

Respecting The Elderly Muslim إكرام المسلمين الكبار

Listening to our parents and elderly believers is also something we have to take care of. To understand the respect of elderly Muslims, we need to understand the longevity of someone's life in dunya. If someone is two years older than you, that means he knew the world a little more than you. You may have more knowledge, but the older person has more observed knowledge than you. The way he ate more than you in the world because of his longevity of life, he faced a little more things in life than you. So to show respect to that person is very logical. Our Nabi sallallahu alaihi wasallam told us to show respect to elderly Muslims and in return they show their love and affection to us.

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، وَابْنُ السَّرْحِ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي نَجِيحٍ، عَنْ ابْنِ عَامِرٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، يَرْوِيهِ - قَالَ ابْنُ السَّرْحِ - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَيَعْرِفْ حَقَّ كِبِيرِنَا فَلَيْسَ مِنَّا "

Narrated Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-'As:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Those who do not show mercy to our young ones and do not realise the right of our elders are not from us. (Sunan Abi Dawud)

In this hadith, by the word “right of elders” means their respect. We must respect them, to get their love and affection. After respecting them if one of them does not show their love and affection towards you then that person will be questioned by Allah swt. Now as the hadith mentions their right, we must learn what their rights are.

Anas bin Malik radhiyallahu anhum narrated that:

"An older man came to talk to the Prophet, and the people were hesitant to make room for him. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: ;He is not one of us who does not have mercy on our young and does not respect our elders." (Jami At-tirmizi) From this narration we learnt one thing, which is making room for elderly people when a sitting place is packed with people. And that is one of their rights. We should also lower our voices when an elderly person is approaching us. If we are engaged in chit chat, then we should pause it to show respect to the elderly person. It's against our islamic morals and ethos that we laugh out loud while an elderly person is next to us. If the elderly person is making us laugh then that's fine. But we have to laugh in a polite manner. Not like the way we do when only friends are together. In another narration it was mentioned in a slightly different way.

Amr bin Shu'aib narrated from his father, and he narrated from his father (radhiyallahu anhum) who said that the Messenger of Allah sallallahu alaihi wasallam said: “He is not one of us who does not have mercy upon our young, nor knows the honor of our elders.” (Jami` at-Tirmidhi, 1920)

This hadith mentions knowing their honor. What is the honor of an elderly person? It's our polite behavior towards them. Every time we involve ourselves with them in any dealings, we need to sense they're older than us. That's called honoring them.

