



# 40 Hadiths on Social Justice

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**Lecture Notes**

## Chapter 29: Beyond Respect – The Rights of the Elderly on Society

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Abu Musa al-Ash'ari narrated: "The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Glorifying Allah involves showing honour to a grey-haired Muslim and to one who can expound the Qur'an, but not to one who acts extravagantly regarding it, or turns away from it, and showing honour to a just ruler."

[Sunan Abi Dawud]

عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى الْأَشْعَرِيِّ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " إِنَّ مِنْ إِجْلَالِ اللَّهِ إِكْرَامَ ذِي الشَّيْبَةِ الْمُسْلِمِ وَحَامِلِ الْقُرْآنِ غَيْرِ الْعَالِي فِيهِ وَالْجَافِي عَنْهُ وَإِكْرَامَ ذِي السُّلْطَانِ الْمُقْسِطِ .

[سنن أبي داود]

### Introduction

- In this series, we aren't just learning about rights and obligations. We are also learning about Ihsan (compassion and excellence)
- Islam has an emphasis on honoring the elderly outside of your family. There is a lot of literature in our tradition regarding this.
- Hadith: **هَلْ تُنصِرُونَ وَتُرزِقُونَ إِلَّا بِضِعْفَائِكُمْ**.
  - The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "You gain no victory or livelihood except through (the blessings and invocations of) the poor amongst you."
  - Scholars include the oppressed as well as the elderly in the interpretation of this Hadith.
  - You are taken care of by Allah because you provide for those who cannot give anything in return.
- Hadith: **لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يُوقِرْ كَبِيرَنَا ، وَيَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَعْرِفْ لِعَالِمِنَا حَقَّهُ**
  - 'Abdullah b. 'Amr (rA) narrates, "He is not from us - whoever does not respect our elders, show mercy to our youngsters, and realize the right of our scholars." (Abu Dawud & at-Tirmidhi)

- Respect of the elderly is not just symbolic gestures of respect (احترام). It is also to acknowledge a person's right upon you and give them their proper position.
- This Hadith recognizes the generation gap and shows us how to find a balance in society between the elderly and the youth.
- The vast majority of the prophet (ﷺ)'s companions were young. Most were under forty.
- The context of this Hadith is mentioned by Anas ibn Malik. He says: "An older man came to talk to the Prophet, and the people were hesitant to make room for him. The Prophet said: ;He is not one of us who does not have mercy on our young and does not respect our elders."

### How We Treat Others

- How we treat others is how we will be treated; good or bad.
- Surah Rahman Ayah 60: هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ
  - "Is the reward for good [anything] but good?"
- Surah Rum Ayah 10: ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا السُّوأَىٰ...
  - "Then the end of those who did evil was the worst [consequence]..."
- Hadith: مَنْ أَهَانَ ذَا شَيْبَةٍ لَمْ يَمُتْ حَتَّىٰ يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ مَنْ يُهِينُ شَيْبَهُ إِذَا شَابَ
  - Whoever disrespects someone who is elderly, he will not die except that Allah (swt) sends someone upon him to humiliate him in his old age.
- When Abu Bakr (ra) was old, the youth would compete to serve him. He was asked why that was the case. He said that he would do that for an elderly man when he was young.
- Hadith: مَا أَكْرَمَ شَابٌ شَيْخًا لِسِنِّهِ إِلَّا قَيْضَ اللَّهِ لَهُ مَنْ يُكْرِمُهُ عِنْدَ سِنِّهِ
  - "No youth treats an elderly person with honor in their old age except that Allah sends someone to treat them with honor in their old age."

### What is Respect?



- Respect or إكرام is subjective (بالمعروف).
- You should honor the elderly according to your culture as long as it doesn't contradict Sharee'ah.

### Economic Assistance

- Ibn Qayyim mentions in *Ahkam Ahl adh-Dhimmah (Rulings on How to Treat Protected Non-Muslim Minorities)*:
  - عمر بن الخطاب كان يسير يوماً في الطريق فرأى رجلاً يتسول، فقال له مالك يا شيخ؟ فقال الرجل: أنا يهودي وأتسول لأدفع الجزية، فقال عمر: والله ما انصفناك نأخذ منك شاباً ثم نضيعك شيخاً والله لأعطينك من مال المسلمين، وأعطاه عمر - رضي الله عنه - من مال المسلمين
  - Umar (ra), during his Khilafah, saw an old Jewish man begging. He asked him: "What brought you to this condition that I see?". The elder Jew said: "The demand of jizya, needs & old age." Umar took him by the hand to his home and helped him. Then he called a custodian of the Treasury and said: "Take a look at his suffering. By Allah this is not justice on our part that we extract from them in their youth and leave them helpless in their old age!". He exempted him, and those like him from Jizya
  - The Jizyah at the time of Umar (ra) was less than the Zakah mandated on Muslims.
  - Think of how this concept relates to economic issues like social security and retirement benefits.

### Physical Assistance

- Umar (ra) would compete with Abu Bakr (ra) in good deeds. So during Abu Bakr's Khilafah, Umar (ra) would go serve the elderly women on the outskirts of Madinah. When he went to one house, an elderly lady answered the door and said that someone already came. He asked who it was but she said that he didn't want anyone to know. So Umar (ra) hid by her house and saw Abu Bakr (ra) coming to help her.
- Talha b. 'Abdillah (rA) said, "Umar (during his Khilafah) went out in the depths of the night and entered someone's home. In the morning, I went to that house, only to find a elderly immobile blind woman. I said to her, 'Why does this man come to you?'

She said, 'He has been visiting me regularly for X amount of time. He brings me what I need, and removes my waste.' I said to myself: Woe to you, O Talha! Are you probing for the flaws of 'Umar?'

### Emotional Rights

- Hadith: يُسَلِّمُ الصَّغِيرُ عَلَى الْكَبِيرِ، وَالْمَارُّ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِ، وَالْقَلِيلُ عَلَى الْكَثِي
- The prophet (ﷺ) said: "The young person should always initiate Salam to the older person..."
- During Fath Makkah, Abu Bakr (ra)'s father accepted Islam. Abu Bakr (ra) carried his father to the prophet (ﷺ). He said, "You should have left the old man in his home. I would have come to him."
- Hadith: أمرني جبريل أن أقدم الأكاير
- "Jibreel (as) commanded me to always put forth the elders."
- Always give preference to the elders.
- Hadith: أَرَانِي أَتَسَوِّكُ بِسِوَاكِ، فَجَاءَنِي رَجُلَانِ أَحَدُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْآخَرِ، فَنَاوَلْتُ السِّوَاكَ الْأَصْغَرَ مِنْهُمَا، فَقِيلَ لِي: "كَبِّرْ. فَدَفَعْتُهُ إِلَى الْأَكْبَرِ مِنْهُمَا
- The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "I dreamt that I was cleaning my teeth with a Siwak and two persons came to me. One of them was older than the other and I gave the Siwak to the younger. I was told that I should give it to the older and so I did."
- The dreams of the prophet (saw) were always Wahy.
- Aisha (ra) narrated that if the Prophet passed his siwak, he started with the elder and if he gave his water jug, he gave it to the person on the right.
- One of the factors in determining who should lead Salah is the one who is older.
- فَلْيُؤَمِّمَهُمُ الْكَبِيرَهُمْ سِنًا
- Rafi' ibn Khadeej and Sahl ibn Abi Hathma reported that 'Abdullah ibn Sahl and Mu7ayyiSa ibn Mas'ud came to Khaybar and parted when they were among the palm trees. 'Abdullah ibn Sahl was murdered. 'Abdu'r-Rahman ibn Sahl and Huwayyisa and

Muhayyisa, the sons of Mas'ud came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and spoke to him about their (murdered) companion. 'Abdu'r-Rahman, the youngest of those present, began to speak, but the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Let the oldest speak first (كبر الكبارى) or Exalt the eldest. (ليلي الكلام الاكبر)

### Being Gentle in Religious Obligations

- Imam Shafi said that an elderly person never asked the prophet (saw) for a concession except that he gave it to them.
- The prophet (saw) would also make them feel better about taking that concession.
  - If an elderly person has no choice but to sit and pray then their reward will be the same as the one who stands.
  - Similarly if someone must give Fidyah instead of fasting, their reward will be the same.
  - It was narrated from 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas that a man asked the Prophet "The command of ) Hajj has come while my father is an old man and cannot sit firmly in his saddle; if I tie him (to the saddle) I fear that he will die. Can I perform Hajj on his behalf?" He said: "don't you think that if your father owed a debt and you paid it off, that would be just as good?" He said: "Yes." He said: "Then perform Hajj on behalf of your father. "

### Conclusion

- We have a collective social responsibility. Putting our hands and resources together for their care.
- Comprehensive care in terms of their physical and mental health, their emotional stability, and all that falls under "honoring the elderly".
- Recognition in public and private gatherings.
- Giving them precedence in honorific spaces, such as being Imam, being served food, and voicing opinion.
- Making the Shar'i concessions available to them and not subjecting them to undue hardship and unwarranted religious guilt.