

'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar narrated:



that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: Gabriel continued to urge kindness to my neighbour, until I thought that he would give him a share of inheritance.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿Worship God alone and do not associate with Him any partners. Be kind to your parents and near of kin, to orphans, the needy, the neighbour who is related to you and the neighbour who is a stranger, the friend by your side, the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. God does not love those who are arrogant and boastful.﴾ (4: 36)

The Narrator

Abu 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufayl belonged to the 'Adiy branch of the Quraysh. He embraced Islam when he was young. He migrated to Madinah with his father when he was young, before attaining puberty. At the time of the Battle of Uḥud, he was too young to fight. His first military effort was the Encounter of the Moat, i.e. al-Khandaq. He also participated in the pledge under the tree. He narrated much useful information and numerous hadiths from the Prophet, and issued many fatwas. He died in Year 74 AH 694 CE.

Summary

Islam promotes the ties of neighbours, giving a neighbour clear rights and responsibilities. In this hadith, the Prophet tells us that Gabriel repeatedly urged him to be kind to his neighbours to the extent that the Prophet thought that neighbours may be included as one's heirs.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6015; Muslims, 2625.



Message and Meaning



On several occasions, the Angel Gabriel urged the Prophet (peace be upon him) to be kind to his neighbours, respect their rights, repel harm, share in their rejoicing and support them in adversity. He counselled him to give them gifts and *ṣadaqah* if they were poor, and to maintain very good relations with them. He urged him to extend all aspects of good treatment to his neighbours, to the extent that the Prophet thought that there would come a time when revelations would require that neighbours were included among one's heirs.



The Qur'an is clear in urging kind treatment of one's close and distant neighbours. God says: 'Worship God alone and do not associate with Him any partners. Be kind to your parents and near of kin, to orphans, the needy, the neighbour who is related to you and the neighbour who is a stranger, the friend by your side, the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. God does not love those who are arrogant and boastful'. (4: 36)



The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that kindness to neighbours is one of the signs of belief. He says: 'Whoever believes in God and the Last Day must cause no harm to his neighbour'.⁽¹⁾ The Prophet repeats his oath three times declaring that the one who causes harm to his neighbour is not a believer. He said: 'By God, he is not a believer. By God, he is not a believer. By God, he is not a believer'. People asked: 'Who is that, Messenger of God?' He said: 'The one whose neighbour is not secure from his evil designs'.⁽²⁾ Indeed, such a person does not enter Heaven, according to the meaning of the hadith: 'A person whose neighbour is not secure from his evil designs shall not enter Heaven'.⁽³⁾



Neighbours fall into different categories: a Muslim neighbour who is also a relative claims the right of neighbourliness, the right of brotherhood in faith, and the right of kinship. A Muslim neighbour who is unrelated has the first two of these three rights, while a non-Muslim neighbour claims only the right of neighbourliness.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6018; Muslim, 47.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 6016.

3 Related by Muslim, 46.

Implementation



Highlighting a theme on several occasions gives a clear impression of its importance. It also motivates the listener to ensure the fulfilment of what is required. Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to repeat what he says three times. Advocates of Islam, educators and scholars should tackle the most important issues of their community and discuss these with their audience.



A neighbour has clear rights, referred to in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Every Muslim should respect these rights and ensure their fulfilment.



To harm one's neighbour indicates deficiency of faith, and to be kind to neighbours is an aspect of faith. Everyone should consider whether their faith is whole or deficient.



Abu al-Jahm al-'Adawī sold his house for one hundred thousand dirhams. When the buyer turned up to complete the sale, Abu al-Jahm pointed to the money and said: 'This is the price of the house. How much will you offer for becoming neighbours with Sa'īd ibn al-'Āṣ?' The buyer said: 'Is that something to be bought?' Abu al-Jahm said: 'Then take your money and give me back my house. I will never relinquish being a neighbour of a man who will enquire after me when I am missed; welcome me whenever he sees me; protect me when I am away; keep me close when I visit him; do what is required if I have a request but will ask me [what I need] if I do not make a request; and will stand by me when I suffer a calamity'. Sa'īd heard of what Abu al-Jahm said to the one who wanted to buy his house. He sent him one hundred thousand dirhams and a message saying: 'This is the price of your house, and the house is yours'.



Every person has the right that other neighbours should tolerate some inconvenience he might cause, and that they not be too quick with their complaints. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: 'Good neighbourliness does not just mean not to cause harm to others, but also means tolerating the harm caused by others'.⁽¹⁾

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 353.

