

THE TRUE MUSLIM

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Chapter One

The True Islam

عن عمرو ابن العاص رضى الله عنهما عن رسول الله ﷺ قال : « المسلم من سلم المسلمون من لسانه و يده و المهاجر من هجر ما نهى الله عنه »

(رواه البخاري)

Abdullah Ibn Omar, may Allah be pleased with them, narrated that the Prophet, sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, said, "The Muslim is he from whose tongue and hands Muslims are safe. And the Muhajer (immigrant) is he who abandons all what Allah has forbidden." Al-Bukhari

Other Traditions from Al-Bukhari

- **Abdullah Ibn Omar said that Allah's Messenger said, "Islam is founded upon five (pillars): To testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger, to offer the prayers (dutifully and perfectly), to pay Zakat (obligatory charity), to perform Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca), and to observe fast during the month of Ramadan."**
- **Abdullah Ibn Amr said that a person asked Allah's Messenger, "Which Islam¹ is the best?" He replied,**
- **"To offer food and greet with peace those whom you know and those whom you don't know."**

1 - . i.e., Which of the deeds of Islam is the best ?

Preface

I am deeply grateful to Almighty Allah for guiding me to start this series of Hadeeth studies. Selections of the Prophet's traditions from Saheeh Al-Bukhari, the most authentic book after the Qur'aan, are explained in some detail emphasizing their application in our lives.

This series of Hadeeth studies is a humble attempt toward a better understanding of Sunnah, its important role in our lives and the revival of Islamic heritage at large.

I thank Allah for offering me the chance to teach these selected traditions and share this knowledge with many of my sisters in IPC (Islam Presentation Committee, Kuwait). I pray to Allah (Subhanahu Wata'la) from all my heart to accept this work and make it sincerely for His sake.

"Say: Truly, my prayers, my services of sacrifice, my life, and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. There are no partners with Him. This am I commanded, and I am the first of Muslims (of those who submit to His will)." Surah Al An'am, Chapter 6, Verse 162-163.

The Meaning of “Islam”

Islam, إسلام , in Arabic is derived from the verb “As-Lama اسلم ” which means to submit willingly. Unwilling submission, or surrender, in Arabic is “Istislam, استسلام” which is completely different from Islam.

The follower of Islam is called a Muslim; the meaning of “Muslim مسلم” in Arabic is any person who submits willingly to the will of God out of love and free choice.

If one submits to God unwillingly, for example if one is compelled to announce his Islam for any reason, he is not a true “Muslim” but rather a “Mostaslim مستسلم ”, which means a surrenderer.

That means you cannot be a Muslim by force. To be a true Muslim you must choose Islam and be fully convinced of it as the true religion of God.

That is why the Qur’aan itself states, “**There is no compulsion in religion.**” This is one of the basic principles of Islam.

The “Muslim مسلم”, in Islamic terminology, is he who declares his submission to Allah willingly by testifying that there is no God but Allah and Mohammad is His messenger and practicing all other pillars of Islam: offering prayers, giving obligatory charity, fasting the month of Ramadan, and performing pilgrimage to Mecca if he can afford it.

The Religion of Peace, Balance, and Harmony

Islam also means in Arabic: peace, security, as well as the freedom from all dangers, unpleasant conditions and situations (*Assalamah* - السلامة). One of the beautiful names of God is (*Assalam* - السلام), The Provider of Peace and Security. The salutation of Islam, Assalamu Alikum, which means peace be with you, expresses this aspect of the meaning of Islam.

Islam proves to be the only way of life that balances in harmony between the life of this world and the Hereafter, between man’s physical needs and spiritual needs. Islam is a way of life that rejects monasticism. A Muslim can enjoy the life of this world and yet be the greatest worshipper of God.

Good intentions and pure heart are as important as the deeds themselves. Good intentions may turn a small insignificant deed into a great achievement. One could be rewarded for all his ordinary activities as acts of worship if the intentions behind them are good. For example, every penny man spends to support himself and his dependents will be counted as a charity for him if he intends to keep himself and his dependents away from evil.

Another example, Mua’ath Ibn Jabal used to say, “I expect a reward from Allah for the time I spend in sleep as I expect a reward for the time I spend in night prayer, because I sleep with the intention to strengthen myself for the night prayer.” Thus the time we sleep would be turned into a righteous deed if we intend to strengthen ourselves to do more good deeds. This attitude dramatically improves the

quality of the life of Muslim. Every thing in his/her life becomes meaningful; and every day normal activity service a good purpose in life.

This way Islam brings inner peace and satisfaction to the lives of its followers. What's more is that Islam provides answers for the puzzling questions such as: where we came from, why we are here in this world, and where are we going after death, what will happen to our souls, etc.; and thus it resolves all the conflicts people encounter in their lives in such a way that enables them to live in inner peace and harmony within themselves, with their Creator, with other people, and with all of God's creatures around him.

The Everlasting Religion

Islam is a religion as old as mankind. It is the call of all prophets of God. The message of Islam is a continuation of all the religions before it. Islam is the religion of all the true followers of the prophets of God.

The mission of the Prophet Mohammad is the fulfillment of the prayer of the Prophet Abraham to send into the children of his son Ishmael a prophet from amongst themselves and bring a great nation out of them. This prophecy is mentioned in the Bible. In Genesis, Chapter 16, Verse 10,

“And the angel of the LORD said unto her (Hajar), I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.”

In Deuteronomy, Chapter 18, Verse 18, God said,

“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren (children of Ishmael), like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.”

According to this, Islam is not Mohammadism, as it is referred to by some non-Muslims, and Muslims are not just the followers of Mohammad. The Prophet Mohammad, sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, gave a very beautiful parable of the relationship between Islam and the prophets of Allah before him. He said:

“(An illustration) of my relationship to the other prophets before me is that of a man who has built a house nicely and beautifully, except for the placement of one brick in a corner. The people go about it and wonder at its beauty, but say: ‘Would that this brick be put in its place!’ So I am that brick, and I am the last of the prophets.” Al-Bukhari

The example of Islam is like a house and all the prophets of God called people to enter it. When the Prophet Abraham was sent, he renovated the house. Every prophet who came after him added something extra to the house. People liked the house but wished if the missing brick is put so that the house looks at its best. The Prophet said, “I am that missing brick”; in another tradition, he commented: “I have been sent to complete and perfect the high virtues and good manners of humanity.” By mission of Prophet Mohammad, Allah completed His favors upon mankind and perfected their religion for them.

Islam is a Movement for Man's Liberation

Submission to God is the highest rank of liberation a human being can ever reach. It frees man from all kinds of slavery and protects him from slipping into self-worship.

True Muslims are free people; they are free from all forms of submission to people, objects, ideas, or to one's own wealth, desires, position, authority, pleasures, or lusts.

Nothing in this world can control the life of a true Muslim but the law of Allah. The true Muslim yields to nobody but Allah; fears nobody but Allah; turns to nobody for support but Allah; puts his trust in nobody but Allah. Pleasing Allah is the ultimate goal of his life.

The Qur'aan mentions Bilqis the queen of Sheba as an example of a true Muslim. When Prophet Solomon, peace be upon him, invited her to Islam, she consulted her people and decided to visit Solomon in Palestine in order to investigate the matter closely. When she saw the great signs of Solomon's prophethood and was convinced that he must be a true prophet she announced her Islam saying,

“Oh! My Lord, I have wronged myself ² and I am submitting with Solomon to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.”

She fully submitted herself to Allah. She liberated herself from the slavery of her wealth, desires, position, authority and sovereignty, and surrendered fully and willingly to

2. for worshipping the sun

Allah alone. That is why she did not say, “I am submitting to Solomon” but rather she said, ”I am submitting with Solomon to God.”

Thus both the king and the queen proved to be perfect Muslims and submitted together to God, not to one another.

Chapter Two

Analyzing the Hadeeth

The *Hadeeth* implies that the perfect Muslim is he who refrains from abusing people physically, verbally, and mentally. In return, people will trust him and feel secure and comfortable when dealing with him.

The Basic Islam

The basic Muslim as mentioned in other traditions is he who fulfills the five pillars of Islam: testifying that there is no God but Allah and Mohammad is His messenger, offering prayers in time, gave obligatory charity (Zakah), fasting the month of Ramadan, and performing pilgrimage to Mecca if one has the means to afford it.

The True Islam

The *Hadeeth*, we are studying, defines the Muslim as he from whose tongue and hands Muslims are safe. Scholars of Islam say the *Hadeeth* refers to the perfect or true Muslim. The true Muslim is he who, in addition to believing and performing all the pillars of Islam, refrains from harming anybody either by words or actions.

It stresses that the real Muslim avoids causing any kind of harm to people. In other words, one can not be a true Muslim unless his religious practices of Islam are reflected in his dealings with people in real life. The true Muslim does not only meet the basic requirements but also is always striving to be a peaceful person who respects the rights of

people and refrains from causing any sort of harm, damage, or injury to them either by words or actions.

But he who practices the pillars of Islam and various acts of worship, but at the same time, he treats people with bad manners and pays no respect to their rights, is unable to understand the reality of Islam. Such a person has indeed failed to realize the significance of the acts of worship and the wisdom and spirit behind them.

The Best Islam

Moreover, according to other traditions, the best Muslim is defined as he who offers food to the needy and greet every one with peace.

Abdullah Ibn Amr said that a person asked Allah's Messenger, "Which Islam is the best?" He replied, "To offer food and greet with peace those whom you know and those whom you don't know."³

Offering food symbolizes benefiting people by actions; food is mentioned here because it is easy and available, every one can donate some food. Greeting people with peace symbolizes benefiting them by nice, encouraging, and supporting words; peaceful greeting is mentioned because it is simple and no one has an excuse not to do it.

Accordingly, the best Muslim is he who does not only abstain from harming people but also is doing his best to be beneficent to people as much as he can by words and actions.

3-Narrated by both Al-Bukhari and Moslem.

The Ideal Muslim

The ideal Muslim not only acts with people with kind, pleasant, peaceful, and respectful manners; and is beneficent to them but also keeps himself away from nonsense and useless words and actions. He does not waste his time and/or efforts in vain actions and purposeless speeches. The Prophet, sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, said:

“Part of someone’s being a good Muslim is his leaving alone that which does not concern him.”⁴

The True Muhajir

The Prophet, sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, gave orders to his companions to migrate to Medina to escape the persecution of Quraish. They migrated to Medina gradually and secretly; they left behind their houses, wealth, and possessions for supporting Allah and his Messenger.

The immigrant was honored for his great sacrifices and given the title of “*Muhaejir*”. And he was promised a great reward from Allah. The immigration had stopped after the conquest of Mecca.

The *Hadeeth* defines the true *Muhajir* as the one who, in addition to migrating from his homeland to the land of Islam, keeps himself away from all sorts of evil practices; and abandons whatever Allah has forbidden.

But he who migrated from his homeland to the land of Islam, and but does not refrain from indulging in sins and misconduct, has indeed failed to achieve the purpose behind his migration.

4- Narrated by At-Tirmidhi and others.

Why does the *Hadeeth* mention the tongue before the hand?

The *Hadeeth* mentioned the tongue before the hand in the phrase: “... *from whose tongue and hands Muslims are safe.*” to signify the significance of controlling the tongue. The reasons behind this could be summed up as follows:

- 1- The tongue is a tool that expresses ourselves, our beliefs, ideas, and thoughts. If we succeed in restraining our tongues we would indeed be able to take control over our lives.
- 2- Controlling tongue is a very difficult task. People usually give little attention to what they say. That is why hurting people by tongue is easier and more common than hurting them by hands.
- 3- Furthermore, the evils of the tongue are far more widespread than the evils of the hands. They can reach the living and the dead, be in the present time or the past, and in the presence or absence of people.
- 4- When man loses self-control and cannot restrain his speech, his tongue becomes a tool in the hands of the devil that may destroy his life and the lives of others. As it is said, **“The wounds of blades may heal one day but the wounds of the tongue may never heal.”**

Why does the *Hadeeth* mention the hands in particular?

The *Hadeeth* mentions the hands in particular, although other body organs might be involved in causing harm to people for the following reasons :

- 1- Hands are involved in most of our actions.
- 2- The hand is used in Arabic to denote the power and ability of the person; the hand is usually used as a symbol for all man's actions. The Noble Qur'aan, reproaches the unbelievers for their misconduct saying, **“That is because of what your hands had earned.”** The phrase **“what your hands had earned”** means **“what you had earned.”**

Misdeeds of the Hands

From the *Hadeeth* it is understood that the true Muslim should respect the rights of other people and avoid engaging in any harmful actions toward them. The prophet made it clear in other traditions that it will be retaliated, on the Day of Judgment, from those aggressors who mistreated people and acted unjustly toward them:

The prophet once asked his companions, “Do you know who is the true destitute?” They answered, “It is he who has no dirham⁵ nor property.” He said, “In my nation, the true destitute (bankrupt) is he who would come on the Day of Judgment with mountains of good deeds in the form of prayers, charity, and fasting but he would have insulted somebody, accused another one falsely, taken someone's property unlawfully, shed the blood

5- An Arabic currency

of someone unjustly, and hit somebody unjustly. Then good deeds will be taken from his record to compensate his victims. If his good deeds are finished before compensating his victims then bad deeds will be taken from their records and thrown at him till they are justly compensated and he would be thrown into the Fire.”⁶

Does the *Hadeeth* exclude the Non-Muslims from the good treatment of Muslims?

Although the *Hadeeth* specifies the safety of the Muslims, it does not exclude the Non-Muslims from good treatment and kindness from Muslims.

It should not be understood that the *Hadeeth* implies that non-Muslims do not deserve good treatment and kindness from Muslims. **“Muslims”** are specified for the following reasons:

- 1) The Prophet, sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, was addressing Muslims and meant only to emphasize the meaning of the true Islam, which is peace and security, and its impact upon its true followers.
- 2) The Prophet, sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, did not intend to state the relationship between Muslims and Non-Muslims in this *Hadeeth*. The companions of the Prophet were well aware that the non-Muslims citizens living in the Muslim state share with Muslims the same rights and obligations. There was no need to remind them of this.
- 3) The rights of Non-Muslims are stated in detail in many

6- Narrated by Moslem

verses of Qur'aan and other prophetic traditions. This topic requires some further explanation since not all Non-Muslims are alike or treated in the same way. The rights of Non-Muslims are discussed in more detail in Chapter - 5.

Chapter Three

Misdeeds of the Tongue ⁷

The Hadeeth urges the Muslim to watch his tongue carefully and not to make it a tool of transgression and corruption. He should not talk ill about people; he should refrain from telling lies, making false accusations, using bad language, insulting, backbiting, or defaming people, hurting their feelings, slandering or abusing them.

One should also not waste his time and the time of other people in indecent speech, purposeless conversations, nonsense arguments or idle talk.

Hurting others may destroy one's good deeds.

Once a person asked the Prophet, sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam ,”O Messenger of Allah! a certain woman is very famous for her prayers, fasting and giving many charities, but she hurts her neighbors with her tongue.” He replied, ”She is in Fire.” Then that person further asked, “O Messenger of Allah! Another woman does not do that much of prayers and fasting and gives pieces of cheese in charity but she does not harm her neighbors.” He replied, “She is in the Paradise.”⁸

7- See the book “Misdeeds of the Tongue” by the author

8- Narrated by Imam Ahmed

Abdullah Ibn Abbas advised Muslims to control their tongues with the following:

- ”Do not indulge in nonsense talk because it is useless and absurd; I fear that it might be a sin.
- Talk purposely when there is an occasion for it; be not of those who may talk for no occasion, for it is a defect.
- Do not argue with a patient man or a fool. If he is patient he will be angry with you and if he is fool he will hurt you.
- Speak about your brother in his absence in the same words you like him to speak about you in your absence.
- Pardon him of what you like him to pardon you.
- Act like a man who believes he is rewarded for his good deeds and punished for his bad deeds.”⁹

The Following are some of the most common misdeeds of the tongue:

Idle Conversation

Islam discourages wasting time in aimless matters for actually it is wasting our lives, and it opens the door for more evils. The true Muslim should avoid wasting his time in useless conversations and idle talks, and invest his free time in doing more good productive deeds that will last forever.

Lustful Conversation

9- Reported by Ibn-Abi-Al-Dunya

It is unlawful for Muslim men and woman to be involved in lustful conversation. The prophet indicated that lustful talk is the adultery of the tongue for it might lead to committing adultery. Allah (Subhanahu Wata’la) forbids believers from approaching adultery by committing any deed that might lead to it. The Qur’aan states,

”Do not approach adultery for it is indeed a heinous sin that leads to an evil way.”¹⁰

Women in particular should avoid softening their voices when talking to men so that those men who have **disease** in their hearts will not think wrong about them. In the Qur’aan Allah (Subhanahu Wata’la) addresses the wives of the Prophet who were the examples for every Muslim woman :

“And be not soft of speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease should aspire to you; and say only honorable speech.”¹¹

It is the same evil desire that one finds pleasure and satisfaction in relating or listening to imaginary love romances, or the stories about other peoples’ lawful or unlawful sexual relations. Moreover, the Prophet Mohammad also prohibited women from describing the beauty of other women before their husbands.

Backbiting

One should be careful not to speak ill of others behind their backs, reveal their shortcomings and mistakes, or disclose their secrets, imperfections, or private matters, even if what he is saying is the truth.

10 - Surat Al-Isra’, Chapter (17), Verse 32

11- Surat Al-Ahzab, Chapter (33), Verse 33

Once the Prophet Muhammad , sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, asked his companions, ”Do you know what backbiting is?” They said, ”Allah and His messenger know better.” He said, ”You mention your brother with that which he dislikes.” They asked, ”Even, if the defect I am mentioning is in him?” He said, ”If it is in him this is backbiting, and if it is not in him that is false accusation.”¹²

Backbiting is a tool of destruction of one’s self and others. No wonder the Qur’aan states that backbiting is as disgusting as eating the flesh of one’s dead brother. Allah (Subhanahu Wata’la) says in the Qur’aan,

“Nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay you would abhor it; but fear Allah for Allah is Oft-Returning Most Merciful.”¹³

Mocking Others

It is not appropriate for a believer to mock at others, or laugh at their imperfections, for Allah (Subhanahu Wata’la) says in the Qur’aan :

“O you who believe! Let not some men mock at other men for they may be better than them; nor let some women mock at other women for they may be better than them.”¹⁴

It is reported that Abdullah Ibn Mas’ood had thin legs. Once his leg was uncovered. Upon seeing his leg some

12 - Narrated by Moslem

13 - Surat Al-Hujerat, Chapter (49), Verse 12

14 - Surat Al-Hujorat, Chapter (49), Verse 11

people laughed, whereupon the Prophet asked, ”Are you laughing at his leg? By Him in whose hand is my soul, his leg in the scale of Allah is heavier than the mountain of Uhud.”¹⁵

Defaming Others

Allah (Subhanahu Wata’la) says in the Qur’aan,

“Nor defame yourselves (each other) nor call each other by disgracing nicknames. Ill-seeming is using an offensive name after faith. And those who do not turn in repentance are indeed wrongdoers.”¹⁶

The above verse forbids defaming and slandering other people by finding faults with them. The verse uses the Arabic word *Lanz*, which literally means “piercing and stabbing” to indicate that the words of defamation might be more cutting than swords. Although the verse means not to defame each other, it says “**nor defame yourselves**” for the Qur’aan regards the community of Muslims as one body; if part of it is defamed the whole body is defamed.

Using Offensive Names

One of the forms of defamation is to call others with names they dislike or with offensive nicknames which may highlight some defects or maybe used to mock at them, degrade them, cause them pain, or hurt their feelings`.

Spreading Gossip (Nameemah)

Nameemah, or spreading Gossip, means passing on to others what you hear from someone in such a manner that will cause trouble among people. The one who practices

15 - Narrated by Imam Ahmad and others

16 - Surat Al-Hujorat, Chapter (49), Verse 11

Nameemah is called **Nammam**.

Envy, hatred, jealousy, or the desire to achieve some worldly gains usually motivates those who practice Nameemah.

Nameemah is a major sin and Islam strictly prohibits it even if one is telling the truth. It was condemned since the early Meccan period.

The Qur'aan says, "And do not obey every mean man, ready with oaths, a slanderer, going among the people with calumnies (Nameemah)." ¹⁷

The Prophet, sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, said, "The one who spreads Nameemah will not enter the Garden."¹⁸

The Prophet once passed by a grave and told his companions that a man was being punished in his grave because of spreading **Nameemah**.

Telling Lies

Lying (Al-Kadheeb) is to inform people of something not real. Lying is a transgression against Allah's will since it attributes to Allah something He did not permit to exist. Falsehood is a distortion of the truth that would lead to nothing but wickedness, evil doing, and the destruction not only of the liar but of the entire society.

Since in Islam a lie is an evil in itself we cannot classify lies into categories of harmful, unhelpful, small or big. All forms of falsehood are forbidden.

17 - Surat Al-Qalam, Chapter (68), Verse 11

18 - Narrated by At-Tirmidhi on sound authority

Muslims must avoid all sorts of lies to guard themselves from indulging in the habit of lying which would eventually lead to wickedness and evil doing.

The Prophet, sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, said, "Stick to the truth, even if you see destruction in it, for indeed it is the proper way for salvation."¹⁹

The Prophet, sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, used to instruct his companions to avoid telling lies in all matters - serious matters as well as in minor matters. Even one is not allowed to tell lies in jokes. Fabricating dreams is one of the most vicious lies.

Exceptions to the Prohibition of Lying

Islam allowed lying as the last resort of trying to foster peace and reconciliation between people such as a husband and his wife, a parent and his children, or friends.

The Prophet, sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, said, "Lying is allowed only in three cases: falsehood spoken by a man to his wife to please her, falsehood in war, and falsehood to put things right between people."²⁰

However, one should his best to avoid lying. What is permitted in these situation is to conceal the bad words said by one person against another or to add some good words which, in fact, neither of them said.

Lying is also allowed during the time of war if it is to deceive the enemy or hide the plans of Muslims.

19 - Narrated by Ibn Abi-Duniya

20 - Narrated by Ahmad and At-Tirmidhi

Chapter Four

Applying the Hadeeth in our Lives

The Hadeeth warns Muslims not to rely only upon their declaration of Islam, acts of worship, and their good deeds such as Hijrah²¹ and urges them to continue fulfilling their duties toward Allah and toward people in order to perfect their Islam.

It reminds them that they could not be true Muslims unless their deeds and sayings are free from all sorts of defects and imperfections. And they could not be true Muhajers (migrating for Allah's sake) unless they abstain fully from all sorts of evil.

Respect People's Rights and Feelings

Islam guards the life, money, property, religion, mind, dignity, and honor of every human being whether he is a Muslim or a Non-Muslim. The Prophet said in his farewell pilgrimage sermon,

“Your lives, your honor, and your properties are sacred to each other as the sacredness of this, your day, in this, your month, and in this, your year.”²²

It is not permissible to say or do anything, no matter how little it is, that might hurt others' feelings such as laughing at someone's physical handicap, deformity, or poverty.

21 - Migration from the land where one cannot practice his faith freely to a land where he can.

22 - Narrated by Moslem

It is reported that Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood had thin legs. Once his leg was uncovered and upon seeing his leg some people laughed. The Prophet said, "Are you laughing at his leg? By Him in whose hand is my soul, his leg in the scale of Allah is heavier than the mountain of Uhud."

Think Good about People

In Islam, every person is innocent unless there is a strong evidence against him. The relationships amongst Muslims should be based upon mutual trust not upon mistrust, doubts, and bad suspicion. Allah (Subhanahu Wata'la) enjoined Muslims to avoid suspicion as much as they can so that they would not commit something wrong:

“O you who believe! Avoid indulging in much suspicion as much as possible for suspicion in some cases is a sin and spy not on each other.”²³

It is not permissible for Muslims to indulge in baseless and unjustified suspicion, for this kind of suspicion is a sin that would lead to many other evils such as severing good relationship between people, accusing people of defects which are not in them and maybe entangling them in baseless charges.

The Prophet, sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, said, "Avoid suspicion, for spreading suspicion is the most dishonest form of speech." ²⁴

The Prophet, sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, also said, "If you have suspicion, do not pursue it." ²⁵

23 - Surat Al-Hujerat, Chapter (49), Verse 11

24 - Narrated by Al-Bukhari and others

25 - Narrated by At-Tabarani

Respect People's Privacy

In Islam, the right of privacy for every individual is highly respected.

Prying into people's private affairs and spying on their secrets are not permitted even if they are engaged in sins as long as they do it privately and not openly.

The Prophet , sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, said, "Whosoever listens to people's conversation against their wishes will have molten lead poured into his ears on the Day of Resurrection." 26

The Prophet , sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, also said: "Beware of suspicion (about others), as suspicion is the most dishonest talk, and do not spy upon each other, and do not listen to the evil talk of the people about others' affairs, and do not have enmity with one another, but be brothers. And none should ask for the hand of a girl who is already engaged to his (Muslim) brother, but one should wait till the first suitor marries her or leaves her."27

Be a Big Brother/Sister

Islam builds its community on mutual love, brother- hood co-operation. Muslims are but brothers and sisters. The Qur'aan states,

26 - Narrated by Abu Daoud and others

27 - Narrated by Al-Bukhari

"The believers are but a single Brotherhood. So make peace and reconciliation between your brothers. And fear Allah so that you may receive Mercy."

A Muslim should guard the rights of brotherhood. He should do his best to show sympathy toward people and remove their difficulties.

He must strive to overcome his pride, anger, hatred, ill feelings, and jealousy toward people and humble himself toward them.

The Prophet , sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, said, "A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not oppress him, nor should he hand him over to an oppressor. Whoever fulfilled the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs; whoever brought his (Muslim) brother out of a discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection, and whoever covered a Muslim, Allah will cover him on the Day of Resurrection."28

The Prophet , sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, also said: "Do not envy one another; and do not inflate prices one to another; and do not turn away from one another; and do not undercut one another, but be you, O servants of Allah, brothers. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim: he neither lies to him nor does he hold him in contempt. Piety is right here," and he pointed to his breast three times. "It is evil enough for a man to hold his Muslim brother in contempt. The whole of a Muslim for another Muslim is inviolable: his blood, his property, and his honor."29

28 - Narrated by Al-Bukhari

29 - From the forty Hadith, narrated by Moslem.

Do not Uncover Faults

It is unlawful in Islam to search for defects in other people.

The Prophet , sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, warned those who tend to search for defects in other people. ”He who seeks out the faults of his Muslim brother will have his faults sought out by Allah; and when Allah seeks out somebody’s faults He will expose them even if he is hidden in the interior of his house.”³⁰

If one knows something wrong about his brother he should cover it and wish for people what he wishes for himself.

Maintain Close Ties

A Muslim should not break ties with a fellow Muslim. He should not turn away from him.

The Prophet, sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, said, “It is not lawful for a man to desert his brother Muslim for more than three nights. And when they meet, every one of them turns his face away from the other, and the better of the two, will be the one who greets the other first.”

The Prophet, sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, said, “Do not hate one another, and do not be jealous of one another, and do not desert each other, and O, Allah’s worshipers, be brothers! Lo! It is not permissible for any Muslim to desert (not talk to) his brother (Muslim) for more than three days.”³¹

30 - Narrated by At-Tirmadhi and others

31 - Narrated by Al-Bukhari

Do not Sever Relationships

The devil instigates people toward one another in order to sow the seed of enmity in their hearts; once enmity develops it will turn into open hostility and fighting that will destroy relationships.

The Prophet , sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, said, “The Satan has been despaired of being worshipped in the land of Arabia. But he has not been despaired from kindling the fire of fighting among people.”³²

If you hear something wrong about others do not spread it; ignore it for many evils die when they are left alone. Otherwise they will spread like fire and cause destruction not only to relationships but also to the religion.

The Prophet , sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, said, ”Listen, may I tell you something more important than prayer and charity?” His companions answered, “Yes.” He said, ”Keep good mutual relationships. Because ill relationships are the shaver. I do not mean it shaves heads but it shaves the religion.”³³

Closest People Deserve More Attention

More attention should be given to the rights of one’s relatives, including one’s parents, spouse, children and other family members. They have precedence over others regarding kindness and good treatment because of the common blood relationship even though they may be non-Muslims.

Special attention should also be given to the rights of the needy, the weak, the handicapped, orphans, widows, servants, the poor, and the destitute.

32 - Narrated by Moslem

33 - Narrated by At-Tirmidhi

For it is the responsibility of the entire Muslim society to look after the needs of these people.

Allah (Subhanahu Wata'la) says, "Show kindness to parents, to near kin and orphans, to the needy, to relatives, to neighbors who are not related to you, to fellow travelers and wayfarers, and to the slaves whom your right hand possesses." 34

The Prophet, sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, said, "If anyone strokes over an orphan's head, doing so only for the sake of Allah, he will have a blessing for every hair over which his hand passed."

Observing the rights of the neighbors is part of every Muslim's faith. One could not be a true believer until he cares for his neighbors and avoids disturbing them.

The Prophet said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not hurt (or insult) his neighbor."

The Prophet also said, "By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe!" It was said, "Who is that, O Allah's Messenger?" He said, "It is he whose neighbor is not safe from his evil."

Respect Public Rights

Muslims should also respect public rights. He should not abuse public facilities or the state's properties, for they belong to all Muslims. One should avoid being involved in any hostile actions against people's rights such as:

34 - Surat An-Nisa', Chapter (4), Verse 36

- littering public places;
- taking others' turns in lines;
- smoking in public places, for it is a health hazard for himself and others as well;
- showing no respect for traffic rules and the laws of the road which might cause accidents and loss of life.

State's properties are sacred in Islam; no one has the right to misuse it or use it for his own self interest purposes.

The Treatment of Animals

Allah (Subhanahu Wata'la) has enjoined goodness and kindness toward everything. Muslims should show mercy toward animals and give them proper care.

Islam forbids torturing animals by doing such things as loading them with more than they can bear, inciting animals to fight with one another, making animals as a target for arrows, or even separating an baby animal from its mother.

When one is slaughtering animals he should sharpen his knife, and let the slaughtered animal die quickly and comfortably.

Even when killing harmful insects one should make this as quick as possible.

The Prophet , sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, said, "A woman was thrown into Hell-Fire because of a cat which she had tied and did not provide with food, nor did she set it free to eat insects of the earth until it died little by little."

As that woman was thrown into Hell-Fire because of torturing a cat, another woman, a prostitute, was forgiven for offering a thirsty dog a drink of water.

The Prophet, sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, said, “While a dog was going round a well and was about to die of thirst, an Israeli prostitute saw it and took off her shoe and filled it with water and watered the dog. So Allah forgave her because of that good deed.”³⁵

The Prophet, sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, was once asked, “O Allah’s Messenger! Is there a reward for us in caring for animals?” He replied, “Yes, there is a reward for caring for any living being.”³⁶

Omar, may Allah be pleased with him, prepared charts of the maximum loads animals can bear and he used to punish those who overloaded their animals.

Protecting the Environment

Allah created this world in the most balanced perfect pattern to make life easy and safe for mankind. Allah (Subhanahu Wata’la) says in the Qur’aan, **”He perfected every thing He created.”³⁷**

Allah (Subhanahu Wata’la) warned us against corrupting this natural balanced state of His creation:

“...and do not make mischief on the earth after it has been set aright...”³⁸

35 - Narrated by Al-Bukhari

36 - Narrated by Al-Bukhari

37 - Surat As-Sajdah, Chapter (32), Verse 7

38 - Surat Al-A’raf, Chapter (7), Verse 85

“Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of the evil which men’s hands have done, so that He may make them taste some of their evil deeds, in order that they may return.”³⁹

Muslims should appreciate the creation of Allah and make conscious efforts to maintain the environment as close as possible to its original state and keep away from disturbing the balance and harmony which Allah created between the elements of the environment.

39 - Surat Ar-Room, Chapter (30), Verse 41

Chapter Five

Common Misconceptions

The Rights of Non-Muslims

The Prophet, sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, made it clear that Non-Muslims, who are living with Muslims⁴⁰ or having a contract with them, share with Muslims same rights and obligations.

The Prophet , sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, said, “For them are the same rights as ours, and upon them are the same obligations as ours.”

The Prophet , sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam, said, “Whoever hurts a Non-Muslim (who is under the protection of the Muslim state) has indeed hurt me, and he who hurts me has indeed hurt Allah.”⁴¹

The perfect Muslim should refrain from hurting Non-Muslims either by his tongue or hands exactly as he should refrain from hurting Muslims.

Non-Muslims who are neither at war with Muslims nor hostile to them should also be treated with justice and fairness. The Qur’aan states,

“Allah does not forbid you, with regard to those who do not fight with you on account of your religion nor drive you out of your homes, to treat them with goodness

40 - Citizens of the Islamic state

41 - Narrated by Al-Khatib on good authority

(Birr) and to be just with them; truly, Allah loves those who are just.”⁴²

The verse even urges Muslims to treat Non-Muslims with more than justice, with kindness and generosity, because it uses the Arabic word *Birr* which is a comprehensive term for goodness; it is the same word the Qur’aan uses to enjoin people to honor their parents and show kindness toward them, which is one of the best deeds in Islam.

However, those Non-Muslims who fight against Muslims and are hostile toward them should not be taken as friends under any circumstances. Allah (Subhanahu Wata’la)says in the Qur’aan,

“Indeed, Allah forbids you only with regard to those who fight against you on account of your religion and drive you out of your homes, and assist others in driving you out, that you turn to them in friendship, and whoever turns to them in friendship, they are the wrong doers.”⁴³

Inflicting Punishments

The apparent meaning of the Hadeeth implies that those who are in authority to punish others, such as parents when disciplining their children and those who are in charge of inflicting punishments according to the law, are not perfect Muslims. This is a misunderstanding.

In fact, those who are entrusted with discipline and applying the law, such as parents, guardians, school principals, or police officers are perfect Muslims as long as they act justly, and restrain themselves to the following rules:

42 - Surat Al-Mumtahanah, Chapter (60), Verse 8

43 - Surat Al-Mumtahanah, Chapter (60), Verse 9

1. They should start with the lightest punishment and give it time to work.
2. Physical punishments should be the last resort.
3. They must apply only the punishments they are authorized to inflict.
4. When applying physical punishment, the face must be avoided, it must not cause any damage to any part of the body, and it should not leave any marks on the body.
5. However, if they are sure that physical punishment will not work, they should avoid it.
6. They should put in mind that the purpose of the punishment is reforming the person not humiliating him or showing power.
7. Islam prescribed Ihsan⁴⁴ upon us in all things. Even when applying punishment one should apply it out of mercy, love and kindness toward people giving the impression that he is caring for them and wants only to reform them.
8. They should respect the punished person as a human being, not to curse him or humiliate him in any way.

44 - The meaning of Ihsan is to master or to be proficient at some thing. Ihsan in Islamic terminology is to do everything in the best possible manner with goodness and mercy.

A man was punished several times for intoxication; somebody said, "May Allah curse him, how many times he was brought here!" The Prophet, sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, said in anger: "Do not be helpers of the devil; say, 'May Allah send repentance upon him, may Allah forgive him.'"

However, if they act unjustly and violate the above rules they would be transgressors and imperfect Muslims since people are not safe from their evils.

Public Complaints

It may be understood that if somebody was wronged and he complained openly and disclosed the imperfections of the oppressor, he would not be regarded as an imperfect Muslim. This is not so.

Islam gives you the right to remove the oppression and stand up for your rights, either on private or public grounds. The Qur'aan states,

"Allah does not like the announcing of evil in public speech except by one who has been wronged; and Allah is Hearing and Knowing."⁴⁵

However, when you stand up for your rights and demand retaliation or compensation, it must be through processes of law, or by private defense if the law permits private action. Under these circumstances you may mention the defects or imperfections of the oppressor.

However, the harm inflicted on the oppressor should be equal to the harm done to you. The compensation should not

45 - Surat An-Nissa', Chapter (4), Verse 148

be greater than the injury you suffered. All of this should be practiced within the Islamic laws and regulations.

Retaliation

Nobody has the right to blame you for demanding retaliation or seeking compensation. Allah (Subhanahu Wata'la) describes good believers in the Qur'aan as:

“And those, when some thing wrong is inflicted on them, they stand for their rights and defend themselves.”

“The recompense for an injury is an injury equal to it (in degree); but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation His reward is due from Allah, for (Allah) loves not those who do wrong.”

“But those who defend themselves after being wronged, indeed against such there is no cause of blame.”

“The blame is only against those who oppress men with wrong-doing and transgress beyond bounds through the land defying right and justice; for such there will be a grievous penalty.”⁴⁶

However, since justice, under these circumstances, is usually very difficult to achieve, Muslims are highly recommended to forgive one another and are promised great rewards from Allah in return. The Qur'aan says:

“Those, who suppress their anger, and forgive people, for Allah loves those who do well.”⁴⁷

46 - Surat Ash-Shora, Chapter (44), Verses 39-42

47 - Surat Al-Imran, Chapter (3), Verse 134

“But indeed if any show patience and forgive, that would truly be an exercise of courageous will and resolution in the conduct of affairs.”⁴⁸

Although Muslims are permitted to stand for their rights and may return evil for evil they are highly enjoined to return good for evil.

“Nor can Goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better. Then will he between whom and you was hatred become as if he were your friend and intimate! And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint, none but persons of the greatest good fortune.”⁴⁹

Conclusions

Islam is a source of peace, safety, and security for all beings. Prophet Mohammad, sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, stated a general rule in Islam that should be applied in all affairs of life: **“There should be neither harm nor reciprocating harm.”⁵⁰**

It means that the true Muslim should refrain from causing any kind of harm, damage, or injury, not only to others, whether Muslims or Non-Muslims, but also to himself, and any of the creatures of Allah whether animals, plants or the environment.

48 - Surat Ash-Shora, Chapter (44), Verses 43

49 - Surat Fusilat, Chapter (41), Verses 34 : 35

50 - Narrated by Ibn-Majah and others from different ways that strengthen one another.

Muslims are urged not to depend upon their profession of Islam or their good deeds alone.

They must keep fulfilling their duties toward Allah up to the last breath. Islam is not completed and perfected until one's deeds and sayings are free from all defects and imperfections, and Hijrah is not completed and perfected until the Muslim abstains fully from all sorts of evil.

The true Muslim should abstain from harming people with his tongue and actions. He is a source of peace and security for all those around him.

Test your knowledge

Q1- What is Islam ?

Q2- Is the person who was compelled to accept Islam a true Muslim?

Q3- Who is the basic Muslim?

Q4- How can a Muslim perfect his Islam?

Q5- Why does the Hadeeth mention the tongue before the hand ?

Q6- Why does the Hadeeth mention the tongue before the hand ?

Q7- Why does the Hadeeth mention the hand ?

Q8- Would Allah forgive people's right on the Day of Judgment ?

Q9- What is the purpose of the Hadeeth ?

Q5- "...from whose tongue and hand Muslims are safe"

Q6- "...from whose tongue and hand Muslims are safe."

Q7 - What is the purpose of the Hadeeth ?

Q8- Would Allah forgive people's right on the Day of Judgment ?

Books of the Author

Published

- 1- The Islamic Concept of God in the light of the greatest verse in Quran (Ayat-Ul-Kursi) -Second Edition - Revised
- 2- Sincerity and Our Deeds - Second Edition - Revised
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the true muslim

Respected Dear Readers

Please pray for forgiveness and mercy of Allah, Subhanahu Wata'la, for the author, her parents, her family, all Muslims, particularly the misfortunate and the less privileged around the world.

I constantly pray to Allah, Subhanahu Wata'la, to bring Muslims from darkness to light, to cover our faults and mistakes in this life, and forgive us for them in the Next life, to seal our work with the best good deeds, and let the best of our days be the day when we shall meet with Him, and make the best part of our lives the end of it.

I also pray to Allah, Subhanahu Wata'la, from all my heart to accept this work and make it sincerely for His sake.

“Say : Truly, my prayers, my services of sacrifice, my life, and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. There is no partners with him. This am I commanded, and I am the first of Moslems (of those who submit to His will)” (Quran 6- 162, 163)

And let the last of our prayers be All praises are due to Allah the Lord of all the worlds»

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