

Surah 4. An-Nisaa

Asad: AND WORSHIP God [alone], and do not ascribe divinity, in any way, to aught beside Him.⁴⁶ And do good unto your parents, and near of kin, and unto orphans, and the needy, and the neighbour from among your own people, and the neighbour who is a stranger,⁴⁷ and the friend by your side, and the wayfarer, and those whom you rightfully possess.⁴⁸ Verily, God does not love any of those who, full of self-conceit, act in a boastful manner;

Malik: Serve Allah and do not commit shirk (associate any partner) with Him, and be good to your parents, kinfolks, orphans, the helpless, near and far neighbors who keep company with you, the travellers in need, and the slaves you own. Allah does not love those who are arrogant and boastful,

Pickthall: And serve Allah. Ascribe no thing as partner unto Him. (Show) kindness unto parents, and unto near kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and into the neighbor who is of kin (unto you) and the neighbor who is not of kin and the fellow traveller and the wayfarer and (the slaves) whom your right hands possess. Lo! Allah loveth not such as are proud and boastful,

Yusuf Ali: Serve Allah and join not any partners with Him: and do good to parents kinsfolk orphans those in need neighbors who are near neighbors who are strangers the companion by your side the way-farer (ye meet) and what your right hands possess: for Allah loveth not the arrogant the vainglorious; ^{550 551 552 553}
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Transliteration: Wa oAAbudoo Allaha wala tushrikoo bihi shayan wabialwalidayni ihsanan wabithee alqurba waalyatama waalmasakeeni waaljari thee alqurba waaljari aljunubi waalssahibi bialjanbi waibni alssabeeli wama malakat aymanukum inna Allaha la yuhibbu man kana mukhtalan fakhooran

Khatab:

Worship Allah ?alone? and associate none with Him. And be kind to parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, near and distant neighbours, close friends, ?needy? travellers, and those ?bondspeople? in your possession. Surely Allah does not like whoever is arrogant, boastful—

Author Comments

46 - The expression shay'an (here rendered as "in any way") makes it clear that shirk ("the ascribing of divinity to anything beside God") is not confined to a worship of other "deities", but implies also the attribution of divine or quasi-divine powers to persons or objects not regarded as deities: in other words, it embraces also saint-worship, etc.

47 - I.e., "whether he belongs to your own or to another community". That the expression "your own people" (dhu 'l-qurba) refers to the community and not to one's actual relatives is obvious from the fact that "the near of kin" have already been mentioned earlier in this sentence. The Prophet often stressed a believer's moral obligation towards his neighbours, whatever their faith; and his attitude has been summed up in his words, "Whoever believes in God and the Last Day, let him do good unto his neighbour" (Bukhari,

Muslim, and other compilations).

48 - According to 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud and other Companions, "the friend by your side" (as-sahib bi'l-janb) is one's wife or husband (Tabari). By "those whom you rightfully possess" (lit., "whom your right hands possess") are meant, in this context, slaves of either sex. Since this verse enjoins the "doing of good" towards all people with whom one is in contact, and since the best that can be done to a slave is to free him, the above passage calls, elliptically, for the freeing of slaves (Manar V, 94). See also surah {2}, note [146], as well as [9:60](#), where the freeing of human beings from bondage is explicitly mentioned as one of the objectives to which zakah funds are to be dedicated.

550 - The essence of Islam is to serve Allah and do good to your fellow-creatures. This is wider and more comprehensive than "Love God and love your neighbour". For it includes duties to animals as our fellow-creatures, and emphasises practical service rather than sentiment.

551 - Neighbours who are near: that is, in local situation as well as intimate relationships, just as neighbours who are strangers includes those whom we do not know or who live away from us.

552 - The Companion by your side may be your intimate friends and associates, just as the way-farer you meet may be a casual acquaintance on your travels. This last is much wider than the "stranger within your gate."

553 - What your right hands possess: For the meaning of the phrase see n. 537 above.

554 - Real deeds of service and kindness proceed, not from showing off or from a superior sort of condescension (cf. "White Man's Burden"), but from a frank recognition of our own humility and the real claims, before Allah, of all our fellow-creatures. For in our mutual needs we are equal before Allah, or perhaps the best of us (as the world sees us) may be worse than the worst of us (from the same point of view).

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