

The Neighbor's Rights



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All praise is for Allâh ﷻ Who ordered us to keep the ties of kinship intact and forbade us from being ungrateful. He further confirmed the right of a Muslim over another Muslim. The neighbor has a right over his neighbor even if he is not a Muslim or is a sinner.

We praise Allâh ﷻ and put our trust in Him. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allâh ﷻ Alone having no partners with Him. He is the Creator who created everything other than Himself.

May peace and prayers be upon our Master Muhammad ﷺ who spoke the best of speech. May peace and blessings be upon him, his family, his Companions who fulfilled all of the people's rights required from them and upon every one that follows their guidance.

O servants of Allâh, the neighbor's right is proven in many Verses of the Qur'ân and *Ahadith*. It was even said that the angel Jibreel kept emphasizing upon Muhammad ﷺ the importance of the neighbor's rights until the Prophet ﷺ developed an impression that Jibreel was going to prescribe a share in the inheritance for the neighbor. No one harms his neighbor except an ill-mannered person who is wicked and evil. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«وَاللّٰهِ لَا يُؤْمِنُ، وَاللّٰهِ لَا يُؤْمِنُ، وَاللّٰهِ لَا يُؤْمِنُ،» « قِيلَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللّٰهِ لَقَدْ خَابَ وَخَسِرَ، مَنْ هُوَ؟ قَالَ: «مَنْ لَا يَأْمَنُ جَارُهُ بَوَائِقِهِ» قَالُوا: وَمَا بَوَائِقُهُ؟ قَالَ: «شَرُّهُ» .

“By Allâh, he does not believe. By Allâh, he does not believe. By Allâh, he does not believe.” It was said: “O Messenger of Allâh! Verily, he lost and failed. Who is he?” He said: “It is he whose neighbor does not feel safe from his *Bawaaqiq*.” They asked: “What is his *Bawaaqiq*?” He said: “His evil.” (*Agreed upon*)

The Arabs before and after Islam were proud of being kind to their neighbors. They even priced their houses according to how valuable their neighbor was. Furthermore, Islam has made it incumbent upon

Muslims to be kind and benevolent to their neighbors regardless of their neighbors' religion. It was even ruled that the wicked person is he whom people avoid for his ill-manners, terrible behavior and his harmful actions. The most disgusting and revolting neighbors are those who search for people's (and also their neighbor's) faults and deficiencies. They would not mind looking into people's privacy. Thus they cannot be entrusted with people's lives, religion, money, or property. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

«مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ جَارَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ
لِيَصْمُتْ.»

“He who believes in Allâh and the Last Day should show hospitality to his neighbor; he who believes in Allâh and the Last Day should show hospitality to his guest; and he who believes in Allâh and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent.” (*Agreed upon*)

«الْمُؤْمِنُ مَنْ أَمَنَهُ النَّاسُ، وَالْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ،
وَالْمُهَاجِرُ مَنْ هَجَرَ الشُّوْءَ، وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ لَا يَأْمُرُ
بِجَارِهِ بِوَأْتِقَهُ.»

“The believer is he who the people feel safe with. The Muslim is he who the Muslims are protected from his tongue and hand. The Emigrant is he who abandons evil. By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, he will not enter Paradise whose neighbor is not secure from his evil.”

O Muslims, it is really shameful to go to sleep with a full stomach while your neighbor is hungry. It is shameful to always wear new clothes, yet be so stingy that you would not even give your neighbor your used clothes to cover his nudity. It is shameful to enjoy all the good things you have — food, clothes, perfume, and much more — while your neighbors long for bones and dry bread. Are you aware of what the Prophet ﷺ said regarding giving things away to your neighbors even if it were a little thing? He ﷺ said:

«أَلَا لَا تَخْفِرَنَّ جَارَةً لِجَارَتِهَا وَلَوْ فَرَسَنَ شَاةً» .

“Certainly, a woman should not belittle what her neighbor gives her, even if it is a sheep’s intestines.”

He ﷺ addressed Abu Dhar رضى الله عنه, saying:

«يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ إِذَا طَبَخْتَ مَرْقَةً فَأَكْبِرْ مَاءَهَا وَتَعَهَّدْ جِيرَانَكَ» .

“O Abu Dhar! When you cook, add more water (i.e., to make enough soup) and take care of your neighbors (by sending them some of it).”

O brothers in Islam, your neighbor has rights upon you, which you must fulfill! These rights are easy to fulfill; I shall mention them as a reminder. When you meet with him or run into him accidentally, you should greet him by saying *Salâm* (*Assalamo Alaikum*). When he falls sick, you should visit him. When he dies, you should attend his funeral and look after his children after his death as if it were their father looking after them. You must stand by him in happiness, grief, hardship and ease. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«خَيْرُ الْأَصْحَابِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى خَيْرُهُمْ لِصَاحِبِهِ، وَخَيْرُ الْجِيرَانِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى خَيْرُهُمْ لِجَارِهِ» .

“The best of companions with Allâh is the one who is good to his companion, and the best of neighbors with Allâh is the one who is good to his neighbor.”

O Muslims! It is prohibited for you to peek into your neighbor’s house, especially while he is not paying attention. It is prohibited for you to cheat him (by having relations) with his wife. You should know that he, who looks into his neighbor’s house without his permission, would have his eyes filled from Hellfire. It is forbidden upon you to try to listen to what your neighbor says in his house like spies do, which would make him insecure with you being his neighbor and never trust you with what he says or does.

If you are not able to be good and kind with your neighbor or acknowledge his favor upon you, then do not harm him and keep your

evil away from him. Let him relax in his home and visit him when he invites you. When he consults you, advise him. If he is oppressed, give him your help, support and defense. Yet if he is the oppressor, help him by stopping him from oppression. If he does well, hail and compliment him and if he does wrong, pardon him. If he corrupts, do not approve of his corruption and remember that on Judgement Day many will be grabbing their neighbors, each one saying: "O Lord! This is my neighbor who closed his door in my face and deprived me of his good advice while witnessing my evil."

قَالَ رَجُلٌ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! إِنَّ فُلَانَةَ تُذَكِّرُ مِنْ كَثْرَةِ صَلَاتِهَا وَصِيَامِهَا، غَيْرَ أَنَّهَا تُؤْذِي جِيرَانَهَا، قَالَ: «هِيَ فِي النَّارِ» قَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ فُلَانَةَ تُذَكِّرُ مِنْ قَلَّةِ صَلَاتِهَا وَصِيَامِهَا، وَإِنَّهَا تَتَصَدَّقُ بِالْأَنْوَارِ مِنَ الْأَقِطِ وَلَا تُؤْذِي جِيرَانَهَا، قَالَ: «هِيَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ».

"A man asked the Prophet ﷺ about a woman who made many prayers and fasted much. Yet she would hurt her neighbors. The Prophet ﷺ answered: 'She is in the fire of Hell.' The man asked again about another woman who only did her obligations in terms of praying and fasting, yet she gave charity with big pieces of *Aqit* (yogurt or cheese) and never harmed her neighbors. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'She is in Paradise.'"

The Prophet ﷺ said:

«أَرْبَعٌ مِنَ السَّعَادَةِ: الْمَرْأَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ، وَالْمَسْكَنُ الْوَاسِعُ، وَالْجَارُ الصَّالِحُ، وَالْمَرْكَبُ الْهَيِّئُ، وَأَرْبَعٌ مِنَ الشَّقَاوَةِ: الْجَارُ السَّوُّ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ السَّوُّ، وَالْمَرْكَبُ السَّوُّ وَالْمَسْكَنُ الضَّيِّقُ».

"Four are from happiness: a good wife, a spacious residence, a good neighbor and a comfortable vehicle. And four are from misery: a bad neighbor, a bad wife, a bad vehicle, and a small (stifling) residence."

Allâh ﷻ likes the neighbor who is patient upon his neighbor's harms until one day Allâh ﷻ will help him, either by moving him away from that neighbor or by that neighbor's death. It is idiocy and stupidity for

people to file complaints with the authorities against their neighbors for the bickering and quarrels that occur among the women or children. The Prophet ﷺ also forbade building walls or raising the houses so high that such would cause harm for the neighbor and might block the wind from reaching the neighbor's property or expose of the neighbor's privacy. The Prophet ﷺ used to say:

«اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْجَارِ السَّوِّءِ فِي دَارِ الْمَقَامَةِ، فَإِنَّ جَارَ الْبَادِيَةِ يَتَحَوَّلُ» .

“O Allâh, I seek refuge with you from the bad neighbor in a permanent residence, as the neighbor in the nomadic residence is always moving (i.e., he does not stay in one place).”

The Prophet ﷺ said:

«اتَّقِ الْمَحَارِمَ تَكُنْ أَعْبَدَ النَّاسِ، وَارْضَ بِمَا قَسَمَ اللهُ لَكَ تَكُنْ أَعْنَى النَّاسِ، وَأَحْسِنْ إِلَى جَارِكَ تَكُنْ مُؤْمِنًا، وَأَحَبَّ لِلنَّاسِ مَا تُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِكَ تَكُنْ مُسْلِمًا، وَلَا تَكْثِرِ الضَّحْكَ فَإِنَّ كَثْرَةَ الضَّحْكِ تُمِيتُ الْقَلْبَ» .

“Beware of the prohibitions then you are the best of worshippers. Be satisfied with which Allâh has given you, then you are the richest of people. Be kind to your neighbor, then you are a believer. Love for the people what you love for yourself, then you are a Muslim. And do not laugh too much, for laughing too much kills the heart.”

Some people do not care about others if they themselves are comfortable. They would not mind if all the people were annoyed by them and angry with them. They would not mind even if their reputation was hurt so long as they satisfy their lusts and joys. Their lusts and desires are fulfilled and their needs are met, so it does not matter if all these were satisfied at the expense of their honor, dignity, or reputation. For that reason, these people are despised by others, hated by their neighbors and have a disgusting reputation among their peers. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«إِذَا لَمْ تَسْتَحِ فَاصْنَعْ مَا شِئْتَ» .

“If you feel no shame, then do whatever you wish.”

He ﷺ also said:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَسَمَ بَيْنَكُمْ أَخْلَاقَكُمْ كَمَا قَسَمَ بَيْنَكُمْ أَرْزَاقَكُمْ، وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يُعْطِي الدُّنْيَا مَنْ يُحِبُّ وَمَنْ لَا يُحِبُّ، وَلَا يُعْطِي الدِّينَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَحَبَّ، فَمَنْ أَعْطَاهُ الدِّينَ فَقَدْ أَحَبَّهُ، وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ! لَا يُسْلِمُ عَبْدٌ حَتَّى يُسْلِمَ قَلْبُهُ وَلِسَانُهُ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ حَتَّى يَأْمَنَ جَارُهُ بِوَأْتِقَهُ».

“Allâh has divided your manners among you as he has divided your provisions. Verily Allâh gives (the pleasures of this) life to whom He loves and whom He does not. Yet, He does not give the faith except to whom He loves. He who is given the faith, verily Allâh has loved him. By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, a person does not become a Muslim until his heart and tongue submit and surrender (to Allâh), and does not believe until his neighbor is safe from his evil.”

May Allâh make you and me among the best of his creatures, and may He bless us all with the good favors and provisions that he bestows upon us. May He protect you and me from harming the neighbor and from ignoring his rights upon us.

Allâh ﷻ says:

﴿ وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ، مِمَّا وَطَّأْتُمْ أَرْسَالَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اسْكُنُوا فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلْأَقْرَبُ لِلَّهِ وَالْبُيُوتُ الْمَسْكُونَةُ وَالْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينُ وَالْجَارَ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارَ الْجُنُبَ وَالصَّاحِبَ بِالْجَنبِ وَالْأَبْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا ﴾

“Worship Allâh and join none with Him (in worship); and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, *Al-Masâkin* (the poor), the neighbor who is near of kin, the neighbor who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and those (slaves) whom your right hands possess. Verily, Allâh does not like such as are proud and boastful.” (4:36)