

The rights of the neighbour

The Qur'an lists the neighbour twice in one verse, near and far. The hadith turn that into a standard a stranger can measure: he must be safe from you.



Named in the verse

وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ

"...and the near neighbour and the neighbour farther away, and the companion at your side, and the traveller." Listed alongside parents and kin.

Qur'an 4:36

Jibril would not let it go

مَا زَالَ يُوصِينِي جِبْرِيلُ بِالْجَارِ حَتَّى ظَنَنْتُ أَنَّهُ سَيُورِثُهُ

"Jibril kept on recommending the neighbour to me until I thought he would make him an heir." An heir is the last person you can write out.

Sahih al-Bukhari 6014

The oath, three times

وَاللَّهِ لَا يُؤْمِنُ، وَاللَّهِ لَا يُؤْمِنُ، وَاللَّهِ لَا يُؤْمِنُ

"By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe!" Asked who, he said: the one whose neighbour is not safe from his harm.

Sahih al-Bukhari 6016

The plain rule

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbour, should honour his guest, and should say what is good or keep silent." Three clauses, one condition.

Sahih al-Bukhari 6136

Which of two first

إِلَى أَقْرَبِهِمَا مِنْكَ أَبَا

'A'ishah asked which of her two neighbours should get her gift.

"The one whose door is nearer to you." Proximity, not preference.

Sahih al-Bukhari 6020

Never belittle the gift

يَا نِسَاءَ الْمُسْلِمَاتِ لَا تَحْقِرَنَّ جَارَةً لِّجَارَتِهَا وَلَوْ فَرَسَنَ شَاةٍ

"O women of the Muslims, let no neighbour look down on what her neighbour sends her, even the hoof of a sheep." The exchange matters more than the value.

Sahih al-Bukhari 6017

Best in Allah's sight

وَخَيْرُ الْجِيرَانِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرُهُمْ لِّجَارِهِ

"And the best of neighbours with Allah is the one who is best to his neighbour." Measured by conduct, not by piety claimed.

Sunan at-Tirmidhi 1944 · sahih in the corpus · at-Tirmidhi himself: hasan gharib

A peg in your wall

لَا يَمْنَعُ جَارُ جَارِهِ أَنْ يَغْرِزَ خَشْبَهُ فِي جِدَارِهِ

"Let no neighbour stop his neighbour fixing a beam into his wall." Abu Hurayrah found people reluctant, and swore he would keep repeating it.

Sahih al-Bukhari 2463

First claim on the sale

الْجَارُ أَحَقُّ بِصَقْبِهِ

"The neighbour has the better claim because of his nearness." Whether that pre-emption reaches a mere neighbour or only a co-owner is a point the schools differ on.

Sahih al-Bukhari 6980 · fiqh: the schools differ