



## Social Independence

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 3

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should:

- Understand that Islam encourages independence in our personal and social needs
- Know that an independent person is liked by others more than a person who asks frequently
- Understand that we should Allah (SWT) for everything no matter how small
- Understand that we do need help, especially during our younger years and we should ask when necessary
- Understand the type of people and the type of friends we should seek help from

### Independence is encouraged

Imam al-Şādiq (as) has said:

شَرَفُ الْمُؤْمِنِ قِيَامُ اللَّيْلِ وَ عِزُّهُ

اسْتِغْنَاؤُهُ عَنِ النَّاسِ

“The honour of a believer lies in his night-worship and his glory lies in his being independent of the people.”

Islam encourages us to refrain from asking other people for our needs. We all come across situations where we have the option of doing something for ourselves, or seeking help. For example, if we are faced with a difficult assignment, we can either take the time to understand it properly and do our own work, or we can copy-paste from a number of websites and hope we can get away with it. Even worse, a person might call their friend and ask for that friend’s assignment so they can copy it. If we want to be successful in our lives, and to be liked by people, we need to take the option of doing things ourselves- of being independent.

A lesson from the Holy Prophet:

One of the companions of the Holy Prophet (saw) once found himself in severe poverty. His wife advised him to go to the Holy Prophet (saw) and request his help. The man approached the Holy Prophet (saw), but as soon as the Prophet’s (saw) eyes fell upon the man, he said:

“If a person seeks something from me, I shall certainly grant it to him, but if he were to exhibit himself as being self-sufficient and free from want, Allah shall make him wealthy.”

Hearing this, the man said to himself, "The Holy Prophet (saww) has intended me by this speech of his".

Without uttering a word, he returned home and narrated the incident to his wife. His wife said, "The Holy Prophet (saww) is also human; explain your dilemma to him and see what he has to say."

The man returned to the Holy Prophet (saw) for the second time but heard the same sentence from him and again came back home without saying a word. When this was repeated for the third time, the man borrowed a pickaxe from one of his friends and set off towards the mountains. Throughout the day he worked hard to gather firewood, which he sold for some flour and that night, he and his wife had bread for dinner.

The next day, he worked harder and collected more firewood and this continued for several days till he was able to purchase a pickaxe for himself.

After some period, as a result of his hard work, he managed to purchase his own animals and property, and slowly became rich.

One day, arriving before the Holy Prophet (saw), he narrated to him the events of his life and the effect of his words, whereupon the Prophet (saw) responded:

"I had said (before): One who seeks to be independent (of others), Allah shall make him independent."

### **INDEPENDENT PEOPLE ARE LIKED BY OTHERS**

Let us look at an example of being independent in a social situation. If we are at the community centre and there is food being served. However, there are no spoons available. Thus, if it is possible to get them yourself, that is better than asking someone else to get it for you.

In the case where we even have to give up certain luxuries and desires, we should try our very best not to ask unless it is absolutely necessary. There are times for example, when we are in university, we cannot afford to buy certain textbooks, and the only way of accessing them would be by going to the library all the time. In such cases, it may be better to actually go to the library rather than borrow it from another person.

The Holy Prophet (saw) has said:

"Be wary of asking others for your needs"

This is a very important piece of advice because this way, we will be independent and we will maintain our dignity and respect. People who keep their dignity and respect by hiding their needs and being independent are praised even in the Holy Qur'an.

Also, because we are not asking people and not troubling them, they are more likely to like to us and respect us. Whereas if we are always asking for things, people will avoid us and lose respect for us.

### **WE SHOULD ASK ALLAH (SWT) FOR EVERYTHING**

While it is not good to ask people for things, it is very good to ask Allah (SWT) for everything- even something as simple as the salt in our food. Not only will Allah (SWT) give us what we want or something better, He will also reward us for asking Him, and not asking people.

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ  
عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

"And your Lord said: "Ask Me, I will answer you. Indeed those who too arrogant to worship Me, they will surely enter Hell in humiliation." (23:60)

This is a very important message because firstly, Allah (SWT) is aware of all our needs but He wants us to ask Him. It is this act of asking or invocation that is highly recommended.

### **ASK FOR HELP WHEN NECESSARY**

Many a times, it becomes extremely important to ask for help in situations where help is really necessary. A good example is when we are involved in an accident, God forbid, whereby we have to call people to come to our aid in taking us to the hospital etc. This is necessary, although Allah (SWT) will help us, but it is through people that He provides us with assistance. At the end of the day, it is He who will have helped us out no matter what the means.

Another situation is when for example we are being bullied at school, or if we are feeling depressed about something. Sometimes we cannot solve these problems on our own, especially when we are young, and so we should ask for help from the right people.

## ASKING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

When it is necessary to seek help, we should go to the right people to ask for help:

- Parents – They brought us up and know all of our weaknesses and strengths. Thus they are the first people we should ask for help. This is especially in very sensitive cases like which type of friends to have or how to deal with a bullying issue at school etc...
- Teachers – They teach us and give us knowledge and also understand us to a large extent. If parents are unable to help us, especially in a school related issue like an issue with certain subjects in school, bullying etc...then we should seek their assistance when necessary.
- Older siblings – For those who have older brothers and sisters, it is important to seek their help when it is something they can help with.
- Grandparents/Aunts/Uncles – they can also be of assistance
- Friends: if we are going to ask friends for help, we should make sure to ask the right friends- those who are intelligent, trustworthy and helpful. We should not ask those who will:
  - a. Be rude to us and reject our request
  - b. Tell our secrets to people
  - c. Give us bad advice

## Review Questions

**Q1. Who are the first people we should generally go to for help?**

- a. Parents
- b. Neighbours
- c. Teachers

**Q2. People who are independent are highly respected because:**

- a. Those people are always showing off to others.
- b. Those people rely on Allah (SWT) for everything.
- c. Both a & b

**Q3. What qualities should a friend possess in order to ask for his/her help?**

- a. They should be very rich and famous.
- b. They should be on your facebook friends' list.
- c. They should be trustworthy and intelligent

4. Shia Hadith Browser app for Android.

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<sup>1</sup> Sources

1. Notes of Sheikh Mansour
2. Anecdotes of reflection Part 1 at <http://beta.al-islam.org>
3. <http://www.maaref-foundation.com/>