

Al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr narrated:



that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: In their mutual love, compassion and sympathy, believers are like a single body: when any of its organs suffers a complaint, the rest of the body will share its sleeplessness and fever.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Believers, if you renounce your faith, God will bring forth [in your stead] people whom He loves and who love Him, humble towards the believers, proud towards the unbelievers.﴾ (5: 54)
- ﴿The believers, men and women, are friends to one another.﴾ (9: 71)
- ﴿Muhammad is God's Messenger; and those who are with him are firm and unyielding towards the unbelievers, full of mercy towards one another.﴾ (48: 29)

The Narrator

Al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr ibn Sa'd ibn Tha'labah of the Anṣār was a companion of the Prophet, as was his father. Scholars are in agreement that he was one of the young companions of the Prophet. His son Muhammad and 'Āmir al-Sha'bī transmitted his hadiths. He became a scholar and a governor. Mu'āwiyah appointed him Governor of Kufah for a period of time. He was subsequently appointed as Judge of Damascus, succeeding Faḍālah. He then became Governor of Homs in Syria. He narrated a small number of hadiths, but his hadiths are related in all six authentic hadith anthologies. He died in Year 64 AH 684 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) compares the mutual feelings of love, compassion and care among believers to a single body. When any part of the body complains of pain, the pain will be felt by the rest of the body and the person will suffer from fever and sleeplessness.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6011; Muslim, 2586.



Message and Meaning



Islam builds a strong community with firm foundations. It is characterized by love, care and cooperation between its members. Its governing rule is: 'None of you [truly] believes unless he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself'.⁽¹⁾



In this hadith the Prophet draws a comparison to show how believers should establish their relations. He likens their compassion and care for one another to the feelings of a single body. When any part or organ of the body suffers a complaint, the rest of the organs will share the complaint and feel the pain and discomfort. Thus, the whole body will be restless and feverish. The same sort of feeling and mutual compassion should exist between Muslims. They share in their sorrows and happiness. They relieve each other's distress whenever and however they can. The Prophet says: 'Believers are to one another like a building whose parts strengthen one another'.⁽²⁾



The Prophet (peace be upon him) makes it a duty of every believer to care for other believers, particularly his neighbours who are the closest to himself. The Prophet says: 'A believer is not one who eats his fill while his close neighbour goes hungry'.⁽³⁾ He urges believers to help their brethren and to exert their efforts in such help. He said: 'Whoever relieves a believer from one distress of this life, God will relieve him from a distress of the Day of Resurrection. Whoever makes it easier for someone in straightened circumstances, God will make things easier for him in this life and the next. Whoever shields a Muslim, God will shield him in this life and the life to come. God will help a person as long as that person helps his brother'.⁽⁴⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 13; Muslim, 45.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 481; Muslim, 2585.

3 Related by Abu Ya'la in *al-Musnad*, 2699.

4 Related by Muslim, 2699.

Implementation



Giving examples and using figures of speech are very good tools to explain one's meaning. They should be frequently used by advocates of Islam and educators.



One indication of good faith is that a Muslim should be concerned with whatever is important for Muslims and that he shares their feelings, whether of sorrow or happiness.



To exert an effort in doing what people need and to lighten their burdens is one of the best types of worship a person does to draw closer to God. The Prophet says: 'The person who God loves best is the one who benefits people most. The deed God loves most is that you make another Muslim happy by relieving his distress, paying off his debt or feeding him to remove his hunger. To walk with my brother to help him with something he needs is dearer to me than spending a month in this mosque (meaning the Prophet's mosque in Madinah) in worship. Whoever suppresses one's wrath when one can give it full expression shall have his heart full of satisfaction on the Day of Judgement. And whoever walks with his brother to attend to something he needs, until it is done, God will make his feet firm on the Day when feet slip'.⁽¹⁾



One aspect of mutual care among Muslims is that when the news of Ja'far ibn Abi Ṭālib's martyrdom was received, the Prophet said to some of his companions: 'Cook some food for Ja'far's family. They have received something to keep them busy'.⁽²⁾



To visit a Muslim when he is sick, to help the one in need, to maintain ties of kinship, to be hospitable to guests, to attend funerals and to refrain from expressing pleasure in front of someone who is in grief are all aspects of believers' mutual care.

1 Related by al-Ṭabarānī in al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ, 6026.

2 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 3132; al-Tirmidhī, 998; Ibn Mājah, 1610.

