



ENMITY

العداوة

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- That we are only allowed to be enemies with people if they are enemies of Allah (SWT) or the Prophet
- That sometimes we do not like people or we don't get along with some people for some reason
- How we can reduce problems with people by being more tolerant and less sensitive
- The principles of dealing with enemies

Enmity

Human beings are innately sociable which means they need to socialise with others. Whilst often we develop very strong positive relationships, often we simply cannot get along well with others. We begin to despise them for something wrong they may have done to us or to our loved ones. If the hatred persists, we begin to consider and treat such people as our enemies.

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 4

The Holy Qur'an gives us examples of this enmity developing between siblings. The hatred that Prophet Joseph's brothers had toward him was the cause for throwing him into the well. Similarly, the story of the two sons of Prophet Adam (as) where one killed the other due to hatred, is another example.

Whilst we may develop a dislike for certain people, they should not be treated like our real enemies. In this lesson we will discuss who our real enemies are and also how we should deal with those people who we dislike.

WHO ARE OUR REAL ENEMIES?

In Islam the definition of an enemy is somewhat different to the 'enemy' we create for ourselves. Our real enemies are those who are the enemies of Allah (SWT) and the Ahlul-Bayt (as). The rest are simply people we dislike, perhaps due to our own personal tastes. So, unless the people we hate fall into the category of our 'real enemies' as defined by Islam, there are steps we can take to avoid, reduce and resolve the hatred that exists in our relationships.

PRINCIPLES FOR DEALING WITH PEOPLE WE DISLIKE:

In Islam the definition of an enemy is somewhat different to the 'enemy' we create for ourselves. Our real enemies are those who are the enemies of Allah (SWT) and the Ahlul Bayt (as). The rest are simply people we dislike, perhaps due to our own personal tastes. So, unless the people we hate fall into the category of our 'real enemies' as defined by Islam, there are steps we can take to avoid, reduce and resolve the hatred that exists in our relationships.

DO NOT DO ANYTHING TO MAKE PEOPLE HATE YOU

Most importantly, we should never do those things that make people hate us. Examples of this include teasing and bullying others in school.

Imam 'Ali (as) said: "Everything has a seed, and the seed of enmity is mockery."

In a family relationship, being disrespectful to elders and doing harm to the family's dignity through our bad actions are examples of actions that may cause others to hate us. When it comes to friends, we should not put down, humiliate, ignore or make jokes at the expense of others. Instead, we should respect and be good to everyone so that people love us.

DO NOT EXPRESS YOUR ENMITY OPENLY:

We should not announce our hatred and enmity since this will intensify the feeling both in ourselves and in the other person. Telling the other person how much you hate him only adds fuel to the fire. Instead we should keep the feeling within ourselves and try to remove the hatred gradually. On the other hand, if we really enjoy the company of somebody, we should make this feeling known to them as this will increase the love for one another.

Imam al-'Askari (as) said: "The enemy with the weakest strategy is he who openly displays his enmity."

PUNISH YOUR ENEMIES WITH GOODNESS

The most effective way to convert your enemies to friends is to do good to them, to tolerate their mistakes and to desensitise ourselves to whatever wrong they do to us. We should also treat them in exactly the opposite way to the way they treat us. Recall the reaction of Imam al-Ḥasan (as) when the man from Syria, an enemy of the Ahlul Bayt, began swearing at him. The Imam (as) responded to the man very politely and even offered him food and accommodation. Seeing this good behaviour, the man immediately converted to being a lover and follower of the Ahlul Bayt.

CHECK YOURSELF

Often in times of conflict with another person, we are the culprits. However, because we love ourselves so much we tend to blame it on the other person. Our

biggest enemy is our soul (nafs) since it makes us feel good about our actions:

The Holy Prophet (saw): "Your worst enemy is your lowest Self (Evil Nafs) which is between your sides"

When Satan was asked as to why he did not prostrate to Prophet Adam, he never admitted his mistake. Instead, he defiantly claimed that the command to prostrate to someone made from clay was unreasonable. Do we find this characteristic within ourselves?

How often have we been punished at home or school for something we did but it is very difficult for us to admit it? If we are able to find the faults within ourselves, several conflicts can be resolved.

RESOLVE CONFLICT, AND DO NOT GOSSIP

If we are aware of hatred between two people in the family or community, we should not add to it by 'spicing' up the story when telling it to others. In fact, we should not tell anyone about a conflict between two people as this may make the problem worse. Tale-bearing is a vice severely punished by Allah (SWT). In situations like these we should try to reconcile the two parties as did our Imams on several occasions. We are even allowed to lie in removing hatred between two people.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) said to his companion: "If you see two people from amongst our followers (Shi'ah) fighting [over property or the like], use my money to settle the dispute."

Review Questions

Q1. From an Islamic point of view, who is considered my enemy?

- One who has harmed my family and property
- One who is an enemy of Allah (SWT) and the Ahlul Bayt (as)
- Both a and b

Q2. How best should we deal with our enemies?

- Punish them with violence so they fear us
- Punish them with goodness so they realise their wrong-doing
- Publicly announce that he/she is your enemy