

25)Neighbors' Rights

Another group of people about whose rights we should observe piety (Taqwa) are neighbors. If people carry out their duties in associating with each other, it will lead to the prosperity of their homeland and people shall live in safety and tranquility, in addition to its results in the hereafter.

The Holy prophet (SAW) has been reported as saying: “Whoever annoys his neighbor, God will forbid him from the smell of paradise (will not take him to Paradise).”^{[1](#)}

Imam Ali (AS) has been reported as saying: “Fear Allah! Fear Allah concerning your neighbors, for it is the advice of your prophet in a way that it is thought they (neighbors) shall inherit (other neighbors).”^{[2](#)}

The following is among the prohibitions made by the Messenger of Allah (SAW): “Whoever unlawfully appropriates as much as one span of his neighbor’s land, God will make it a tie around his neck from the seven earth, until he meets God on the Day of Judgment, unless he repents and give it back (to its owner).”^{[3](#)}

Imam Sadiq (AS) has been reported as saying: “Cursed, cursed is one who annoys his neighbors.”^{[4](#)}

As for the rule “One should not harm himself, nor should he harm others”, Zurarah has reported Imam Baqir (AS) as saying: “Samara ibn Jundab had a date-palm tree in the orchard of a man from the Ansar. The house of the Ansari man was in the front part of the orchard. Samara used to enter the orchard without getting permission. The man asked him to get permission before entering the orchard, but Samara paid no attention. The man complained about that to the Messenger of Allah (SAW) who ordered Samara to get permission before entering the orchard. Samara still refused to comply.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) asked him to sell the orchard, but Samara was not ready to sell it even. The Holy prophet (SAW) said: ‘There shall be a tree for you in paradise for this tree.’ Samara did not accept the offer. The Holy Prophet told the Ansari man to uproot the tree in compliance with ‘One should not harm himself (intendedly), nor should he harm others.’

In certain traditions, we read: “go, uproot the tree and throw it to its owner.”^{[5](#)}

Imam Sadiq (AS) has been reported as saying: “There is no faith to one whose neighbor is not safe from his evils.”^{[6](#)}

It is well to mention that a neighbor is not the one who lives next door. Forty houses from four sides of one’s house are considered as neighbors from the viewpoint of Islam. Hence, the rights of them have to be observed. Imam Sadiq (AS) was asked: “What is the limit of a neighbor?” The Imam said: “Forty houses from each side.”^{[7](#)}

Truly, one should not do anything that he may be included in this du’a if one of his neighbors may recite the following in the Du’a of Simat, “O Lord, safeguard me from every bad man and every bad neighbor.”

^{[1](#)}. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 150.

^{[2](#)}. Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 2, p. 977.

^{[3](#)}. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 151.

^{[4](#)}. Ibid., p. 153.

^{[5](#)}. Tahtheeb, vol. 7, p. 146.

^{[6](#)}. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 152.

^{[7](#)}. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 151

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