

# - THE RIGHTS OF BROTHERHOOD -

And each of you has certain rights upon his brother.

You should fulfill his needs, and this is of levels. The least is that you gladly fulfill his needs **when you are able and he asks you**. Better than this is that you fulfill them **before he even asks you**, and better than all of this is that **you put his needs before your own**.

You should remain silent regarding him at times, and speak at times. As for your silence, you should be quiet about his faults, both in his presence and absence.

You should not argue or dispute with him, and shouldn't ask him about personal things that he wouldn't want to reveal.

If you happen to see him somewhere, don't ask where he is going, as it might be that he doesn't want anyone to know.

Don't reveal his secrets, even if you fall into a feud afterwards.

Also, don't insult his friends and family, and don't inform him if others happen to insult him.

Don't say anything that could annoy him except if this involves something that must be said, such as commanding the good or forbidding the evil, as this would actually be a way of being good to him.

And know that you will never find a friend who is completely free of faults.

Instead, look for someone whose good qualities outweigh his bad.

Once you are stricter in judging people than you are in judging yourself, you fall into Allah's Saying:

**{“Those who, when they have to receive by measure from men, demand full measure, and when they have to give by measure or weight to men, give less than their due.”}** al-Mutaffifin; 2-3

And know that one of the greatest means by which hatred and envy come between two brothers is useless argumentation. This leads to nothing but each side trying to show itself as being better and smarter than the other, belittling the other, etc.

And he who picks arguments with his brother has essentially made him out to be stupid, low, heedless, and incompetent, and all of this is considered belittlement.

This inflames the heart and makes one person hate the other, and this is all contradictory to what brotherhood is all about.

The rights of brotherhood also entail that you say certain things. Just as you have to remain silent from saying what you shouldn't say, you should also say what should be said.

In fact, this is from the most particular rights of brotherhood, because the one who wants to befriend the mute can go to the graveyard. The point of brotherhood is that you benefit from your brother, not that you are relieved of him.

So, you should strengthen your ties of brotherhood with words by asking about him, asking how things are going, let him know that you are concerned about him, and be happy with what makes him happy.

You should refer to him in the best light and praise him to others for the good that you know of him. You should also speak well of his family, children, actions – even his character, intellect, appearance, personality – and everything that can make him happy without going into extremes or saying what is untrue.

Likewise, you should inform him if someone says something good about him while showing him that you are happy about this, as to hide such joy is tantamount to envy.

You should thank him for anything he does for you, and defend him in his absence if he is mentioned in a bad light, as the right between brothers is that they rush to defend and assist one another.

You should teach and advise him, as your brother's need for knowledge is not any less than his need for money. So, if you have been blessed with a wealth of knowledge, distribute it and guide him.

And you should advise him in secret, and the difference between advising and condemning is whether you do it in public or private. Likewise, the difference between ignoring the fault of your brother and compromising with him is all in the purpose of doing so. So, if you ignore his fault for the sake of a religious benefit, or you see that this will lead to his long term benefit, you are not compromising. If you put aside his fault for your own personal benefit, you are compromising.

You should supplicate for your brother during his life and after his death for everything you want for yourself.

Abu ad-Darda' (may Allah be Pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

***“The supplication of a Muslim man for his brother in his absence is accepted, and there is an Angel appointed for each supplication of a man for his brother with good who says: ‘Allah, accept it, and give him the same that he asks for his friend,’”*** ‘Sahih al-Adab al-Mufrad’ (487) and ‘Sahih Ibn Majah’ (2358)

And Abu ad-Darda' used to supplicate for many of his brothers, mentioning them by name in his supplications. Likewise, Ahmad bin Hanbal used to supplicate at dawn for six specific individuals.

You should make a pact to love your brother until death, and to love his family and friends after his death. You should also not stop being humble with him even if you end up exceeding him in wealth and status.

From the implications of this pact is also that you do not listen to criticism of your friend from others, and that you do not befriend his enemies.

You should also not task him with what he cannot bear. Rather, you should try to relieve him of his own concerns and pressures, and should not use his friendship to get to his wealth or resources, and should not pressure him to go out of his way to help you.

Rather, your love of him should only be for Allah's Pleasure and to deal with him in an easygoing and reserved manner, so that he would not hesitate to ask of you what you would ask of him.

Ja'far bin Muhammad said: *“The most difficult friends are those who are a burden on me and I try to avoid, and the easiest of friends are those whose presence is just as burdensome as their absence (i.e. they are not at all burdensome).”* ‘Mukhtasar Minhaj al-Qasidin’ (p. 126-132)

So, the student of knowledge should be sure to avoid those who should not be befriended in order to preserve his time and protect his heart. He should choose the friend who will help him in the matters of his religion and the Hereafter, and al-Khawarizmi (may Allah have Mercy on him) said:

*Do not befriend one who is lazy \**

*How many righteous people have been corrupted by the corrupt?*

*The steadfast are quickly infected by the lazy \*  
And burning coals simmer down when thrown into ashes.*