Hadith 32: Not Causing Harm

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On the authority of Abu Sa’eed al-Khudree (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

There should be neither harming (darar) nor reciprocating harm (dirar). A hasan hadeeth related by Ibn Majah, ad-Daraqutnee and others as a musnad hadeeth. It was also related by Malik in al-Muwatta in mursal form from Amr bin Yahya, from his father from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), but leaving Abu Sa’eed from the chain. And it has other chains of narrations that strengthen one another.

"لا ضرر ولا ضرار" (lā ḍar‍r‍ār ḍar‍r‍ār).

This hadith includes many aspects of our lives which we can take.

The fiqh rules are based on this very short hadith.
Do not – negation. Not a command but don’t do what comes after.

Do not harm

Two words in this hadith are similar – both nouns. The root word is ُضَرَرَ (رضر) – to harm. This hadith is based on ‘do not harm’ / ‘no harming’.

Islam includes all the legislation, Islam is the religion of ‘Peace’. If you are a Muslim and living as a Muslim you will live life in peace, you will live in harmony with the Universe. The Heavens and the Earth submitted to Allah subhana wa ta’ala willingly when He asked the Heavens and the Earth to submit.

In life, when you don’t submit to Allah subhana wa ta’ala there is no peace – when you submit to Allah subhana wa ta’ala there is peace. In any situation in your life, submit to Allah subhana wa ta’ala – Allah subhana wa ta’ala knows best. When you submit to Allah subhana wa ta’ala you are not restless. Allah subhana wa ta’ala created us and when Allah subhana wa ta’ala created us He wanted us to be Muslim. Allah subhana wa ta’ala sent all the Messengers and the Prophets for Islam – to spread the peace around the world.

Peace
From this hadith you will know that Islam is the religion of ‘peace’.

Allah huwa Salaam – Allah subhana wa ta’ala is peace, Allah subhana wa ta’ala loves the peace, Allah subhana wa ta’ala wants from us to bring the peace, Allah subhana wa ta’ala wants us to live in peace. All the commandments are about the peace.

‘Do not harm’
In this hadith anything which negates peace, don’t do it, as it causes more harm. Do not harm, do not harm yourself and do not harm anyone around you whether intentionally or unintentionally.
In Islam, anything that can affect that peace, Allah subhana wa ta’ala forbade us from it. If everybody is submitting to Allah subhana wa ta’ala, if everybody is a real muslimeen, we will live in a peaceful environment. Allah subhana wa ta’ala will give the Muslim ‘Dara Salaam’ – in Paradise everything is so peaceful. In Paradise you will live in peace, you will sleep in peace, you will eat in peace etc. In Paradise there is no lock – nobody will steal, everybody knows their borders – no will come without permission. Just like in a time of peace in the dunya nobody will lock their homes.

Allah subhana wa ta’ala wants us to live in peace. During Hajj you cannot even harm an ant.

‘Don’t be unfair’
On the siratt you need balance and light. Burdens & weight will cause you to be unbalanced so you may fall, you may crawl or you may fall behind everyone else. In Islam everything will give you balance.

In life when we do something wrong we feel a sense of imbalance – Allah subhana wa ta’ala put this feeling / sensor in us – feelings of guilt, feeling uneasiness etc. For example you may say something and feel restless afterwards however others may not sense what you feel.

Zulm
Zulm is being unjust, unfair, putting something in its improper place. Allah subhana wa ta’ala forbade us from the zulm – those who commit zulm will have darkness on the Day of Judgment. If you are fair you will have light on the Day of Judgment as you will be in ‘peace’.

There should be neither harming (darar) nor reciprocating harm (dirar).
This hadith is based on Deen ul Islam, the religion of peace, Allah subhana wa ta’ala loves the peace and Allah subhana wa ta’ala forbade us from any injustice and unfairness.

Causing harm causes unfairness and imbalance – any harm you do results in some imbalance. In the ecosystem everything is balanced. If one thing, one creature is removed there will be imbalance. In Islam everything is balanced.

Why is the word ‘harm’ repeated?
لا ضرر
Harm can be to the body, harm can be with money etc. this harm is unintentional. You harm yourself, or you cause an accident unintentionally.

ضرار
This is ‘Harm’ caused intentionally as you want to take revenge, you have a desire to cause harm. Revenge is mentioned in the Qur’an particularly regarding divorce. Before Islam men would continuously divorce and remarry their wives to cause them harm. People would remarry in order to take revenge.

If you harm you don’t know how the other person will take it – if they don’t fear Allah subhana wa ta’ala they will take revenge and may do something even worse.

Example – you love gardening and overwater your garden causing the water to go into your neighbor’s garden. You did this unintentionally but Prophet Muhammad sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam said you must immediately remove this harm. As soon as you realize your mistake you must correct it. Sometimes you are not even aware that you are harming yourself – as soon you know you must stop it.
Sometimes people want to take revenge from their husbands or parents – when wanting to take revenge from your own desires you need to stop it and repent to Allah subhana wa ta'ala because you did something wrong.

Islam is the religion of peace. You cannot even harm an animal. Avoid harm unintentionally or intentionally. Take every precaution to avoid causing harm.

If you want to have a tree in your garden you have to consider will it block the light to your neighbors’ house / garden. Before people lived a simple life – today when driving, travelling on the bus etc. we have to consider are we harming anyone in any way with our actions. Unfairness comes when you are a means of causing harm. You can’t even harm yourself. You can’t harm your children out of anger.

This is a transcript of a lecture given by Sister Eman al Obaid. Anything that is good from these notes is from Allah subhana wa ta’ala. Any mistakes & misrepresentations are my own. 28:25 and then one of the two women approached him, walking shyly, and said, ‘My father is asking for you: he wants to reward you for watering our flocks for us.’ When Moses came to him and told him his story, the old man said, ‘Do not be afraid, you are safe now from people who do wrong.’