



Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand that Islam has specific teachings on how we should deal with and treat all the people we come across in our life
- Understand that Islam has specific teaching on how we should deal with all creatures in this world
- Memorise the verse from the Holy Qur'ān (2:83)

SOCIAL RULES IN ISLAM

'Islam is a complete and perfect religion. It teaches not only how act in relation to our Lord Allah, but also how to treat everyone and everything around us. In our 'Social Islam' lessons, we will be learning these rules in some detail.

TREATING ALL WITH GOODNESS

All creatures of Allah (SWT) are special because Allah (SWT) created them. Everything has been created for a purpose and everything is a creature of God, therefore we must respect all things in this world.

The following story is about Prophet Moses (as). He was asked by Allah (SWT) to come to a certain place, and to bring with him a creature he was certain was lower than him in status. Prophet Moses (as) could not find anyone or anything he could consider lower than himself, until he came past an ill, dying dog. He thought 'surely, this creature is lower in status than me', so he leashed the dog and brought him along. However, a little later, he realised that he could not be certain that even this dog was lower than him, so he set the dog free. When he reached his destination, Allah (SWT) told him: 'if you had brought anyone or anything along, I would have no longer considered you a prophet.'

SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Since everyone and everything deserves our respect and has certain rights, Islam has specific teachings on how we should treat everyone and everything. In this lesson, we will examine some of these duties.

OUR DUTIES TOWARDS PEOPLE

We should respect the people around us – whether they are Muslim or non-Muslim, related or not related, young or old! We should always remember the most important rule throughout all of our ‘Social Islam’ lessons: we should always speak and do good to people. We learn this rule from the Holy Qur’ān.

وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا

“Speak (and do) good to people” (2:83)

The Qur’ān orders us to speak good words to people and maintain good relations. It does not specify that we should only be good to Muslims or only to our family. Rather Allah (SWT) uses the very broad and general expression of ‘people’, to show us that all are included in this command.

EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Let’s take a very brief look at the most important social obligations we have.

- Maintaining ties with our family is obligatory in Islam. It is known as *Ṣilatul Raḥim*. When it comes to our immediate family, this is major obligation and we have to make sure we always have good relations with our parents and siblings. As for other relatives, we should keep in touch by visiting them, calling them or asking about them regularly.
- Respecting our elders is another very important aspect of social Islam. We need to respect, help and obey our elders.
- Our neighbours also have a right upon us. We must treat them nicely and not be a nuisance to them.

DUTIES TOWARDS OUR ENVIRONMENT

We also have rules of care towards animals, as they are creatures of Allah (SWT) too. Islam has very specific rules when it comes to slaughtering an animal. For example, you must make the animal drink water before you slaughter them so they do not pass away thirsty. Also, you cannot use a blunt knife- you must use a sharp knife to minimise pain. All these rules are examples of the care we should show fellow creatures of Allah (SWT).

Imam Khomayni (ra), perhaps the greatest scholar of recent years, never used to kill a fly or insect. Instead, if it would bug him, he would just flick it away. Someone asked him why he doesn’t just kill them and he would reply by saying ‘why should I kill them if I can get rid of them by just flicking them away?’

Remember, they are important creatures of Allah (SWT) as well...

Lastly, we should remember that the environment is very important in Islam too, and we should do our part to stop or reduce global warming and other things that harm the creatures on Earth. Our duties to the environment include simple and very easy tasks such as recycling and decreasing our carbon footprint by making use of the public transport system as opposed to the car. These tasks are so simple and easy to do and we hope to be rewarded for them by Allah (SWT).

Homework

List two ways, apart from the ways mentioned in the text, that we can fulfil our duties towards:

- Our neighbours
- Animals/Insects
- The environment

Review Questions

Q1. As Muslims, we believe:

- Only some creatures of God deserve respect
- Only humans have rights
- All creatures of God deserve respect and have rights over us

Q2. The most important principle to remember in our Social Islam series is:

- Be good to Muslims only
- Treat people the way they treat you
- Always speak and do good to people

Q3. Which of the following are examples of important social obligations in Islam?

- Being obedient and respectful to our parents
- Not doing anything to harm our neighbours
- Both of the above

¹ References:

-Rules of Socialisation in Islam series, Sheikh Mansour Leghaei, lecture 1
<http://www.madressa.net/akhlaq/class-7/240-respect-parts-1-3>
<http://quran.al-islam.org/>