

Do not Violate the Rights of the Others

Arman Alimohammadi

In Islam, the expression “The Rights of the Others” embraces a whole range of rights including the rights of the others regarding their honour, their prestige, their life, their security, their safety, their property, their rights to be given the true information about what concerns them and certain other rights. Certainly, if in any environment, people observe each other's rights, many blessings will embrace them, including the sense of trust among them and likewise, the society where the rights of the others is neglected, becomes a hell of mistrust and so misbehaviour. This rule can most obviously be applied to the family environment; If a married couple observe each other's and the others' rights carefully and as per Divine teachings (not the way rights are defined in today's Western societies, encouraging the couples to desert each other just over trivial matters), the family units will be safe and happy centers of life, prosperity and salvation, since among other blessings, the sense of trust and consequently profound love will develop between couple. And will also serve as a very beneficial model for their children.

Regarding people's rights, we see lots of illumination in the Holy Qur'an; The Holy Qur'an admonishes the believers to avoid gossip, backbiting, making fun of each other and also suspicion among themselves. In Chapter 49, Verse 11 of the Holy Qur'an, the believers are advised thus: *“You, who believe, do not let one [set of] people make fun of another set; perhaps they are better than they are. Nor let any women [mistreat other] women; perhaps they are even better than they are themselves. Nor should you criticize one another, nor insult one another by using nicknames; it is bad to use a dirty name instead of one you can believe in. Those who do not turn away from it are wrongdoers.”*

In this regard, the Infallible have presented many valuable teachings. Imam al-Baqir (AS) – the fifth Infallible Imam of the Shi'a Muslims has been quoted: “By Allah! A believer’s sanctity is greater than that of Ka’bah.” Just a moment of thinking about these Divine words suffices to make one guard against harming the reputation of the other believers through saying about them what we are forbidden to, including through backbiting. Imam al-Kazim(AS), the seventh Infallible Imam has strongly advised the believers to avoid talking about the faults of the other believers before the people, which faults the people do not know about. According to His Holiness, Imam al-Kazim (AS) and the other Infallibles, this (forbidden) act falls within range of backbiting which has been regarded as a severe sin in the Holy Qur’an. Spying on each other in a community of believers has also been forbidden as per Divine commands. Yet, it should be noted that whenever there is the danger of the plots by the hypocrites and the other enemies of God against the Muslims and against the Islamic rule, the believers are duty-bound to be cautious and on the look-out for any hypocritical move and also to inform each other of the deceitful words and intrigues of the hypocritical men and women which may be found in any Muslim community.

To undersell and all other ways of cheating is another example of violating the rights of the others, and strongly forbidden by Allah in the Holy Qur’an. Chapter 83, Verses 1-3 of the Holy Qur’an explains this Divine prohibition in quite clear, understandable terms: *“It will be too bad for cheats who insist on receiving everything when they have people measure something out for them; yet whenever they measure or weigh things for others, they give (them) less than their due.”* Here it should be emphasized that in accordance with the teachings of the Infallible and authentic Qur’anic commentaries, this prohibition and the warning (about punishment by Allah) does not include just cheating in selling goods, rather that

covers all services and dealings such as working as employees, factory workers, drivers, house servants, and ... and so, if a civil servant does not fulfill his/her duties at work quite carefully and conscientiously he/she should consider him/herself as a cheat promised severe punishment by Allah.

Wastefulness and extravagance (*Israf*) should also be certainly regarded and avoided as cases of violation of the rights of the others. The Holy Qur'an addresses us thus: "...who when they spend, give neither too lavishly, nor yet hold back, and keep to a happy medium;" (25: 67)

It has been quoted from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in connection with the interpretation of the above verse that anything one consumes or uses unnecessarily and/or improperly is *Israf* (wastefulness) and likewise Imam Ali (AS) has regarded any more than enough consumption as *Israf*. In the Holy Qur'an also we read: "Render your close relative his due, as well as the pauper and the wayfarer. Yet do not squander extravagantly." (17: 26)

Imam as-Sadiq(AS) – the sixth Infallible Imam has been quoted regarding the interpretation of this Verse that anyone who uses things for purposes disapproved by Allah is a '*Mobzer*' meaning squanderer, and anyone who uses things in benevolent ways is '*Moqtasid*' meaning moderate, a capable manager of life's financial as well as moral affairs.

As for observing the others' rights in the family, it should be emphasized that such rights are many and extensive, embracing affection, respect, care, education, guidance and Another very important right, is your family's right upon you to be protected against any illegitimately earned livelihood: You have no right to trample upon the rights of the others (through underselling, cheating, overselling and the like) in order to gain more money for your family, because that very

illegitimately earned money will ruin the happiness in your family, pushing them, (in particular your offsprings) towards wrong-doing, as the Infallible have warned us: “ *Haram* (illegitimately earned) money will show it’s evil in the offsprings.”

As inferred from this Hadith, if the food one buys for his/her family is earned through haram ways, that food will have ruinous effects upon the spirit of those who consume it pushing them towards immorality, stupid behaviour and waywardness. Likewise, the one who through slander and lying, hinders the employment of the others in his/her workplace so that jobs would be vacant for his/her own relatives cannot expect to enjoy a happy family life (nor of course a good Hereafter), since Allah has Himself warned the people, in His Book and through His Messengers (AS) that to do wrong to the others will result in His anger which may afflict one’s whole family.

In just the same vein, being honest and benevolent towards the others pleases Allah greatly, drawing His lasting blessings (in both worlds) upon the honest and benevolent persons and their family members.

In a hadith from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), we are advised to, “Do good to the others’ children if you desire your own children to receive the same (goodness, benevolence) from the others.” In another Hadith, we are also informed that among the blessings granted by Allah upon an honest upright person is that his dependents will enjoy peace of mind and tranquility. Thus, we can conclude that the hoarders, the overchargers, the cheats, the sellers and dealers of alcoholic drinks and narcotics and those who sell unwholesome and even worse, poisonous food as well as of course the usurers, the bribers, the bribee, the gamblers, those who make misguiding films or write misguiding books and of course those engaged in

making or selling atomic or chemical weapons should expect to find their families going astray and feeling miserable. May Allah guide us all towards His pleasure!