

AL-IKHA'A (BROTHERHOOD)

Definition:

A Muslim is a brother to another Muslim for they hold the same convictions and help one another cooperating in virtue. This relationship and tie should be as strong as lineage or ancestry as the Qur'an tells us.

﴿ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴾

[الحجرات: ١٠]

"The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: so make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah, that ye may receive Mercy" (Al-Hujerat 49 : 10)

The Qur'anic verse explains the duty of Muslims to reconcile differences between other Muslims and to be God-conscious. If they fulfill this obligation, then they deserve the mercy of Allah and His blessing.

We Will Discuss the Following Concepts:

- The rights of a believer and Muslim over his brother
- How can we strengthen such ties of brotherhood
- The reward of helping our brothers

THE RIGHTS OF MUSLIMS TOWARDS EACH OTHER

- To help him, support him and not leave him to his enemy.

- To feed him and provide for him if he needs help.
- To stay close to him.
- To visit him when he is ill.
- To give him sound and sincere advice.
- To be his friend and companion.
- To greet him.
- To accept his invitation.
- To defend him and defend his honor.
- To overlook his mistakes.
- To seek blessings for him when he sneezes.
- To say Du'aa (prayer) on his behalf .
- To love him and wish every good for him.
- To witness his funeral and pray for his forgiveness.

The things that we are not allowed to do regarding other Muslims:

- Wronging our brothers
- Leaving them unsupported facing difficulty
- Shaming them in public
- Looking down at them or ridiculing them
- Harboring envy in our hearts
- Disliking or hating our brothers
- Distancing ourselves from them and staying away
- Cheating them
- Lying to them

The Prophet (PBUH) explained in no uncertain terms our obligations to avoid these bad traits and this wrong behavior.

Abou Horaira related that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said,

“Do not envy one another, do not fight amongst each other, do not dislike or hate each other, and do not turn your backs on each other. Do not buy when your brother is buying the same object, and be O servants of Allah as brothers to one another. A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. He does not wrong him, nor does he fail to support him. He does not denigrate him. Taqwa (piety and God-consciousness) is here, and he pointed to his chest three times. It is bad indeed to humiliate or put down

your brother. Everything that a Muslim has is sacred to his Muslim brother, his life, his possessions and his family.”

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim

HELPING OUR BROTHERS

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) explained our duties toward our brothers in Islam.

Abdullah Bin Omar related that Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) said,

“A Muslim is a brother to another Muslim; he does not wrong him nor does he leave him to his enemy unsupported. Whoever was helping his brother, Allah will help him. Whoever relieves the distress of a Muslim, Allah will relieve his distress on the Day of Judgment. Whoever covers the faults of another Muslim, Allah will cover his faults on the Day of Judgment.”

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim.

We learn from this Hadith:

- We are encouraged to help our brothers, relieve their distress and cover their faults.
- We are forbidden from wronging other Muslims, or not lending a helping hand when he is in trouble.
- We are promised a great reward from Allah if we help our brothers.

Another way of helping a Muslim brother is to prevent him from engaging in wrongful conduct and harming others.

Anas Bin Malik related that Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) said,

“Support your brother whether he is the wrong-doer or he is being wronged.” His companions asked, “We understand how to support him when he is being wronged, but how can we support him when he is the wrong-doer?” The prophet said, “By preventing him from doing wrong and harming others.”

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim

To feed our muslim brother, provide for him and visit him when he is ailing

Abou Horaira related that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said,

“Whoever relieves the distress of a believer in this life, Allah will relieve his distress on the Day of Judgment. Whoever makes it easy on someone in debt having difficulty paying his debt, Allah will make it easy for him both in this life as well as in the Hereafter. Whoever covers the faults of another Muslim, Allah will cover his faults in this life and in the Hereafter. Allah will continue to help the person helping his brother.”

Narrated by Muslim and Abou Dawood

Abou Musa related that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, “Feed the hungry, visit the ill and set the captives free.”

Narrated by Bokhari, Ahmad and Abou Dawood

Abou Horaira related that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, “Allah, glory be to Him will say on the Day of Judgment, ‘O son of Adam! I was sick, but you did not visit Me!’ The son of Adam will answer, ‘O Lord! How can I visit you in sickness and You are the Lord of the Worlds?’ Allah will say ‘Did you not know that My servant got sick and you did not visit him during his sickness; did you not know that if you visited him, you would have found Me with him!’ Allah will say ‘O son of Adam! I asked you for food but you did not feed me!’ The son of Adam will say ‘O Lord! How can I feed you and You are the Lord of the worlds!’ Allah will say ‘My servant asked you for food but you did not feed him; did you not know that if you fed him, you would have found that with Me?’ Allah will say, ‘O son of Adam! I asked you for a drink but you did not give me drink!’ The son of Adam will say ‘O Lord! How can I give you drink and You are the Lord of the worlds?’ He will say ‘My servant asked you for a drink but you did not give him any, did you not know that if you gave him drink, you would have found that with Me!’”

Narrated by Muslim

STAYING CLOSE

Muslims are not allowed to turn their back on other Muslims, or stay

away, especially when they need our help or are experiencing difficult times.

Abou Ayyob Al-Ansari related that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, "It is not allowed for a man to stay away from his brother for more than three nights; they meet and this one turns away and the other one turns away as well. The better of the two is the one who starts with the greetings."

Narrated by Bokhari & Muslim

GIVING SINCERE ADVICE

Tameem Ad-Dary related that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, "Religion is to give advice (sound and sincere advice). His companions asked, 'To whom should the advice be given?' He said, 'To Allah; and to His book; and to His Messenger; and to the leaders and to every Muslim.'"

Narrated by Muslim

There are certain guidelines that needs to be followed in giving advice:

- The advice should be given in such a way that it is well received and accepted.
- The person giving the advice should demonstrate that he is caring with good intentions.
- The advice should be constructive and sound.
- It should be given in a kind and polite way without putting down or ridiculing the other person.
- Any faults should be shown only in such a way that does not offend the pride and sensitivity of the listener.

DO NOT SLANDER

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) told us to respect and defend that which Muslims hold dear, i.e., their lives, possessions, and honor (families).

We should not listen to others who would slander or question the integrity of other Muslims, nor should we spread rumors or engage in talking ill of others in their absence for this too is forbidden. The Qur'an states,

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بِغَيْرِ مَا اكْتَسَبُوا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلُوا بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُّبِينًا ﴾ [الأحزاب: ٥٨]

"And those who annoy believing men and women undeservedly, bear (on themselves) a calumny and a glaring sin" (Al-Ahzab 33:58)

And:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَنُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴾ [الحجرات: ١٢]

"O ye who believe! avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: and spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, ye would abhor it. But fear Allah: for Allah is Oft-Returning, Most-Merciful" (Al-Hujerat 49: 12)

OVERLOOK MISTAKES

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) explained that our sins are not forgiven until we reconcile our differences, make amends and forgive other Muslims.

Abou Horaira related that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, "The gates of Heaven are opened every Monday and every Thursday and the sins of every servant are forgiven if he does not worship others with Allah, except for two people that have had an argument and did not reconcile or forgive each other. It will be said, 'Wait and hold forgiveness for these two until they make up! Wait and hold forgiveness for these two until they make up! Wait and hold forgiveness for these two until they make up!'"

Narrated by Muslim

LOVING OUR BROTHERS

The bond that unites Muslims and believers is their bond of belief and faith in Allah. Muslims appreciate Allah's blessings and in return help others as Allah has helped them. A feeling of belonging and affection holds Muslims together.

Anas Bin Malik related that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, "A servant of Allah would not have attained faith until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim

The Prophet (PBUH) also said,

"Three characteristics, if they are present in an individual, he will feel the sweetness of belief; that Allah and His Messenger are more beloved to him than anyone else; that he loves another person only for the sake of Allah; and that he hates to return to a state of unbelief in the same way that he hates to be thrown in Hell Fire."

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim

To Be A Friend and Close Companion to Our Muslim Brothers:

Since Muslims share the same beliefs and ideals, it is natural that they feel close and belong together. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "The spirits are like soldiers working together, if they know each other they like one another and stay close together; but if they feel strange and different, they separate."

Narrated by Muslim

The Prophet (PBUH) also gave us advice that our friends should only be Muslims who are God-conscious.

"Do not befriend or be a close companion except to another believer; and do not let anyone share your food except for a pious person."

Narrated by Abou Dawood, Termedhi and Hakim

GREETINGS

A cordial greeting improves our relationship, and may open the door

to friendship and affection. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, “You will not enter Paradise until you believe; and you will not believe till you love one another. Shall I tell something if you do will make you love one another! Spread the greetings among yourselves.”

Narrated by Muslim

Omar Bin Al-Khattab said,

“Three things that will endear you to your brother are to greet him when you see him; to make space for him in a meeting; and to call him by the name that he likes the most.”

To Witness the Funeral of Our Muslim Brother:

It is an obligation upon Muslims in any community to bury their dead and to witness their funeral seeking God’s forgiveness on their behalf. Such an obligation is more binding on those who knew the dead person. It is a way of paying last respect to him and providing comfort to his family. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said,

“Al-Bara’a Bin Azeb related that Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) ordered us to do seven things and forbade seven things. He ordered us to visit the sick; to witness the funerals; to bless the one sneezing; to accept an invitation; to say greetings when we are greeted; to help and support the person who was wronged; and to fulfill the oath. He forbade us to wear gold rings, to wear silk or to ride in fancy carriages.”

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim

In another Hadith related by Abou Horaira, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, “Six things are the rights of a Muslim over his brother, to return the greetings; to bless him when he sneezes; to accept his invitation; to visit him during his sickness; to witness his funeral, and if he asks you for advice to give him sound and sincere advice.”

Narrated by Muslim

PRAYING FOR OUR BROTHERS

Such a Du’aa is noteworthy if it is said in his absence, this way there is no hidden motive, and the only motivation is the desire to help him and seek Allah’s forgiveness on his behalf. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said,

“Umm Ad-Darda’a related that Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) said, ‘If a Muslim says Du’aa on behalf of his brother in his absence Allah responds to such a Du’aa (prayer to Allah) for there is an angel at his head appointed, whenever he prays to Allah wishing for something good for his brother, the angel says, Amen, and you will also get the same wish.’”

Narrated by Muslim

REWARDS OF BROTHERHOOD

- Allah loves those who are true friends.
- Allah will cover our faults and protect us on the Day of Judgment.
- Allah will ease our difficulties.
- Allah will help us provided we continue to help our brothers.
- Allah will give a great reward to those who love one another and who work together for His sake.

Moa’dh Bin Jabal related that Allah’s Messenger (PBUH) said, “Those who love each other for My sake will have thrones made of light; even the Prophets and martyrs will be happy for them and wish for the same honor.”

Narrated by Termedhi and Muslim

Strengthening each other and working together allows us to accomplish tasks that would not otherwise be achieved through individual effort.

How can such a bond of brotherhood be strengthened

- Understand that the shared bond of belief is stronger than lineage or ancestry.
- The collective sense of responsibility will stimulate us to work together helping one another.
- Our commitment of caring, wishing good fortune and praying to Allah on behalf of our brothers will strengthen the bond of affection and bring us closer.
- Close cooperation and working together on projects important to the welfare of the community will foster love, understanding and a sense of achievement.

- Praying together and sharing the good times together; giving comfort, support and solace during difficult times.
- Working together to educate our children setting good examples for them.

CHOOSING GOOD FRIENDS

It is of vital importance that we choose good friends for they will influence us in either a good or a bad way. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) gave us the parable of the good companion and the evil companion.

Abou Musa Al-Asha'ri related that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, "The example of the good companion is that of the person carrying musk, either he will give you a gift, or you may buy from him, or you may smell a good smell. The example of the evil companion is that of the person blowing in a furnace, either he will burn your clothes, or you may smell a bad smell."

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim

We learn from this Hadith:

- There are several ways that a good companion may benefit us.
 - He may teach us something good.
 - We may learn from his example or by observing him
 - Something good from his character and behavior may rub off on us.
- As to the evil companion, he can harm us in various ways:
 - Either his evil character and behavior may influence our conduct as we follow his example
 - Or he may actively corrupt us or may cause us to sin or commit mistakes.

The Prophet (PBUH) in another Hadith emphasized the effect of friendship and cautioned Muslims to be careful as to whom they choose as intimate friends:

Abou Horaira related that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, "A person is affected by his friend's character and behavior; therefore each person should be careful in choosing his friends."

Narrated by Abou Dawood and Termedhi.