

CHAPTER SIXTY- TWO

RIGHTS OF NEIGHBOURS

O Allah (The Exalted) bless our lord and master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) as many times as there are drops of rain.

Islam is a religion of peace. It deals justly and kindly with each and every member of society without distinction of race, religion, and colour. For example, Islam guides its followers to treat the neighbours kindly as the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: *“Anyone who believes in Allah (The Exalted) and the Day of judgement should honour his neighbour.”*ⁱ

Excellent neighbour

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“The most excellent neighbour is he who behaves best with his neighbour.”*ⁱⁱ

The true Muslim does not restrict his good treatment only to neighbours who are related to him who are Muslims, but he extends it to non-Muslim neighbours too, so that the tolerance of Islam may spread to all people, regardless of their race or religion. ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr had a sheep slaughtered and asked his slave, *“Did you give some meat to our Jewish neighbour? For I heard the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, “Jibrail (upon whom be peace) kept recommending treating neighbours with kindness until I thought he would assign a share of inheritance.”*ⁱⁱⁱ

Meaning that the emphasis of the respect and rights of the neighbours was such that he thought a share of inheritance would be given to them. *Subhanallah!*

Rights of neighbours

‘Abd-Allah bin ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates, that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *‘Do you know what the rights of your neighbours are?’* then he said; *“When they ask for help assist them, when they ask for money give them, when in need give them, when they are ill visit them, when they are in a good position congratulate them, when in difficulty share their grief, when they die go to the funeral, do not erect your building without permission so the wind doesn’t reach them, do not make them suffer with the fragrance of your cooking but give them some too, when you purchase fruit give them as a gift and if you don’t want to, then secretly bring it into your house and that your children do not take it out in front of their children.”*^{iv} *Allahu Akbar!*

This shows how we should be treating our neighbours on a daily basis.

Keep in mind your neighbours

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“Whenever you cook soup, add extra water to it and have in your mind the members of the household of your neighbour. Then give them some of this (soup) with courtesy.”*^v

We should make extra food and at times give some to our neighbours too, this will increase love and friendship with each other.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“A man is not a true believer if he eats with satisfaction whilst his neighbour goes hungry.”*^{vi}

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“O Muslim women, do not think that nay gift is too insignificant to give to a neighbour, even if it is only a sheep’s foot.”*

A sheep’s foot is a thing of little value, but it is better than nothing, and no woman should feel that any gift is not worth giving to a neighbour.

Like for your neighbour too

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“By the One in whose Hands is my life! No one is a true believer until he likes for his neighbours whatever he likes for himself.”*^{vii} *Allahu Akbar!*

Many people do things to their neighbours which we ourselves would not like to be done to ourselves i.e. throwing rubbish into their bins or parking the car in front of their house etc.

A companion (may Allah be pleased with him) asked, “O Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)! If I perform a good act how do I know that this is a good act; and when I have done something wrong that it is a bad act?” The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “When your neighbours disapprove of your act it is a bad act.”^{viii}

Displeasing your neighbour

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that, “A person said ‘O Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) such a woman offers plenty of Salaah, fasts and gives in charity, however, she gives difficulty to her neighbours with her tongue.’” “She is from those of the hell fire,” said the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). The person then said, “O Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) such a woman doesn’t have much Salaah (voluntary), fast (voluntary) and she gives piece of cheese in charity but doesn’t give difficulty to her neighbours.” The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “That woman is from those of paradise.”^{ix}

Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Sallam (may Allah be pleased with him) came to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and complained about his neighbour. “Have patience.” Said the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). When he complained the second and the third time the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Place all your belongings outside in the street.” The narrator says when people saw this they enquired the reason. He said, “My neighbour teases me.” People passed and asked and said, “May Allah (The Exalted) guide his neighbour.” When the neighbour found out he was very sorry and advised him to take back his belongings and said, “I will not give you difficulty.”^x

Do not have friends around late night, play music which is forbidden anyway, or horn on the streets as may be working nights, children may be sleeping etc. so have consideration for everyone.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, “By Allah (The Exalted), he is not a believer! By Allah (The Exalted), he is not a believer! By Allah (The Exalted), he is not a believer.” It was asked, “Who is that, O Messenger of Allah?” He said, “One whose neighbour does not feel safe from his evil.”^{xi} Allahu Akbar!

There were many mice in a pious person’s house and someone advised him to get a cat. He replied, ‘I feel that the mice will leave my house and enter the house of my neighbour that means I will become such a person that doesn’t like a difficulty but wants others to suffer the same difficulty.’^{xii}

The pious would always have others in mind too.

Giving a gift

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, “O Muslim women! No one of you should consider insignificant (a gift) to give to her neighbour even if it is (a gift of) the trotters of a sheep.”^{xiii}

You don’t have to cook any special dish to give to your neighbour, even the smallest of gifts can be given such as fruits or sweets etc.

‘Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that I said, “O Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) I have two neighbours, to which of them should I send a present?” He replied, “To the one whose door is nearer to you.”^{xiv}

Incident!

Malik bin Dinar (may Allah’s Mercy be upon him) rented a house. Next door was a Jew and Malik bin Dinar’s (may Allah’s Mercy be upon him) room was near the door of the neighbour. The Jewish neighbour made a place where all impurities and waste which he would throw in the house of Malik bin Dinar (may Allah’s Mercy be upon him). He did this for some time but Malik bin Dinar (may Allah’s Mercy be upon him) said nothing. Once the Jew asked Malik bin Dinar (may Allah’s Mercy be upon him) “Do you not suffer from my throwing the waste?” Malik (may Allah’s Mercy be upon him) said, “Yes I do, but I clean it up.” “Why do you go through this, do you not get angry?” asked the Jew. Malik bin Dinar (may Allah’s Mercy be upon him) said, “My Lord states in the Qur’an: And those who

Listening to this verse the Jew's heart became soft and he said, *"Without doubt your religion is good, today I except Islam from the bottom of my heart."* He then accepted Islam. ^{xv}

We should be kind in our dealings and easy going with out neighbours. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that, *"No-one should present his neighbours from fastening a piece of wood to his wall."* ^{xvi}

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that, *"How many people will be hanging onto their neighbours on the Day of Judgment saying, "O My Rabb! He shut his door in my face and deprived his kind treatment and help."* ^{xvii}

The true Muslim is especially careful to avoid committing sins against his neighbour, because a sin against a neighbour is worse than other crimes, according to the words of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). He quizzed his Companions about adultery and they said, *"It is forbidden, Allah (The Exalted) and His Messenger have prohibited it."* He told them, *"A man who commits adultery with ten women has committed a lesser sin than one who commits adultery with his neighbour's wife."* Then he quizzed them about stealing, and they said, *"It is forbidden, Allah (The Exalted) and His Messenger have prohibited it."* He told them, *"A man who steals from ten households has committed a lesser sin than the one who steals from his neighbour's house."* ^{xviii}

Respected brother/sister in Islam! The true Muslim does not restrict his good treatment only to neighbours who are related to him or who are Muslims, but he extends it to non-Muslim neighbours too, so that the tolerance of Islam may spread to all people, regardless of their race or religion. These are the beautiful teachings of the Prophet of Islam (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). If we act upon this Sunnah, there will be no corruption in the world and there will be global peace and prosperity amongst Muslims.

May Allah (The Exalted) give us the ability to respect and look after our neighbours and be patience with them, Ameen.

ⁱ Bukhari

ⁱⁱ Tirmidhi

ⁱⁱⁱ Bukhari & Muslim

^{iv} Faizane Sunnat

^v Muslim

^{vi} Mishkat

^{vii} Muslim

^{viii} Ibn Majah

^{ix} Baihaqi

^x Muqashifatul Quloob

^{xi} Bukhari & Muslim

^{xii} Muqashifatal Quloob

^{xiii} Bukhari & Muslim

^{xiv} Bukhari

^{xv} Tazkiratul Awliya

^{xvi} Bukhari & Muslim

^{xvii} Aadaab al-Mufrad

^{xviii} Musnad Imam Ahmad