat Jibra'eel ALY. has told me that this is the fifteenth night of Sha'baan in which Allaah emancipates from Jahannam people numbering as many as the hairs on the goats of the Banu Bakr tribe, however, Allaah does not look at the Mushrik, the one who bears malice, the one who severs family ties, the one

whose garment flow beneath his ankles, the one who disobeys his parents and the one who is a habitual drunkard.

It must be borne in mind that maintaining good family ties should not be done only when the opposite party does the same, because this is really compensation. True maintaining of family ties is fostering them with those who sever them. Note the following Hadith:

8. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar RADI. narrates that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "The true maintainer of family ties is not one who only gives back what he receives, but he is one who joins ties when they have been severed.

9. Rasulullaah SAW. also said, "Join ties with those who sever ties with you, be good to those who are not good to you and speak the truth even though it may be against your own self.

10. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. reports that a man once came to Rasulullaah SAW. saying, "O Rasulullaah SAW. I have relatives who sever ties with me whenever I join ties, who are bad to me when I am good to them and who behave foolishly with me when I am most tolerant towards them." Rasulullaah SAW. said, "If what you say is true, then it is as if you are sprinkling sand on them and as long as you do this, there shall always remain an angel with you to assist you.

11. Hadhrat Sa'eed bin Al Aas RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "The rights that the elder brother has over the younger brother is like the rights of a father over his son.

Forty Ahadeeth have been quoted with the grace of Allaah. Ponder over the verses of the Qur'aan and the Ahadeeth, practise what they teach and encourage others to do the same. May Allaah grant us all the ability to practise. Aameen. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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