

# Principles in Dealing with the Creation



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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## Principles in Dealing with the Creation

Shaykh Sulayman ar-Ruhayli (حفظه الله)

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These are notes that have been prepared for a lecture that was delivered by our noble shaykh, Shaykh Sulayman ar-Ruhayli (may Allah preserve him, and honour him in this life and the next).

Disclaimer: These notes are **not** supposed to be an exact translation of the lecture. Furthermore, despite best efforts, the notes may still be susceptible to some errors or inaccuracies. Therefore, if possible, please try to contact the compiler of the notes if any errors are found.

I ask Allah by His Beautiful Names and Lofty Attributes to allow us to benefit from what the Shaykh has taught us, and to reward him for his efforts.

May Allah, the Most High, grant us all beneficial knowledge and allow us to implement it.

بارك الله فيكم وأحسن الله إليكم

Contents:

***First Principle – You Deal with Allah’s Creation for The Sake of Allah. ....4***  
    You deal with them in a way that Allah would want you to deal with them: ..... 4  
    You should do good and refrain from evil purely for the Sake of Allah: ..... 5  
    From the things that this principle necessitates: ..... 5

***Second Principle – Deal with People the Way That You Would Want Them to Treat You. ...6***  
    Use this principle as a yardstick to determine what “good treatment” is: ..... 6  
    Everything goes back to the first principle: ..... 6

***Third Principle – Always Give That Which Is Due Upon You, And Ask Allah for That Which Is Due to You.....7***  
    Prioritise fulfilling your rights over others:..... 7  
    Narrations in regard to fulfilling your rights: ..... 7  
    If you fulfilled your right, and you didn’t receive your right back: ..... 8

***Fourth Principle – To Stay Far Away from The Disease of The Hearts.....9***  
    What does “tajassus” mean?..... 9  
    Narrations in regard to envy:..... 9

***Fifth Principle – Hide the Faults of People, Be Patient Upon Their Shortcomings, And Be Thankful for The Good That They Do. ....10***  
    Hiding faults refers to hiding their private sins: ..... 10  
    There are two approaches that you can take when it comes to advising a Muslim who fell into a sin: ..... 10  
    Benefit of keeping advice for a sin anonymous: ..... 10  
    This principle of hiding faults does not apply to two groups of people: ..... 11  
    Thanking the people and showing gratitude: ..... 11  
    How to show thanks to people: ..... 12  
    So, how much dua do you make for this individual?..... 12

***Sixth Principle – To Love for Others What You Love for Yourself. ....13***  
    When it comes to people wanting good for others, it is of different levels: ..... 13  
    Difference between 4 and 5: ..... 13  
    Is there a level higher than this? ..... 13

# Principles in Dealing with the Creation

حفظه الله Shaykh Dr. Sulayman ar-Ruhayli

Learning how to deal with each other in goodness is an important issue, and one that people are in great need of. Humans are inherently social beings; they have to co-operate and deal with one another. Islam is a religion of maintaining good conduct with people, and it teaches us how to do so in the best manner.

These principles apply to dealing with all relationships; such as how the husband and wife should deal with each other, how parents should deal with their children, how the children should deal with their parents, how friends should deal and deal each other, how neighbours should deal with each other, and how relatives should deal with each other.

## First Principle – You Deal with Allah’s Creation for The Sake of Allah.

### **You deal with them in a way that Allah would want you to deal with them:**

This is the most important principle. You deal with them in a way that Allah would want you to, and you are good to them because you know that Allah wants you to be good to them. For example, the wife is good to her husband for the Sake of Allah, to attain His pleasure.

We do not base our behaviour based on how others treat us, rather we treat them well because it is what Allah expects from us.

Although it might be easier to treat a person good simply based on the fact that they are good to us, that should not be the reason behind why we are good to them in return. Likewise, when someone treats us badly, we don’t behave badly in response, we deal with them well due to what Allah wants and expects from us.

Shaykh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمه الله) said,

السعادة في معاملة الخلق أن تعاملهم لله، فترجو الله فيهم ولا ترجوهم في الله، وتحافه فيهم ولا تخافهم في الله، وتحسن إليهم رجاء ثواب الله لا لمكافأتهم، وتكف عن ظلمهم خوفاً من الله لا منهم،

*” Happiness when it comes to dealing with creation is that you treat them for the Sake of Allah. You hope in Allah (for His reward in dealing with them), and you do not hope in them (i.e., for their praise). And you treat them well hoping in the reward of Allah, without expecting favours in return from them. And you abstain from oppressing them out of fear of Allah, not out of fear of them.”*

Everyone wants to be happy in this life, and everyone wants to prosper. Happiness is something that Allah instils in a person’s heart, and happiness is a result of eemaan and good deeds.

**You should do good and refrain from evil purely for the Sake of Allah:**

When you treat people well, you should hope for the reward of Allah. You should not hope for the praise of that person or for a future reciprocation of your kindness.

Some people will only smile in your face if you smile to them. Remember, that smiling is a sadaqah and it is not a condition that they smile back. You smile because you know that Allah will reward you.

Likewise, refraining from oppressing people is something you do out of the fear of Allah and His punishment since it is haram (forbidden). You should not refrain out of fear of the people and their potential retaliation; rather your abstaining should be driven by the fear of Allah.

وقال رحمه الله: وإذا أحسن إلى الناس فإنما يحسن إليهم ابتغاء وجه ربه الأعلى.

*Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمه الله) said, "When a person is good to the people, he is only good to them, to seek the Face of his Lord the Most High."*

He is only good to people to seek the reward of Allah, and he knows that this tawfeeq (to be good to people) is a gift from Allah. He does not expect anything in return or any favours to be reciprocated from the people that he is good to."

**From the things that this principle necessitates:**

- You should not count on people returning favours when you are good to them.
- You do not continuously recount favours that you did for others.

Reminding others of the favours that you have done for them should be avoided, because you should remember that it was Allah who favoured you and blessed you with the tawfeeq (ability/success) to be good to people in the first place, it is not something that came from you and your efforts alone.

## Second Principle – Deal with People the Way That You Would Want Them to Treat You.

### **Use this principle as a yardstick to determine what “good treatment” is:**

This principle serves as a yardstick for determining how to treat people well. i.e., how to determine what constitutes as “good treatment”? Think about how you would feel if someone treated you the way you are treating them.

### **Everything goes back to the first principle:**

The Shaykh (حفظه الله) reminds us of the first principle (to treat people the way Allah wants us to treat them), that the first principle is the mother of all principles, and all the others branch off it.

From this we understand, that if someone wants you to treat them in a way that would oppose how Allah wants you to treat them, then we give precedence to how Allah would want us to deal with them.

For example, when it comes to the people of innovation, sometimes people will approach you and say, *“This individual that you are warning against, you are attacking his dawah, stop backbiting him and treat him the way that you would want to be treated.”*

The shaykh (حفظه الله) says that this goes back to the first principle, and that as a matter of fact, talking about the individual, warning against them is something that pleases Allah, as you are warning against their evil.

The shaykh says that the first principle is one that we always go back to, so pay attention to it. We do not give precedence to what the creation wants over what Allah wants and loves.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

*“He who desires to be rescued from the fire of Hell and to enter Jannah<sup>1</sup>, should die in a state of complete belief in Allah and the Last Day, and should do unto others what he wishes to be done unto him.” (Muslim)*

So, it is obligatory to deal with people in a way that you would like to be dealt with; this is what will result in you entering Jannah and being distanced from Fire.

### **It is obligatory to treat people the way that you would like to be treated:**

Shaykh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمه الله) mentioned in regard to this Hadith, that this level of treating the people in a way that you would like to be treated is wajib.

We understand that it is wajib because the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) mentioned this point along with eemaan, and he mentioned it along with that which will save you from the Hell Fire...and such statements are only made with things that are wajib.

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<sup>1</sup> Pay attention to this, which Muslim does not want this for themselves?

## Third Principle – Always Give That Which Is Due Upon You, And Ask Allah for That Which Is Due to You.

Everyone has rights that they owe to others, and rights that others owe to them. However, you must give those rights which are obligatory on you, as for those rights that others owe to you, then you should ask Allah for that.

### **Prioritise fulfilling your rights over others:**

You receiving your rights shouldn't always be your top concern; instead, you should consider what your responsibilities are, and be eager to fulfil them.

Many societal issues would have been solved if we all adopted and implemented this way of thinking. For example, if the husband didn't constantly focus on his rights being fulfilled, and focused on what his wife's rights are instead, and if she ever falls short, he asks Allah to guide her and keep her upright...then every house would be upon tranquillity, and vice versa.

### **Narrations in regard to fulfilling your rights:**

The Shaykh (حفظه الله) mentions some narrations:

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

*"You will see after me preferential treatment, and things which you will disapprove of. The Companions asked "What do you command us to do (under such circumstances)?"<sup>2</sup>. The Messenger said, "Discharge your obligations and ask your rights from Allah." (Bukhari and Muslim)*

So, the Messenger (ﷺ) clarified that there will be oppressive rulers, but he said that the solution is to fulfil your obligations, and ask Allah for your rights.

Also, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

*"There will be leaders who will be many in number. The Companions asked, "O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)! What do you order us (to do)?" He said, "Obey the one who will be given the pledge of allegiance first. Fulfil their (i.e., the Caliphs) rights, for Allah will ask them about (any shortcoming) in ruling those Allah has put under their guardianship." (Bukhari and Muslim)*

Salama b. Yazid al-Ju'afi asked *"Oh Messenger of Allah, what do you think if we have rulers who rule over us and demand that we discharge our obligations towards them, but they (themselves) do not discharge their own responsibilities towards us? What do you order us to do?"* The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) avoided giving any answer. Salama asked him again. He (ﷺ) (again) avoided giving any answer. Then he asked again - it was the second time or the third time - and the Messenger (ﷺ) said, *"Listen to them and obey them, for on them shall be their burden and on you shall be your burden."* (Muslim)

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<sup>2</sup> Ponder over how they did not get upset, rather they immediately asked what is commanded upon them.

**If you fulfilled your right, and you didn't receive your right back:**

- You can either forgive that person, and Allah will compensate you on the Day of Judgement.
- If you don't forgive them, then you are still guaranteed to receive your right on the Day of Judgment.

So, where is the loss? The shaykh (حفظه الله) reminds us that the person who implements the religion is never in loss.



## Fourth Principle – To Stay Far Away from The Disease of The Hearts

Reflect over the state of your heart, and stay away from those deeds that lead to the diseases of the heart.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا ؕ أَن يَحِبُّ أَحَدُكُم أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ ؕ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ؕ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴾

*“Oh, you who believe<sup>3</sup>, refrain from conjecturing too much: even a little suspicion forms a vice.” (Surah al-Hujurat, 12)*

### What does “tajassus” mean?

**“Tajassus”** (تجسس) i.e., spying, is to follow people’s shortcomings and look for hidden things without a valid reason, and this causes a lot of problems. For example, a wife looking into her husbands’ phone, and vice versa. Or if brothers go around asking other brothers “did so and so say anything about me” this is *tajassus*.

### Narrations in regard to envy:

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,  
*“Do not envy one another.”*

The Messenger of Allah, (ﷺ), said to his companions one day,  
*“If the treasures of Persia and Rome were opened for you, what kind of people will you be?”*  
AbdurRahman ibn Awf said, “We will be as Allah has ordered us.” The Prophet said,  
*“Perhaps you will be something else. You will compete with each other (in Dunya affairs), then (as a result of that) envy each other, then (as a result of envy) turn away from each other, then (as a result of that) hate each other, and so on. Then you will go to the poor emigrants and make some of them masters over others.” (Muslim)*

Therefore, when it comes to competing with one another, we must be careful not to fall into envy (hasad), whether in regard to seeking knowledge, or anything that is good, we must be very wary of this trap.

So, the Messenger mentioned a sequence in the Hadith, and it was all a result of having a disease in the heart, therefore it is upon us to strive to keep our hearts pure.

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<sup>3</sup> The shaykh reminds us that when you find a verse starting with “Oh you who believe...” know that it will be followed by a great principle, so you must pay attention and listen carefully.

## Fifth Principle – Hide the Faults of People, Be Patient Upon Their Shortcomings, And Be Thankful for The Good That They Do.

### **Hiding faults refers to hiding their private sins:**

In regard to concealing people's shortcomings, this is referring to their private sins, not the transgression that is displayed publicly.

The shaykh said that whoever wants his faults to be concealed by Allah and to remain unexposed, then he should not expose the faults of others.

Narrated from Ibn Umar that he said, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,  
*“Whoever conceals the faults of his Muslim brother then Allah will conceal his faults on Day of Resurrection.” (Muslim)*

Look at the deed and the reward in this Hadith...if you hide your brothers' faults and mistake, and how easy is that? And then look at the reward...Allah hides your faults; the reward is great.

In another narration,  
*“Whoever conceals the fault of his Muslim brother in this world, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and the Hereafter.” (Muslim)*

Hiding a person's faults doesn't entail that you ignore advising him, rather you should do both.

### **There are two approaches that you can take when it comes to advising a Muslim who fell into a sin:**

- If the person sinned and they *know* that you have found out, then there is no issue in advising them directly.
- However, if they are unaware that you discovered their sin, then you should try to give them advice in a way that they are unaware of your knowledge of their fault<sup>4</sup>.

### **Benefit of keeping advice for a sin anonymous:**

The benefit of keeping the advice anonymous, is to save your brother from having a feeling of guilt and embarrassment every time he sees you. Therefore, in order to preserve his feelings, you should try to advise him as privately as you can, and the shaykh said that this is a very high level of good manners.

This also applies to a father, if he sees his son (or wife or any family members) committing a sin. He should advise them in such a way that they are unaware that he knows. Why?

- Firstly, so that the son doesn't feel guilty, lowly and embarrassed before his father.
- Secondly, so that the son doesn't belittle the sin (i.e., if he happens to be unmoved by your reaction or can't fully gauge your reaction).

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<sup>4</sup> For example, you can advise by way of sending a note anonymously; that way they can still see the advice, but they won't know who it is from.

As for those who make their sins apparent, and those who have no sense of shyness, the shaykh says that they have already exposed themselves, therefore this issue of hiding their faults doesn't apply to them.

Shaykh Ibn Baz (رحمه الله) said, one of the Salaf said,

*"I have seen a people who had no faults, but they started mentioning the faults of other people, and the people started mentioning their faults (in return). I have also seen a people whose faults were known, however they withheld from mentioning other people's faults so their faults were forgotten (due to withholding from exposing other people's faults)."*

**This principle of hiding faults does not apply to two groups of people:**

- The first are those who make their faults apparent, because they have already exposed themselves anyway.
- The second are the faults of the people of innovation and those who call to it, because uncovering their misguidance (faults) is an advice to the Ummah.

Mankind will always have faults and shortcomings, so if anyone looking is to attain friends or family with no shortcomings, then he will end up with no friends or loved ones.

**How to overlook the shortcomings of people:**

From the things that will help you overlook people's shortcomings, is to constantly remember their good traits, for indeed every shortcoming that a person has, they equally have good traits within them that should be highlighted and focused on. Once you do so, then every time you look at their character, then their shortcomings will appear minor.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

*"Let not a believing man (i.e., husband) hate a believing woman (i.e., wife). If he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will be pleased with another." (Muslim)*

**Thanking the people and showing gratitude:**

When it comes to being thankful and showing people gratitude for what they do, then this is from the characteristics of the noble souls. Everyone loves to be appreciated and thanked for the good that they do. And the noble souls' express gratitude and appreciation for whatever others do for them.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

*"Whoever does not thank the people, has not thanked Allah"*

**This has two meanings<sup>5</sup>:**

- Whoever thanks Allah, but doesn't thank the people, then his thanks to Allah is deficient, he hasn't truly thanked Allah.
- The individual that doesn't thank the people, then he is an individual that most likely won't be thankful to Allah either.

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<sup>5</sup> The shaykh said that both meanings are correct.

### **How to show thanks to people:**

The person with good akhlaq (character), if anyone does him a favour, then he returns the favour back. However, if he is unable to return that same favour, then he prays for that individual and makes du'a for them.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

*“Whoever is treated well, let him repay them. If he cannot find repayment (cannot return the favour), let him praise them for that is thanking them. If he conceals it, he was been ungrateful to them.”*

So, if he thanks the individual for the favour and prays for him, then he has shown gratitude and appreciation to that individual. However, if he keeps the appreciation and thanks to himself and he doesn't pray for that person, or acts like the person hasn't done him a favour, then he has been ungrateful.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

*“Whoever does you a favour, then reciprocate, and if you cannot find anything with which to reciprocate, then pray for him until you think that you have reciprocated him.”*

### **So, how much dua do you make for this individual?**

You continue making du'a until you feel as though you have repaid him for the favour that they have done for you. So, continue making dua until you are confident that you have repaid them.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

*“Whoever is favoured by another (had a favour done for them), and he responds to his benefactor saying, “JazakAllahu khayr (may Allah reward you with good)”, then he has indeed prayed for the individual the most that he can of praise (offered the highest level of praying).”*

The shaykh (حفظه الله) said that some people say “May Allah reward you with a thousand good” but the shaykh said this should be avoided, and leave it to “JazakAllahu khayr” as it is unrestricted to how much reward you are praying for them to attain.

Some say “shukran”, and the shaykh (حفظه الله) said it is permissible, but it is more beneficial for you and the person who done the favour, to say “JazakAllahu khayr”.

## Sixth Principle – To Love for Others What You Love for Yourself.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,  
***“None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.”***  
***(Bukhari and Muslim)***

To love for your brother what you love for yourself is from the perfection of a person’s eemaan.

When it comes to people wanting good for others, it is of different levels:

- **1<sup>st</sup> level:** Someone who wants evil for his brothers ← **This is haram by consensus.**
- **2<sup>nd</sup> level:** Someone who doesn’t want evil for his brothers, but he doesn’t want good for them either ← **This is also haram by consensus.**
- **3<sup>rd</sup> level:** Someone who wants goodness for his brothers, but less than the good that he himself receives ← **This is also haram by consensus.**
- **4<sup>th</sup> level:** Someone who wants for his brothers exactly what he has.  
(For example, if he seeks knowledge to minimal level then he wants that same level of knowledge seeking for others) ← **There is a deficiency in fulfilling your brother’s right in this level.**
- **5<sup>th</sup> level:** Someone who loves for his brothers what he loves for himself. ← **This is wajib.**

### **Difference between 4 and 5:**

- The one who is on the 4<sup>th</sup> level just wants for you whatever level he is at right now, nothing higher than that.
- However, the one on the 5<sup>th</sup> level wishes for his brothers that which he actually desires and hopes for himself.  
For example, if he hopes to be a strong student of knowledge, even if he isn’t one himself at that moment, he still wishes it for others.

This is the level that is wajib. As the Messenger said, *“None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself...”*

### **Is there a level higher than this?**

Yes, and that is that you love for your brothers that they reach a level *higher* than you, and higher than what you desire for yourself.

This is not to say that you shouldn't compete in goodness; rather, you should compete with them while simultaneously wishing for them to achieve even greater heights than you.

**2 Muharram, 1444 AH corresponding to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022.**

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