

26) Fellow Muslims' Rights

One may have this impression that the only duty of man is to take care of himself, his wife, his children and his relatives and that he has no responsibility towards other people. That is not so, although one's duties towards himself, his wife, and children is heavier and more serious than towards others.

No human being can ignore his fellow human beings or be indifferent to them. Imam Sadiq (AS) has reported the Messenger of Allah (SAW) as saying: "Whoever spends a day without doing anything for the fellow Muslims is not considered as a Muslim."¹

The Holy Prophet (SAW) has also said: "Whoever hears a man calling 'O Muslims (asking for help)' and does not respond to him is not considered as a Muslim."²

Imam Sajjad (AS) has been reported as saying to az-Zuhri: "It is incumbent on you to consider other fellow Muslims as members of your family. Take the elder one as your father and the younger one as your son and those of your age as brothers. In that case, which one of them would you like to harm?" Speaking about good opinion of them, Imam Sajjad further says: "When you see someone older than you, say to yourself: 'he has preceded me in faith and good deeds. Therefore, he is better than I am.' If he is younger than you are, say to yourself: 'I have preceded him in sins. Therefore, he is better than I am.' If he is of your age, say to yourself: 'my sins are certain, but I doubt whether he has committed sins or not. Therefore, I have no right to change my certainty into doubt.' If you see Muslims bow to you and honor you, say to yourself: 'this is a favor from them, that is, *they* are good and not me.' If they ignore you, say to yourself: 'this is the result of the sin I have committed.' Then, if you adopt such a policy, God will make life easy for you; you will have a lot of friends, your enemies will be few, you will be happy with their benevolence, and you will not become sad for their wrongdoings."³

Imam Ali (AS) has been reported as saying: "There are thirty rights that every Muslim has to observe towards his Muslim brother. These rights cannot be quitted unless by compensation or being pardoned. These rights are the following:

- To overlook his mistakes (Muslims towards each other)

- To have pity on him when he is distressed
- To cover his faults
- To forgive his lapses
- To accept his excuses
- To reject his backbiting (by others)
- To keep on advising him
- To observe his friendship
- To observe his duties
- To accept his invitation
- To attend his funeral
- To accept his gift
- To reciprocate his visit
- To thank him for any favor
- To help him
- To safeguard his wife
- To grant his requests
- To intervene for him
- To pray for him when sneezing
- To guide him when he goes astray
- To answer his greeting
- To talk kindly to him
- To appreciate his favors
- To accept his witnesses
- To make friends with his friends and avoid bearing enmity against them

- To help him, to prevent him from oppressing, and support him when he is oppressed
- To avoid humiliating him
- Not to betray him
- To wish for him what he wishes for himself and hate for him what he hates for himself.” [4](#)

Abdullah ibn Sinan has reported: “I heard Imam Sadiq (AS) say: ‘observe piety and do not let people ride on your shoulders (that makes you low and servile). Nevertheless, God says: **“Speak kindly to mankind.”**”[5](#) Visit Muslims of other sects when they are sick, attend their funerals and perform prayer with them in their mosques until you breathe your last...”[6](#)

Being asked for advice, Imam Sadiq (AS) said: “It is incumbent on you to observe piety, speak truthfully, give back the trusts to their owners, keep good companionship with your companions, greet loudly, feed the poor, offer prayer in their[7](#) mosques, to visit their sick people and to attend their funerals. My father told me a tradition that our Shia (followers), we the Ahlul Bayt, are the best of people; if one of them was a jurisprudent, he would be the best of them (jurisprudents), if he was a muezzin, he would be the best of them (muezzins), if he was an imam, he would be the best of them, if he was a man of trust, he would be the best of them and if he was a man of deposit, he would be the best of them. And so you must be; try to make us beloved to people and do not make us hated by them!”[8](#)

Concerning the obedience to the Imams and the true leaders, Abu Basir has reported: “I heard Imam Sadiq (AS) say: ‘Fear Allah, and it is incumbent on you to obey your Imams in whatever they say and keep silent about what they keep silent.’”

Imam Ali (AS) has said: “Associate with people in a way that if you die, they will weep for you and if you live, they are eager to see you.”[9](#)

[1.](#) Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 11, p. 559

[2.](#) Ibid., p. 560

[3.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 156.

[4.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 236.

[5.](#) Qur'an, 2:83.

[6.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 161.

[7.](#) It may refer to people of other creeds.

[8.](#) Ibid., p. 162

[9.](#) Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 2, p. 1092.

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