

**Objectives >>>****Students should:**

- Understand the importance of social rules in Islam
- Understand that Islam encourages socialisation and discourages seclusion
- Understand that social rules in Islam involve all rules associated with social interactions with family, friends, neighbours etc...
- Understand that social rules also include rules of interactions with animals, plants, and the environment
- Review and memorise the Āyah (2:83) and the principle: 'speak and do good to people'

## SOCIAL ISLAM

وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا

*"Speak (and do) good to people" (2:83)*

In this lesson, we will be discussing the rules of socialisation in Islam. Although the rules of jurisprudence are important in Islam, the rules of socialisation are also extremely important. In fact, the rules of jurisprudence are called 'the minor jurisprudence', while the rules of socialisation are called 'the greater jurisprudence'.

Our lesson will be based on the above ayah from the Holy Qur'ān which commands us to say and do only good things to all people in general. The word 'قولوا' in this ayah includes actions as well as words.

**ISLAM ENCOURAGES SOCIALISATION**

In Islam, socialisation is very much encouraged and Islam discourages isolation. In fact, the Prophet (saw) says that the 'asceticism' or isolation which is practiced in the Christian religion and in Buddhism is not encouraged in Islam and that the asceticism of a Muslim is: 'Hajj', 'Jihād', and 'daily prayers'. In other words, Islam encourages practical action within society rather than isolation.

One of the most famous narrations related from Imam 'Ali (as) on social interaction is as follows:

*"Mingle amongst people in such a way that when you die they should weep for you, and when you are alive, they should long for you"*<sup>ii</sup>

## SOCIAL INTERACTION WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS AND STRANGERS

Islam also encourages socialization with our families and condemns people who abandon their families or do not treat them well. We know this from one incident when some women went to the Prophet (saw) complaining to him that their husbands had stopped eating meat and no longer spent time with their wives and children. The Prophet (saw) was upset at this and reminded his companions that this was not what he had recommended.

When our Imams were asked about how we as Shi'a should treat people of different beliefs, they said they wanted us to treat them well in order to set a good example for them and attract them towards our beliefs, and to be a good reflection of our Imams and our school of thought.

Mu'āwiyah ibn Wahab, a student of the Imam (as), asked Imam al-Ṣādiq (as): "How should we interact with our brothers in faith and with other people that we mix with who do not follow our faith?" The Imam (as) said:

*"Look at your Imams whom you take as guides and do what they do. By Allah, your Imams visit their ill, and attend their funerals, and give testimony for them or against them and fulfil their trusts...once you become very careful about your religion, tell the truth, fulfil the trusts and make your manners with people good, then they will say: 'this is a Ja'fari...' and that would please me"*<sup>iii</sup>

## OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND US

Islam also encourages us to be responsible for and take care of our environment and surrounding. This includes our relationship with animals, plants and the general environment. It means that we should not abuse or misuse anything from or in the environment that would damage it.

The environment is a creation of Allah (SWT) and we are responsible for treating every creation of Allah (SWT) with care and respect. The trees have been created to change carbon dioxide to oxygen to refresh the air around us, from the pollution that is caused. Cutting down trees without growing new ones will be harmful to all living

creatures. Therefore, pollution of the environment is considered wrong in Islam.

There is a lot of reward in feeding animals in need of feeding, and this act can free someone from many of their sins. It also acts as a charity for the person who does these deeds. There are many narrations which encourage this, including the following:

*The Prophet (saw) said: "every single Muslim that cultivates or plants anything which humans, animals or birds may eat from, this act will be counted as charity for them"*<sup>iv</sup>

Planting trees has also been encouraged in Islam. We have a hadith from the Prophet (saw) in which he says:

*"When the Last Hour comes, if any of you happens to be holding a seedling in his hand, then if he is able to, let him not stand until he has planted it."*<sup>v</sup>



## Review Questions

### Q1. Islam:

- Encourages isolation and cutting of relations with the general society
- Socialising without any rules or limits
- Socialising, but with certain rules and limits

### Q2. The ayah quoted at the beginning of the lesson (2:83) indicates that:

- We should speak good words to people in general
- We should speak and do good to people in general
- We should speak and do good only to good people

<sup>i</sup> Bibliography:

Dar-al-Hadith, Cultural Scientific Institute - <http://www.darolhadith.net>  
Sheikh Mansour, Social Rules Series, lecture 1

<sup>ii</sup> [Nahj al-Balagha, Saying 10]

Islamic Studies Syllabus Online: [Islamicsyllabus.com](http://Islamicsyllabus.com)

<sup>iii</sup> [al-Kaafi vol.2. p. 464]

<sup>iv</sup> [Kanz al-'Ummal, no. 9051]

<sup>v</sup> [Kanz al-'Ummal, no. 9056]