

1434-10-23 - أ. بن حميد - المسجد الحرام

## **The Rights of neighbours in Islam**

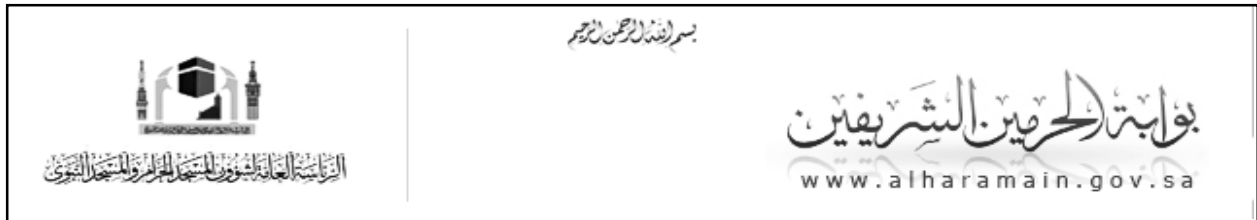
### **Khutbah Topic**

His eminence Sheikh SalehibnHumaid delivered last Friday's *khutbah* titled “**The Rights of Neighbours in Islam**” in which he addressed the neighbor's rights as outlined in the religion of Allah (ﷻ). He presented evidence from the Qur'ān, *Sunnah* and 'āthār (religious relics and accounts attributed to the Companions) showing the necessity to observe the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ) in this respect and the danger of going against them.

### **Part one**

Praise be to Allah! Praise be to Allah! He created and He gave commands; He possessed and He prevailed; He wished and He preordained. I praise Him (ﷻ) and I thank Him. He bestowed and He gave; He bestowed enough bounties and He granted people self-sufficiency. I bear witness that there is no deity worth worshipping except Almighty Allah alone with no associate. To Him praise is due in this life and in the hereafter. I also bear witness that our Master and Prophet, Muhammad, (ﷺ) is the Servant and Messenger of Allah –purest of the pure and the leader of the righteous. May Allah send His *Salat* (Graces, Honours, Mercy), Peace and Blessing onto him, his family, and his pious and devout Companions who, despite their immense suffering in the cause of Allah, showed no signs of delinquency and never surrendered or retreated, onto *tabi'in* (the contemporaries of the Companions of the Prophet [ﷺ] after his death) and those who followed them righteously till Doomsday.

Now then, O people, I urge you as well as myself to observe fear of Allah. Fear Allah –may Allah have mercy on you– and worship Him. Unite on compassion, love and obedience and never let rancour, caprice and disobedience throw you into disunity.



Adorn yourselves with obedience to your Lord; expiate and repent of your sins; and never walk away from the door of your Lord, so you may abide in the Garden of Eden. He who meditates on the end of life should be cautious in his actions, and he who is certain about the length of his journey should ready himself for it.

The true Muslim is the one who does not inflict harm, physical or verbal, on other Muslims. *Al-muhajir* (emigrant) is the one who renounces what Allah has forbidden, and *al-mujahid* (fighter in the cause of Allah) is the one who makes *jihad* against himself and his whims. Allah (ﷻ) says, **﴿O you who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allah that you may prosper﴾** [al-Imran: 200]

O Muslims!

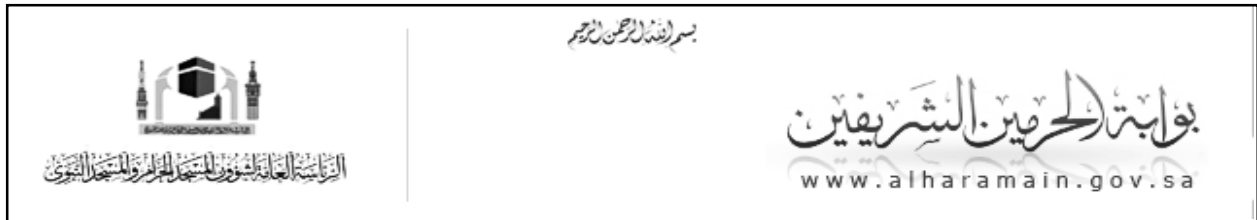
The laws of our faith and the commandments of our Islam begin with the realization of *tawheed* (monotheism), soundness of worship, solidity of relations and purity of connections. The Islamic bond and brotherhood in faith are the core of belief and essence of feelings. With them and for them the Muslim lives. They are intertwined and coherent: creed, rituals and strong connections.

Read, if you will, **﴿Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbors who are of kin, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the way farer, and what your right hand possesses, for Allah loves not the arrogant, the vainglorious﴾** [An-Nisa: 36]

In this verse, Allah combines together His right with the rights of His servants. People entitled to these rights belong to many categories. First, they could be “*thawualqurbā*”: relatives (especially parents, on account of their close kinship and the great importance of their rights); second, “*qarībmukhālīt*”: mixed type of relatives (**neighbours who are near of kin, neighbours who are strangers, companions by your side**<sup>1</sup>—when travelling by bus, by train, or by plane, for instance); and third, the weak who need charity on account of physical weakness (such as orphans) or on account of poverty (such as the poor).

Brothers and sisters in faith!

<sup>1</sup> The bold-face part of this paragraph is borrowed from the Holy Qur’ān: surat Al-Nisa’, verse 36.



One of the greatest accomplishments of Islam is the way it organizes society in concentric circles. The innermost circle represents the parents, next is the one representing the neighbours, friends and acquaintances and so on until we reach the outer circle that represents strangers and non-Muslims.

Now, let us examine one of these circles: that of good neighbourliness which represents cooperation and depicts all forms and goals of the Islamic bond.

Fostering relations with the closest community at home and in the neighbourhood takes priority because it is the most able, the closest and the quickest to realise complementarity in due time and to evaluate the benefit in its manifest form.

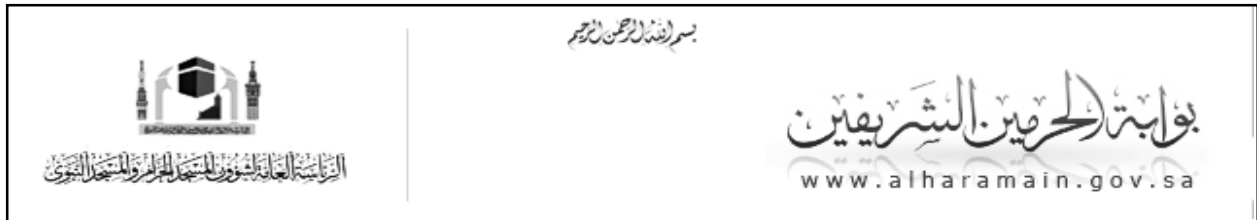
Neighbours know each other well; they even know the secrets of one another; they are aware of what comes into and what goes out of their neighbours' homes. They may see the imperfections of one another, watch their neighbours' visitors coming and going, hear their noise, sense the aroma of their neighbours' cooking, and know about their disputes, contentions and serenity. No house contents or family secrets can be kept from the neighbours.

The Arabic term *Jiwaris* is used to express a high rational and religious value. The verbs *Istajara* and *ajara* respectively mean "to seek refuge with" and "to give refuge to". Only our Lord (ﷻ) is the One Who provides *ijarah* (shelter) but never needs it from anyone.

Satan –may Allah's curse be upon him– has deceived his followers and let them down saying, **﴿While I am a neighbour to you (will protect you)﴾** [al-Anfal: 48]. The Arabic term *jar* (neighbour) indicates protection from harm and doing good and benevolence.

Neighbours fall into several classes and ranks; some are close; others are not so close. Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar says, *"The term neighbour may refer to both Muslims and non-Muslims, to the pious and the disobedient, to friends and enemies, to strangers and relatives and to close and distant neighbours. They form a hierarchy in which the highest rank is occupied by the one who possesses all of the above attributes. Next in rank is the one who possesses all of these attributes, then he who possesses most of them, and so on. The opposite is the one who possesses the other attributes, and so he is given accordingly."*

Scholars said, *"The circle of neighbours must be expanded as much as possible."* Ali (ؓ) says, *"He who hears the call to prayer is a neighbour."* Again, it is reported in *ahadith* that *"No prayer is accepted from a mosque's neighbour unless it is performed in the mosque."* Imam Al-Awzā'i –may Allah have mercy on him– said, *"Neighbourhood extends 40 houses in each direction."*



O Muslims!

The neighbours' rights are so important that our Prophet (ﷺ) associated them with belief in Allah and the Last Day. He (ﷺ) said, **"He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should treat his neighbour well."** In another *Hadith* version, **"...must not do his neighbour harm."**

Abu Shuraih (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"By Allah, he will not believe, by Allah, will not believe, by Allah, he will not believe."** "Who, O Messenger of Allah?" they asked. **"He whose neighbour does not feel safe from his harmful deeds,"** he answered.

Ibn Abbas –may Allah be pleased with him and his father– is reported to have quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying, **"He is not a believer he who sleeps with a full belly while his neighbour is hungry."**

All these *hadiths*, 'āthārs and the like corroborate the strong connection between belief and respecting the neighbours' rights. They show that the neighbours' rights are aspects and acts of faith. It is the belief in Allah, Who knows the treacherous eye, and the belief in the Last Day when people are gathered to account for their past deeds.

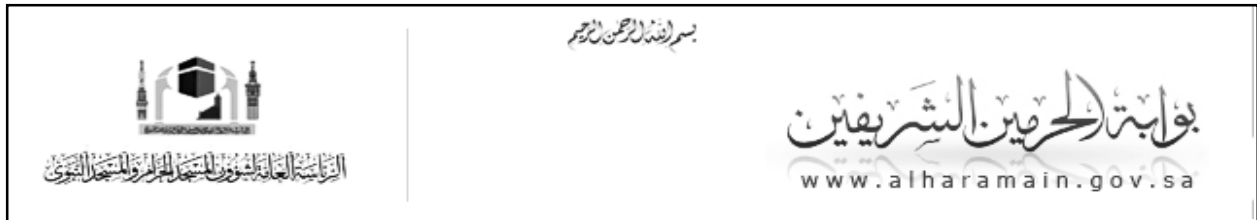
In a *hadith* narrated by Al-Termidhi, Ibn Habban, Ibn Khuzaima and Al-Hakim, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"The best friend to Allah is he who treats his friend best, and the best neighbour to Allah is he who treats his neighbour best."**

Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) once asked, **"Who will take from me these words, follow them through or teach them to someone who will?"** Abu Hurairah said, **"I said, 'I will, O Messenger of Allah'!"** So the Prophet (ﷺ) counted five on his hand and said, **"Avoid committing proscribed deeds, you become the most pious; be content with what Allah has sent you, you become the richest person; be good to your neighbour, you become faithful; wish for the others what you wish for yourself, you become a Muslim and do not laugh too often because laughter kills the heart."** Narrated by Al-Termidhi; it is a *hasan* (good) *hadith*.

Brothers and sisters in faith!

Being good to one's neighbour implies three things: Being benevolent to him, refraining from doing him harm, and bearing his harmful deeds.

Benevolence is a broad term that implies greeting one's neighbour, being nice and offering guidance to him to show him what is good for him and his family spiritually as well as materially. It also implies protecting the neighbour's honour in his absence with emphasis on



good behaviour, leniency, solidarity in fair and foul weather, sharing with him in happiness and sorrow, offering him condolences or congratulations, and showing him kindness and friendliness.

Examples of being good to one's neighbour include giving him what is available because the neighbour watches what goes into and what comes out of his neighbor's house.

Imam Muslim narrated that Abu Tharr (رضي الله عنه) was reported to have quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying, ***“O Abu Tharr! If you cook marqah (broth, bouillon, gravy), add a lot of water to it and give some to your neighbours!”***

In the Prophet's words ***“a lot of water”*** there is a notification to avoid unnatural show-off in offering gifts. He did not say, ***“add a lot of meat to it,”*** because meat may not be easy for all to get. Care should be taken not to present your neighbours with a negligible thing because the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***“Then look for your neighbour's household and offer them what is conventionally acceptable.”*** This means that one should not offer what is conventionally and traditionally considered worthless or too little.

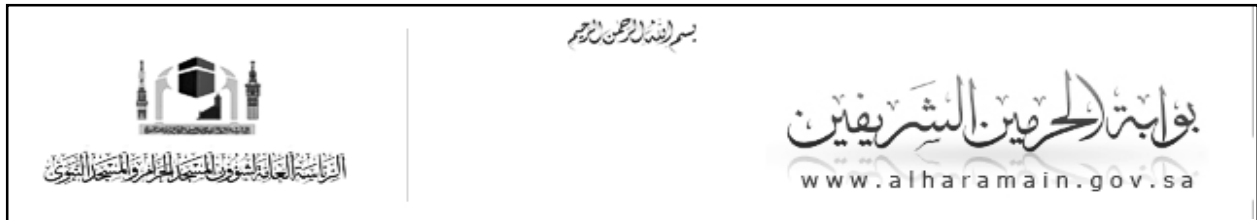
This is an example of high moral standards which strengthens ties, love, good treatment, and contribute to the avoidance of corruption. The cooking aroma may hurt a neighbour with small children, especially if such a neighbour is a widow or a poor man, in which case they would be unable to feed their children and would feel bad about it. This state of affairs would create a feeling of suffering and sorrow, whereas sharing a little food would help mitigate it.

Upon distributing the meat of *‘udh-hiyah* (slaughtered animal at sacrifice Eid), Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) told his wife, ***“Start with our Jewish neighbour!”***

A ewe was slaughtered at the house of Abdullah ibn Amr—may Allah be pleased with him and his father—so when he arrived, he asked them, ***“Have you offered some to our Jewish neighbour?”*** He repeated the question three times and said, ***“I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying, “Jibreel (Gabriel) kept telling me to be good to my neighbour till I thought he would include the neighbour in inheritance.”***

It sounds in the Prophet's last words ***“till I thought he would include the neighbour in inheritance”*** that there is no difference between relatives and neighbours except in matters of inheritance.

Another form of *Ihsan* (benevolence) is comforting one's neighbour when in need. Rather, how beautiful it is to be useful to him through the talents and expertise with which Allah has blessed us. Thus, the rich help the poor, physicians help treat illnesses, and teachers help in



teaching. The same can be said of engineers, carpenters, blacksmiths, and the rest of the vocations. All this would make neighbours love one another, help and do good to one another.

Other forms of *Ihsan* include: teaching, guiding, and advising one's neighbour, commending him, politely and wisely, to do good and warning him against doing evil. He should also be kind with his neighbour's children and guide them to what is useful to them in matters related to religion and life.

In a comprehensive *Hadith* that has a good chain of narrators, Mu'adh bin Jabal (رضي الله عنه) said: "we said: O Messenger of Allah! What are the rights of a neighbour? He said: ***if he asks for a loan, give it to him; if he asks for help, help him; if he is in need, give him; if he falls ill, visit him; when he dies, follow his funeral procession; if something good happens to him, be pleased and congratulate him; if something bad happens to him, be displeased and console him. Do not hurt him by the aroma of your cooking pot unless you intend to send him some of your food; do not raise your building high to overlook him and block the wind except by his permission. If you buy things, offer him some, or carry them into your house secretly, and do not let your children go out with some of what you bought lest this galls his children***".

In a *Hadith* agreed upon (among *Hadith* scholars): ***He who shares property with a neighbour or a partner shall not sell it before proposing it to him.***"

The nearest neighbours deserve one's favour and benevolence on account of their closeness, for the nearest neighbour can see what is brought in and carried out of his neighbour's house. 'A'isha—may Allah be pleased with her—said, "I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I have two neighbours. To whom should I offer my gifts?' He replied, ***To the one whose door is nearer to you.***"

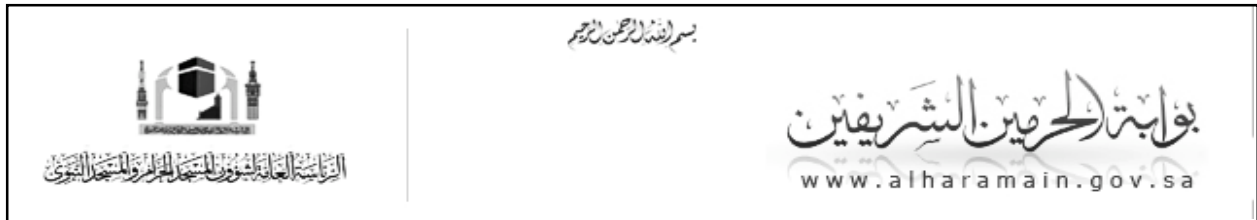
Muslim scholars said: ***What is meant is that if you do not have enough to offer both neighbours, then offer the nearer one; but if you can offer both, then this would be better.***"

Responsibility is multiplied and rights are increased when the neighbour is poor, an orphan, a widow or one with a special need. It is narrated that, on the Day of Judgement, a poor neighbour will hold to his rich neighbour and say: ***O Lord! Ask this man why he closed his door in my face and refused to show me common kindness!***"

O brothers and sisters in Islam!

One of the greatest rights of neighbours is to refrain from hurting them. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has said: ***He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbour***".





In a *Hadith* narrated by Imam Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) observed: "**He will not enter Paradise whose neighbour is not secure from his harmfuldeeds**".

In another *Hadith* the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "**Oh Allah, I seek refuge with you from an evil urbanite neighbour, fora nomadicneighbouris always on the move.**" Narrated by Ahmad, Al-Bukhari in *Al Adab Al Mufrad*, Al-Nassāi, Al-Hākim who corrected it, and Athahabi agreed with him on the correction.

'*Bawā'iq*' is the plural form in Arabic of '*Bā'iqah*' which means 'calamity', 'destruction', 'evil deeds', and (all kinds of) 'harmful acts'.

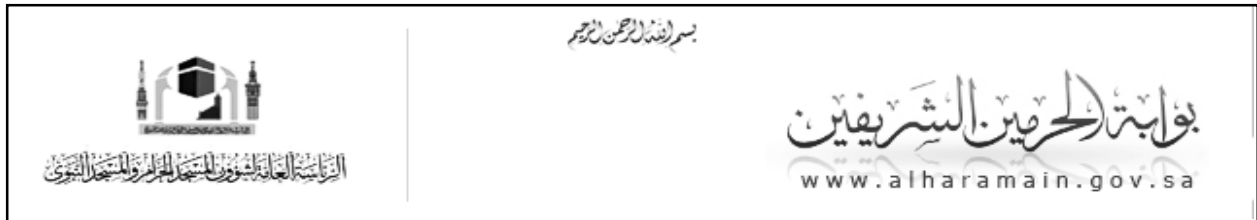
In the *Hadith* the expression "*not secure from his harmfuldeeds*" means that one should not use his knowledge of his neighbour's conditions as a means to defame, oppress, or blackmail him.

The forms and aspects of harm are numerous. One should forgive his neighbour's slight faults, abstain from trying to find out about his flaws and what he is carrying home with him, should cover up what is revealed of his defects, lower his gaze when his womenfolk pass by, avoid harming him by throwing dirt and waste in his courtyard. One should also avoid making the road narrow to his neighbour, or to the water flow of his drain, or building taller wall that would prevent the air from reaching him except by his permission.

Seek refuge with Allah –may Allah have mercy on you– from the evil neighbour who listens to obscenities and talks irrationally of whatever occurs to him. Beware again and again that your wealth or fame be a reason to humiliate or harm your neighbour or be arrogant with him. Teach your children to keep the rights of the neighbours so that the neighbourhood people are not brought up on envy, spite, hatred and malignity.

Now then, O servants of Allah!

Observing the rights of the neighbours would result in intimacy and friendliness. Thus the dwellers of the neighbourhood and the society would be able to live in security and peace exchanging benefits, fulfilling their needs amongst themselves, cooperating in righteousness and *taqwah* (doing what Allah ordered and abstaining from what He forbade), pushing away evil and harm from their families and houses sincerely and faithfully, explicitly and implicitly. They believe in Allah and the Last Day, enjoin good and forbid evil, and hasten to do good things. Such Muslims are indeed among the righteous.



May Allah (ﷻ) benefit me and you with the great Qur’ān and with the guidance of Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ)! I say this and ask Allah’s forgiveness for you and me and for all the Muslims of every sin and wrongdoing! So ask for His forgiveness; He is the All-Forgiving, All-Merciful!

## Part Two

Praise be to Allah! He is the Just Judge who created the male and female: *«...that He may requite those who do evil with that which they have done (i.e. punish them in Hell), and reward those who do good, with what is best (i.e. Paradise)»* [An-Najm: 31]

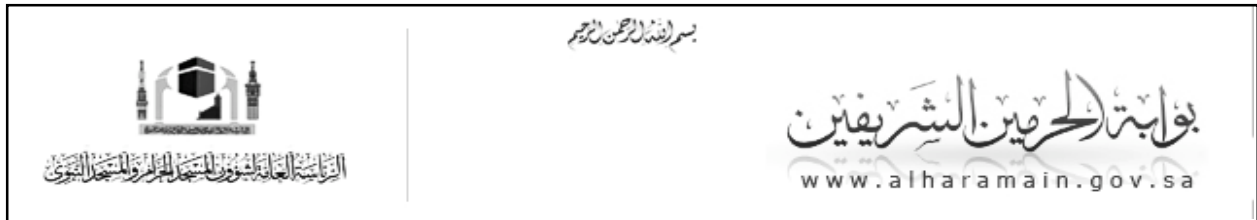
I praise Him (ﷻ) and thank Him for His innumerable favours. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone with no associate, a witness that brings me closer to Him, and I bear witness that our Master and Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) is the Servant and Messenger of Allah (ﷻ), the Seal of the Prophets and the Master of mankind. May Allah send His *Salat* (Graces, Honours, and Mercy) and Peace upon him, his family, his Companions, the *tabi'in* (the contemporaries of the Companions after the death of the Prophet [ﷺ]) and those who followed them in righteousness and imitated their method and were thus rightly guided.

Now then, O Muslims!

Among the rights of neighbours are: to bear the neighbour's harm and to be patient with what he, his family, and children might commit (against him). This is one of the greatest rights and the noblest of morals.

A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah! Tell me about a deed that if I do I will enter Paradise. He said: "**be benevolent**". The man said: how do I know that I am benevolent? The Prophet said: "**ask your neighbours; if they say that you are benevolent then**





*you are indeed benevolent, but if they say that you are a wrongdoer, then you are indeed a wrongdoer*". Al-Baihaqi mentioned this on the authority of Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه).

A man came to Ibn Masoud (رضي الله عنه) and said to him: I have a neighbour who hurts me, curses me, and causes me distress. Ibn Masoud said: "*Go back to your daily life, if he disobeys Allah by mistreating you, then obey Allah by treating him kindly.*"

Al-Hassan says: "*Being a good neighbour does not just mean to abstain from harming your neighbour but to bear (his) harm.*"

It is narrated in a *marfu Hadith*<sup>2</sup>: "*Allah loves a man whose neighbour harms him and he keeps patient until death or travel separates them.*" [Narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad*.]

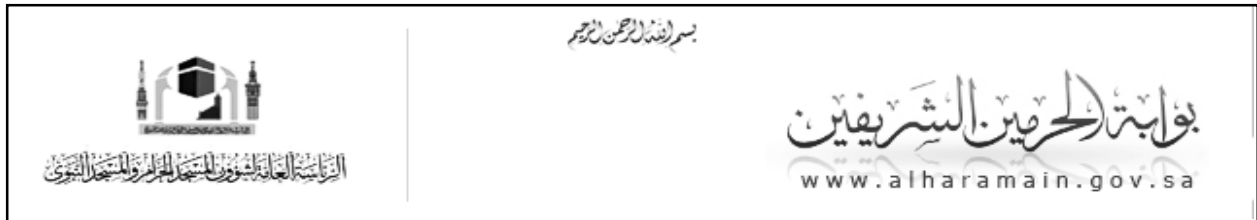
Relevant to this is what the receiver of the gift among the neighbours should do. He/she should accept the gift with gratitude and thankfulness. The Prophet (ﷺ) says: "***O believing women! Do not let any of you disdain her female neighbour's gift, even if it is only a burnt sheep's hoof.***"

He specified women because they are more influential than men in terms of helping build friendly relations or inciting feelings of hatred. Also, they have more effect on manners and conduct. So one should not belittle any help no matter how small and should be thankful for what was offered no matter how little.

So fear Allah, may He have mercy on you, respect your neighbours' rights, reconcile disputes amongst each other, and obey Allah and His Messenger if you were (true) believers!

This being said, I advise you to send your *salat* and peace on the Mercy and Blessing Allah bestowed on you, your Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), the Messenger of Allah, as Your Lord commanded you to do in His wise Book where He so truthfully and graciously said: ***Allâh sends His Salât (Graces, Honours, Blessings, Mercy) on the Prophet***

<sup>2</sup>It is a *Hadith* traceable in ascending order of *muHaddiths* (traditionaries or transmitters of *Hadith*) to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).



(Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and also His angels (ask Allâh to bless and forgive him). O you who believe! Send your Salât on (ask Allâh to bless) him (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and (you should) greet (salute) him with the Islâmic way of greeting (salutation i.e. As-Salâmu 'Alaikum.) [Al Ahzab: 56]

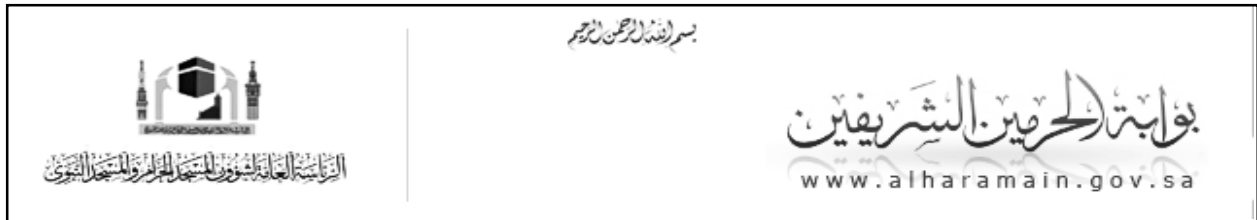
O Allah! Send Your *Salat* (Graces, Honours, Mercy), Peace and Blessing on Your Servant and Messenger, our Master and Prophet, Muhammad (ﷺ), the beloved and the Chosen One, on his virtuous and immaculate family and on his wives, the mothers of the believers! O Allah! We seek Your satisfaction with the four Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman, and Ali, the Prophet's Companions, the *tabi'in* (contemporaries of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) after his death) and those who followed them in righteousness until the Day of Judgment! O Allah! We seek Your Satisfaction with us as well, since You are Most Forgiving, Most Generous, and Most Beneficent!

O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims, and fail polytheism and polytheists! O Allah! Let down tyrants and infidels and all other enemies of Islam!

O Allah! Grant us security in our homelands, and set right our *Imams* and leaders! O Allah! Entrust our government to those who fear You and seek Your satisfaction! O Lord of the Worlds!

O Allah! Grant our *Imam* and Leader a success of Your own! Honour him with Your obedience and make Your word the uppermost through him! Make him an asset to Islam and Muslims! Grant him sound health and wellness! Guide him, his two deputies, his brothers and his aides to do what You love and what pleases You, and lead them to righteousness and piety!

O Allah! Help Muslim leaders to abide by Your Book and to follow the *Sunnah* of Your Prophet, Mohammad (ﷺ)! Make them a blessing on Your faithful, and unite them on the grounds of righteousness and truth, O Lord of the Worlds!



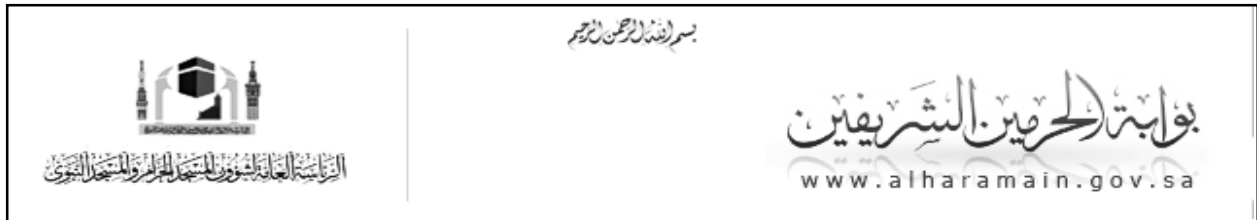
O Allah! Make for this *Ummah* a matter (an affair) of rationality (guidance) whereby the pious are honoured and the sinful are guided, and where virtue is promoted and vice is prevented! Verily, You are the Omniscient!

O Allah, Protector of the believers, Supporter of the defenseless, Reliever of those in need, the Ultimate Hope, Refuge of the weak! Grant relief to our oppressed brothers in Syria! Grant relief to our oppressed brothers in Syria! O Allah! Bring an end to their suffering! Grant them speedy relief and draw them closer at heart! O Allah! Grant them an aid, a fighting power and a triumph of your own! O Allah! We beseech You to grant them great victory, relief, mercy and perseverance! O Allah! Make accurate their views, successful their shooting! Strengthen their power and unite their word!

O Allah! Defeat the tyrants in Syria, O Allah! Defeat the tyrants and oppressors in Syria and those who sympathize and side with them! O Allah! Defeat them! O Allah! Disperse their gathering, scatter their crowds, and tear them apart! O Allah! Make their plotting to their own detriment!

O Allah! Destroy the usurpers and occupiers among the Jews! O Allah! Destroy the usurpers and occupiers among the Zionist Jews, for You are certainly able to do so! O Allah! Inflict Your wrath which is so inevitably destined to strike the people who are *Mujrimûn* (criminals, polytheists or sinners)! O Allah! We pray You to drive them off to their own detriment and seek refuge in You from their evils!

﴿...Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire!﴾ [Al-Baqarah: 201]. ﴿Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers.﴾ [Al-A'raf: 23]



O Allah! Guide us to repent and return (to You), and open for us the doors of being accepted (by You)! O Allah! Answer our supplication, accept our obedience and prayer; make our deeds righteous; forgive our sins; repent on us; forgive us, verily You are All-Forgiving All-Merciful!

O servants of Allah!

﴿Verily, Allah enjoins Al-Adl (i.e. justice and worshipping none but Allah Alone - Islamic Monotheism) and Al-Ihsan [i.e. to be patient in performing your duties to Allah, totally for Allah's sake and in accordance with the Sunnah (legal ways) of the Prophet (ﷺ) in a perfect manner], and giving (help) to kith and kin (i.e. all that Allah has ordered you to give them e.g., wealth, visiting, looking after them, or any other kind of help, etc.): and forbids Al-Fahsha' (i.e. all evil deeds, e.g. illegal sexual acts, disobedience of parents, polytheism, to tell lies, to give false witness, to kill a life without right, etc.), and Al-Munkar (i.e. all that is prohibited by Islamic law: polytheism of every kind, disbelief and every kind of evil deeds, etc.), and Al-Baghy (i.e. all kinds of oppression), He admonishes you, that you may take heed.﴾ [An-Nahl: 90]

Remember Allah and He will remember you, and thank Him for His blessings and He will increase them for you; verily the remembrance of Allah is the greatest and Allah knows what you are doing.