

HADITH

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Subject: Muslims are brothers

Level : Advanced

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ "الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ لَا يَظْلِمُهُ وَلَا يُسْلِمُهُ، مَنْ كَانَ فِي حَاجَةِ أَخِيهِ كَانَ اللَّهُ فِي حَاجَتِهِ وَمَنْ فَرَّجَ عَنْ مُسْلِمٍ كُرْبَةً فَرَّجَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ بِهَا كُرْبَةً مِنْ كَرْبٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ". ((مُتَّفَقٌ عَلَيْهِ))

On the authority Abdullah ibn Umar that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: A Muslim is the brother of a fellow-Muslim. He should neither commit oppression upon him nor hand him over, nor hand him over to an oppressor. And whoever fulfills the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs, and he who relieves a Muslim from a hardship, Allah will relieve him from a hardship on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever covers (the sin of) a Muslim, Allah will cover him (his sin) on the Day of Resurrection." [agreed upon].

The Narrator:

He is Abdullah ibn Umar ibn Al-Khattab Al-Qurashi Al-Adawiy, brother of the Mother of the Believers, Hafsa - may Allah be pleased with her. He was born in Mecca a year before the Prophethood, and he died in the year 73 or 74 AH and was buried near Mecca. He converted to Islam when he was young and immigrated to Medina before his father. The first battle he attended was the Battle of the Trench. He participated in the battle of Mu'atah, Yarmouk, the conquest of Egypt and Africa, and in the wars of apostasy. He was one of the six companions who narrated the most hadiths. He was famous for his strict following of the sunnah of the Messenger - peace be upon him - and for his great caution and devotion to his religion in fatwas, and in every matter. He abandoned the dispute over the caliphate despite the inclination of the people of the Levant towards him, and he did not participate in any of the strife that occurred between the Muslims.

Vocabulary

- يَظْلِم : to oppress
- يُسْلِم : to hand over
- حَاجَة : need
- أَخ : brother
- فَرَّجَ : relived
- كُرْبَة : hardship
- الدُّنْيَا : life - world
- يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ : The Day of Resurrection

The Explanation:

The Arabs before Islam only showed loyalty to their tribe and blood relations. Then Islam came and united all Muslims, making them brothers in faith, with rights and duties towards each other. Allah the Exalted said:

(إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ) [الحجرات: 10]

“The believers are but brothers” (Quran, 49:10).

He also said:

(فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا) [آل عمران: 103]

“and you became, by His favor, brothers” (Quran, 3:103).

The Prophet ﷺ affirmed this Quranic principle by saying, “A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim,” meaning they are brothers in religion. Even though they are not of one blood or one family and do not inherit from each other, they all belong to the family of Islam.

This brotherhood requires some essential foundations, the Prophet laid these foundations as follows: not to oppress him, not hand him over, taking care of his needs, relive his burdens and covering his faults.

1- Do not oppress him

He should neither commit oppression upon him لَا يَظْلِمُهُ

It is not permissible for a Muslim to wrong anyone, especially another Muslim. Oppression means, exceeding the limits. Justice, which is the opposite of oppression, is a distinguished Islamic principle. From Allah's names is *Al-'Adl* which means The Just and *Al-Muqsit* which means the The Equitable. Allah said:

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۚ يَعِظُكُم لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴾ [النحل: 90].

“Indeed, Allah commands to act with justice and kindness, and to give to relatives. And He forbids indecency, wickedness, and aggression. He instructs you so perhaps you will be mindful” (Quran, 16:90)

Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ narrated from Allah the Exalted: “O My servants, I have forbidden oppression for Myself and have made it forbidden among you, so do not oppress one another.”

2- Do not hand him over

nor hand him over وَلَا يُسْلِمُهُ

A Muslim does not leave his Muslim brother without support or protection when an enemy oppresses him or when a calamity befalls him. In another narration of the hadith The Prophet ﷺ : “The Muslim is the brother of a Muslim; he does not oppress him, nor does he forsake him.” Forsaking a Muslim means abandoning him, letting him down and not helping him against his oppressor. Therefore, a Muslim must defend the honor, blood, and wealth of his fellow Muslim. If a Muslim hears someone slandering or backbiting another Muslim, he must defend him and not to ignore what he heard nor say it is not my business to worry about. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “He who defends the honor of his (Muslim) brother, Allah will protect his face from the Fire on the Day of Resurrection.” [At-Tirmidhi]. This is for the one who defends his brother’s honor, so what about the one who defends his Muslim brother’s wealth and life?

Not handing your Muslims brother over does not just mean helping him when he is oppressed but also to stop him from doing wrong, whether against others or against himself. Stopping someone from doing something wrong falls under this category of not handing him over. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or is oppressed". A man enquired: "O Messenger of Allah! I help him when he is oppressed, but how can I help him when he is an oppressor?" He ﷺ said, "You can keep him from committing oppression. That will be your help to him". [Al-Bukhari].

3- Assisting him

مَنْ كَانَ فِي حَاجَةٍ أَخِيهِ كَانَ اللَّهُ فِي حَاجَتِهِ

Whoever fulfills the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs

Whoever assists his brother and helps him fulfill a specific need or provides him with kindness through his wealth, influence, intercession, or any other means, Allah the Exalted will be in his aid. This is because circumstances change, and Allah changes the conditions of people from one state to another. Allah the Exalted said:

وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ

“And these days [of varying conditions] We alternate among the people”
(Quran, 3:140).

Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that a man came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked: "O Messenger of Allah, who are the most beloved people to you?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: "The most beloved people to Allah are those who are most beneficial to the people. The most beloved deeds to Allah are bringing happiness to a Muslim, relieving him of distress, paying off his debt, or driving away his hunger. Walking with a brother to fulfill his need is more beloved to me than observing i'tikaf (seclusion for worship) in this mosque (of Madinah) for a month. Whoever restrains his anger, Allah will conceal his faults. Whoever suppresses his rage, even though he could fulfill it if he wished, Allah will fill his heart with hope on the Day of Judgment. Whoever walks with his brother to fulfill his need until it is accomplished, Allah will make his feet firm on the Day when feet will slip."

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ came across some people who were sitting, so he said: 'Shall I not inform you of the best of you from your worst?' He said: "They became silent, so he said that three times, then a man said: 'Of course, O Messenger of Allah! Inform us of the best among us from our worst.' He said: 'The best of you is the one whose goodness is hoped for, and people are safe from his evil. And the worst of you is he whose goodness is not hoped for, and people are not safe from his evil.'" [At-Tirmidhi].

Be from those who assist others to fulfill their needs so that Allah will help you to fulfill yours.

4- Relieving his hardship

وَمَنْ فَرَّجَ عَنْ مُسْلِمٍ كُرْبَةً فَرَّجَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ بِهَا كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

And he who relieves a Muslim from a hardship Allah will relieve him from a hardship on the Day of Resurrection

Relieving distress can involve various actions: if it is financial distress, then by giving the money needed to alleviate the distress; if it is emotional distress, then by restoring his morale and reputation until the distress is removed; if it is worry and sorrow, then by comforting him, showing him that circumstances do not last, and reminding him that constancy is impossible. You can also emphasize the great reward and immense blessings in such acts to ease his distress.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "There was a man who used to lend money to the people, and he used to say to his servant: 'If you come across someone who is in difficulty, forgive him, so that Allah may forgive us.' So when he met Allah, He forgave him." (Bukhari and Muslim). He ﷺ also said: "Whoever wishes to be saved from the distress of the Day of Resurrection, let him relieve one in difficulty or forgive a debtor."

5- Covering his faults

وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

Whoever covers (the sin of) a Muslim, Allah will cover him (his sin) on the Day of Resurrection

Whoever conceals the faults of his brother, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and the Hereafter. However, this is not absolute; concealing faults can be commendable and required, or it can be forbidden. If we see someone committing a sin and he is a wicked person, known for his evil and wrong doings, and concealing his fault would only increase his transgression, then we should not conceal it. Instead, we should report him so that he may be restrained and his evil does not harm others.

However, if he shows no signs of persistent evil and it is a one-time slip, then it is recommended to conceal it and not disclose it to anyone. If you conceal his fault, Allah will conceal your faults in this world and the Hereafter.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ascended the pulpit and called out in a loud voice, saying: "O you who have accepted Islam with your tongues but faith has not yet entered your hearts, do not harm the Muslims, do not shame them, and do not pursue their faults. For whoever pursues the faults of his Muslim brother, Allah will pursue his faults, and whoever has his faults pursued by Allah, He will expose him, even if he is in the innermost part of his house" (Tirmidhi).

All that is mentioned in the hadith applies equally to men and women. The Prophet ﷺ mentioned men in the hadith because he interacted with them more frequently, but the message of the hadith is directed to the entire ummah unless there is something that specifies the address to one gender.

This hadith also guides us that the reward is of the same type as the deed: whoever fulfills the need of his brother, Allah will fulfill his need; whoever conceals his brother's fault, Allah will conceal his faults; and whoever relieves his brother's distress, Allah will relieve his distress.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Encouraging Muslims to cooperate, show mercy, support, and advise each other.
- Working to strengthen Islamic bonds and fulfill their obligations.
- A Muslim should fulfill the rights of his brother for the sake of Allah and with confidence in the generous reward promised by Allah.
- The reward in the Hereafter corresponds to the acts of obedience performed in this world.