

[Home](#) > [A Divine Perspective on Rights](#) > [The Rights of Others](#) > [Right n. 49: The Right of People of Your Creed](#) > The Effects of Treating People with Gentleness

Right n. 49: The Right of People of Your Creed

حق أهل ملتك

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ أَهْلِ مِلَّتِكَ عَامَّةً فَأِضْمَارُ السَّلَامَةِ وَتَشْرِيعُ جَنَاحِ الرَّحْمَةِ وَالرِّفْقِ بِمُسِيئَتِهِمْ وَتَأَلُّفُهُمْ وَاسْتِصْلَاحُهُمْ وَشُكْرُ مُحْسِنِهِمْ إِلَى نَفْسِهِ وَإِلَيْكَ، فَإِنَّ إِحْسَانَهُ إِلَى نَفْسِهِ إِحْسَانُهُ إِلَيْكَ إِذَا كَفَّ عَنْكَ أَذَاهُ وَكَفَاكَ مَثْوَنَتَهُ وَحَبَسَ عَنْكَ نَفْسَهُ فَعَمَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا بِدَعْوَتِكَ وَانصُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا بِنُصْرَتِكَ وَأَنْزَلْتَهُمْ جَمِيعًا مِنْكَ مَنَازِلَهُمْ، كَبِيرَهُمْ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْوَالِدِ وَصَغِيرَهُمْ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْوَلَدِ وَأَوْسَطَهُمْ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْأَخِ. فَمَنْ أَتَاكَ تَعَاهَدْتَهُ بِلُطْفٍ وَرَحْمَةٍ. وَصِلْ أَخَاكَ بِمَا يَجِبُ لِلْأَخِ عَلَى أَخِيهِ.

And the right of the people of your creed is that you should have their welfare at heart, be merciful and gentle to their wrongdoers, treat them with friendliness and desire their well-being, and thank those of them who do good to themselves and to you.¹

Their goodness to themselves is goodness to you because they have refrained from troubling you, spared you their burden, and restrained themselves from you. So include them all in your supplication, and help them all with your aid. And you should respect each one of them as he deserves: their old men hold the position of your fathers, and their young ones hold the position of your children, and their youths hold the position of your brothers. You should gently and compassionately care for those of them who come to you. And you should treat your brethren as brothers deserve to be treated.

Here the phrase “people of your creed” stands for nation, and it usually refers to people of the same belief. It is similar to religion that God has sent down to people through Prophets. The only difference is that nation is only ascribed to a Prophet not to God or the individuals. We do not say God’s nation or so and so’s nation. However, religion is ascribed to God, a Prophet, or an individual. We see such instances in the words of the Prophet Joseph in the Holy Qur’an as “the ways of a people”:

إِنِّي تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ وَاتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ آبَائِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ

“I have (I assure you) abandoned the ways of a people that believe not in God and that (even) deny the Hereafter. And I follow the ways of my fathers, – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” [The Holy Qur’an, Yusuf 12:37–38]

In another verse we read:

مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي الْمِلَّةِ الْآخِرَةِ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا اخْتِلَافٌ

“We never heard (the like) of this among the people of these later days. This is nothing but a made-up tale!” [The Holy Qur’an, Sad 38:7]

It has also been referred to the idol-worshippers:

قَدْ افْتَرَيْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا إِنْ عُدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُمْ بَعْدَ إِذْ نَجَّانَا اللَّهُ مِنْهَا

“We should indeed invent a lie against God if we returned to your ways after God hath rescued us therefrom...” [The Holy Qur’an, al-A`raaf 7:89]

In this chapter, we shall discuss Imam Sajjad’s expression of the rights of the people who have the same religion, or the nation of Islam.

Islam and the Society

Islam considers man as a social creature whose development is subject to social development. We can easily understand this in the way God addresses groups of people in the Qur’an. In the following verse, God addresses the people to follow the straight path:

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

“Verily this is My way, leading straight. Follow it. Follow not (other) paths. They will scatter you about from His (great) Path. Thus doth He command you that ye may be righteous.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Anam 6: 153]

In another verse, God invites the people who were enemies before to be united as brothers:

وَاَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا

“And hold fast, all together, by the Rope which God (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves, and remember with gratitude God’s favor on you for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye become brethren ...” [The Holy Qur’an, Al-i-Imran 3: 103]

Others are surprised about this event. John Davenport, the well-known British scholar wrote: “Muhammad who was a simple Arab was able to unite the small, hungry and naked tribes which were all scattered about into a disciplined and united nation by introducing to them such new ethics and characteristics that did not exist in other nations. He could overthrow the Constantinople Empire and the Persian kingdom in less than thirty years. He conquered Syria, Iraq, and Egypt, and extended his rule from the Atlantic Ocean to the Caspian Sea and the Jaxartes River.”²

The late Indian politician and scholar Nehru wrote:

“The history of the Arabs and the way they rapidly expanded out into Africa, Asia and Europe, and created a great and an excellent civilization is one of the wonders of human history. The force and the thoughts that awakened the Arabs and filled them with power and self-confidence was due to Islam. This religion was started by a new Prophet called Muhammad who was born in Mecca around the year 570 A.D.”³

These were just two instances that we cited. There are many other writings by the world’s most famous scholars confessing to the great developments due to the appearance of the Muslim nation that would make up a large volume if compiled together.

In the following verse, Muslims are invited to be united:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

“Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving clear signs. For them is a dreadful Penalty.” [The Holy Qur’an, Ali-I-Imran 3: 105]

Here Muslims are asked to avoid the disputes that the nations following Judaism or Christianity pursued before. The Qur’an advises the Muslims to avoid disputes that would lead to their loss of grandeur. The Holy Qur’an says:

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

“And obey God and His Apostle, and fall into no disputes lest ye lose heart and your power depart; and be patient and persevering for God is with those who patiently persevere.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Anfal 8:46]

In this verse, the role of leadership and obeying the orders of our leaders is clarified. We should avoid any disputes in order to maintain our power. In this way, we should all persevere with patience.

Brotherhood as a Slogan for Muslims

The Qur'an has admonished us against disputes, and has invited Muslim societies to brotherhood:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

“The Believers are but a single Brotherhood. So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear God, that ye may receive Mercy.” [The Holy Qur'an, al-Hujurat 39: 10]

Man is a social creature. Undoubtedly in each society, individuals pursue their own interests. This is why there are social disputes. How should we behave in order to avoid social disputes? There are moral recommendations in Islam which when followed will guarantee this. There are two chapters in *Usul al-Kafi* on moderation and friendliness. We will review some of the traditions in these chapters here. Ali ibn Ibrahim quoted on the authority of Imam Sadiq on the authority of God's Prophet :

ثَلَاثٌ مَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِيهِ لَمْ يَتِمَّ لَهُ عَمَلٌ؛ وَرَعٌ يَحْجِزُهُ عَنِ مَعَاصِي اللَّهِ وَخُلُقٌ يَدَارِي بِهِ النَّاسَ وَحِلْمٌ يَرُدُّ بِهِ جَهْلَ الْجَاهِلِ

“There are three characteristics which if anyone lacks his deeds will not be perfect: 1) piety to prevent him from disobedience to God 2) being good natured with people, 3) forbearance that wards off the ignorance of an ignorant person.”⁴

In another tradition Muhammad ibn Yahya quoted on the authority of Husayn ibn al-Hasan on the authority of Imam Baqir : “Gabriel descended to the Prophet and said:

يَا مُحَمَّدُ! رَبُّكَ يُقْرِئُكَ السَّلَامَ وَيَقُولُ لَكَ: دَارِ خَلْقِي

“O Muhammad! Your Lord greets you and says: Be affable with My creatures.”⁵

In another tradition Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of the Noble Prophet :

أَمَرَنِي رَبِّي بِمُدَارَاةِ النَّاسِ كَمَا أَمَرَنِي بِأَدَاءِ الْفَرَائِضِ

“My Lord has ordered me to be affable with people just as He ordered me to perform the obligatory deeds.”⁶

The Effects of Treating People with Gentleness

Allameh Majlisi has defined gentleness as: “mildness, kindness, and avoiding harshness in actions and speech when dealing with people in all circumstances.”⁷ Imam Baqir said:

أَنَّ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قُفْلًا وَقُفْلَ الْإِيمَانِ الرَّفْقُ.

*“Everything has a lock (a safeguard) and the lock of faith is gentleness.”*⁸

In this tradition, faith has been expressed as a precious jewel, which must be safeguarded, and the heart is its vault. Gentleness is expressed as the lock that can securely protect faith in our heart. It does not let Satan enter our heart and rule our faith. If this lock is opened and gentleness is abandoned, harshness, quarrelling and corruption will ensue.

Imam Baqir quoted on the authority of the Noble Prophet of Islam :

لَوْ كَانَ الرَّفْقُ خَلْقًا يُرَى مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ شَيْئًا أَحْسَنَ مِنْهُ.

*“If gentleness was a creature that could be seen, God would not have created anything better than it.”*⁹

Imam Baqir said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ رَفِيقٌ يُحِبُّ الرَّفْقَ، وَيُعْطِي عَلَى الرَّفْقِ مَا لَا يُعْطِي عَلَى الْعُنْفِ.

*“God, the Exalted, the High, is gentle and is loves gentleness. He grants for gentleness what he does not grant for harshness.”*¹⁰

Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of the Noble Prophet :

الرَّفْقُ يَمْنٌ وَالْخَرَقُ شُؤْمٌ.

*“Gentleness is auspiciousness, while harshness is inauspiciousness.”*¹¹

Therefore we can better understand what Imam Sajjad means when he says “and treat their wrongdoers with patience, and treat them with friendliness, and seek their welfare, and thank those of them who do good to you and to themselves ... and you should respect each one of them as he deserves: their old men hold the position of your fathers, and their children hold the position of your children, and their youths hold the position of your brothers ...”

These rights of others have already been discussed in the previous chapters. He finally instructs us by saying that: "...You should gently and compassionately care for those of them who come to you. And you should treat your brother as a brother deserves to be treated." This stresses the importance of the people of the same belief. We should treat them as we treat our brothers. We should seek God's help in so doing.

- [1.](#) In the other version it continues: "And keeping harm away from them. You should love for them what you love for yourself and dislike for them what you dislike for yourself. Their old men stand in the place of your father, their youth in the place of your brothers, their old women in the place of your mother, and their young ones in the place of your children."
- [2.](#) Uẓr-e-Taqsir bi Pishgah-i-Muhammad wa Qur'an, translation by Sayyid Ghulam Rida Sa'idi, p.77.
- [3.](#) A Look at World History, translation by Mahmood Tafazzoli, v. 1, p.290.
- [4.](#) Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p. 116.
- [5.](#) Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p. 116.
- [6.](#) Ibid.
- [7.](#) Mir'at al-'Uqul, v.8, p.233.
- [8.](#) Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p. 118.
- [9.](#) Ibid. p. 120.
- [10.](#) Usul al-Kafi, v.2, p. 116.
- [11.](#) Ibid.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/a-divine-perspective-on-rights-a-commentary-of-imam-sajjads-treatise-of-rights/right-n-49-right#comment-0>