

Loving For Your Brother What You Love For Yourself

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Source: Jaami' al-'Uloom wal-Hikam

Hadeeth Thirteen:

عَنْ أَبِي هَمْزَةَ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ خَادِمِ
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ
لِنَفْسِهِ - رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ.

Abu Hamzah Anas bin Maalik (Radiya `Llahu `anhu) who was the servant of the Messenger of Allaah (Salla `Llahu `alayhi wa sallam) reported that the Prophet (Salla `Llahu `alayhi wa sallam) said: "None of you truly believes (in Allaah and in His religion) until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."
[Bukhaaree & Muslim] ¹

Commentary On The Hadeeth

The negation of faith as referred to in this hadeeth means the absence of the true spirit and epitome of faith. Faith may be negated when some of its pillars or duties are not fulfilled. This is exemplified in the following hadeeths. The Prophet (Salla `Llahu `alayhi wa sallam) said:

"When an adulterer [or fornicator] commits illegal sexual intercourse, he is not a believer at the time he is committing it; and when one drinks alcohol, he is not a believer at the time he drinks it; and when a thief steals, he is not a believer at the time of stealing."²

The Prophet (Salla `Llahu `alayhi wa sallam) also said:

"By Allaah, he does not believe! By Allaah, he does not believe! By Allaah, he does not believe!" It was asked: "Who is that, O Messenger of Allaah?" He (Salla `Llahu `alayhi wa sallam) said: "That person whose neighbour does not feel safe from his evil."³

Wish For Your Fellow Muslims Whatever You Wish For Yourself

One of the obligatory characteristics of faith is that the Muslim should wish the same things for his fellow Muslims that he wishes for himself. Likewise, he should hate for them whatever he hates for himself. If he lacks this characteristic, his faith is incomplete. Abu Hurayrah (Radiya `Llahu `anhu) narrated that the Prophet (Salla `Llahu `alayhi wa sallam) said:

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhaaree in Kitaab Al-Eemaan (Book on Faith) no.13; also recorded by Muslim in Kitaab Al-Eemaan (Book on Faith), no. 45/71

² Recorded by al-Bukhaaree in Kitaab Al-Mazaalim (Book on Injustices) no.2475; also recorded by Muslim in Kitaab Al-Eemaan (Book on Faith), no. 57/100

³ Recorded by al-Bukhaaree in Kitaab Al-Adab (Book on Etiquette) no. 6016

"In order to be a Muslim, wish for your fellow Muslims that which you wish for yourself." ⁴

Abdullaah bin 'Amr bin Al-'Aas (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) narrated that the Prophet (Salla 'Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said:

"Whoever wishes to be delivered from the Fire and to enter the Garden should die with faith in Allaah and the Last Day and should treat the people as he wishes to be treated by them." ⁵

Abu Dharr (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) said: "The Prophet (Salla 'Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam) told me:

"Abu Dharr, I see that you are weak, and I love for you the same things that I love for myself. Therefore, never become an amir [a leader], not even over two persons, and never manage the property of an orphan." ⁶

The Prophet (Salla 'Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam) advised Abu Dharr not to become an amir because he sensed his weakness and desired that those who were weak avoid positions of leadership. The Prophet, however, ruled over people because Allaah gave him the necessary strength. In addition, Allaah ordered the Prophet (Salla 'Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam) to call people to obey him and to direct their religious and worldly affairs.

In the same vein, Muhammad bin Waasi' went to sell a donkey that he owned. A man asked him: "Would you like for me to own it?" He answered: "If I didn't like it, I would not have decided to sell it."

This is an allusion to the fact that he did not wish for his brother in Islaam what he did not wish for himself. All the above incidents are but examples of advice to Muslims, which is part of religion.

Utmost Goodwill

This hadeeth indicates that a believer is pleased with what pleases his fellow believers and that he desires for them the good that he desires for himself. This is a result of being completely free from holding grudges, cheating, and envy. The envious person likes to be superior to others and hates that others are superior or equal to himself. This feeling contradicts faith, which stipulates that one should wish others to enjoy the same blessings that he enjoys without losing any of them. In the Qur'aan, Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) has praised those who are not haughty towards others and hate corruption. Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) says:

"That home of the Hereafter (i.e. Paradise), We shall assign to those who rebel not against the truth with pride and oppression in the land nor do mischief (by committing crimes)." [Al-Qasas (28):83]

Envy Is Permissible in Two Cases

⁴ Recorded by at-Tirmidhee in Kitaab Az-Zuhd (Book on Asceticism) no. 13; also recorded by Ibn Maajah in Kitaab Az-Zuhd (Book on Asceticism) 4217; and Ahmad, hadeeth no. 2/310

⁵ Recorded by Muslim in Kitaab Al-Imarah (Book on Emirate) chapter 1844/46

⁶ Recorded by Muslim in Kitaab Al-Imarah (Book on Emirate) chapter 1826/17

A believer becomes a true believer only when he likes for others what he likes for himself. It is good for a believer to wish for that with which another person has been given if it is beneficial for one's religion. The Prophet (Salla 'Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said:

"Do not wish for the likes of anyone except two: a man upon whom Allaah bestowed knowledge of the Book [the Qur'aan], who stands up [in salaah (prayer)] and recites it during the hours of the night, and a man upon whom Allaah bestowed wealth, and he spends it in charity during the hours of the night and the hours of the day." ⁷

The Prophet (Salla 'Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam) also said, concerning the person who sees another spending his money according to the prescriptions of Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) and says:

"If I had money, I would have spent it in the same way he spends it, "that he would be given an equal reward." ⁸

However, one should not aspire to worldly pleasures. This is shown in the following Qur'aanic verse, in which Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) says:

"So, he [Korah] went forth before his people in his pomp. Those who were desirous of the life of the world, said: "Ah, would that we had the like of what Qârûn [Korah] has been given! Verily, he is the owner of a great fortune." But those who had been given [religious] knowledge said: "Woe to you! The reward of Allaah [in the Hereafter] is better for those who believe and do righteous good deeds..." [Al-Qasas (28):79-80]

As for the Verse in which Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) says:

"And wish not for the things in which Allaah has made some of you to excel others." [An-Nisaa' (4):32]

'Wishing' has been interpreted here as envy, in the sense longing ardently and wrongfully for something that belongs to another. It has also been interpreted as aspiring to illegal things or things that are decreed by Allaah impossible for that person to obtain. By an example would be the desire of women to become men or to have the same religious and/or worldly advantages such as jihad, inheritance of a heritage portion equal to men, having the same degree of manly rationalism, and being equal to men as witnesses etc.

Nevertheless, a believer should regret missing religious virtues. Hence, he has been ordered to consider those who are more religious than him as an example and compete with them as much as he can. This is revealed by the following verse:

"And for this let (all) those strive who want to strive (i.e. hasten earnestly to the obedience of Allaah)." [Al-Mutaffifeen (83):26]

A believer should not dislike for others to have the same religious virtues. Rather, he should like all people to compete in attaining such virtues and

⁷ Recorded by al-Bukhaaree in Kitaab Fadaa'il Al-Qur'aan (Book on the Virtues of the Qur'aan) no. 5025; also recorded by Muslim in Kitaab Salat Al-Musaafireen (Book on the Prayer of the Travellers) 815/266

⁸ Recorded by at-Tirmidhee in Kitaab Az-Zuhd (Book on Asceticism) no 2325; also narrated by Abu Kabshah Al-Anmaary and classified as saheeh hasan

encourage them to do so. This is part of giving sincere advice to his fellows. If another excels him in religious virtue, he should exert his utmost effort to catch up with him. He should feel sorry because he is not doing his best and because he cannot reach him. This is not by way of envy, but by way of competition and aspiring to be at the same level as him, in addition to feeling sorry for his failure to do what ought to be done, and for being inferior to those who are foremost in faith and performing righteous deeds.

A believer should always think of himself as falling short in his seeking the highest degrees. This should lead him to do two precious things: first exerting his maximum effort to attain and build upon his own virtues; and second, to realise his imperfections.

It is permissible for one who is blessed with some favour to tell others about it, so long as he does so for religious interest, and realises that he is deficient in his thanks to Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) for this favour. This is supported by Ibn Mas'ud's (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) saying:

"I do not know of anybody who is more versed in the Book of Allaah than myself."

This is not to imply that one dislikes others to be granted such blessings, as is indicated by the following saying of Ibn Abbaas (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu):

"When I come upon a Verse in the Book of Allaah I really wish for all people to know what I know about it."

Further, As-Shaafi'ee (Rahimahu 'Llah) said:

"I wish for all people to know this science, and to attribute nothing to me."

By the same token, Utbah, a young man, used to tell his close friends:

"Give me water or dates to break my fast so as to have a [divine] reward equal to mine."