Dear brothers and sisters: Islam aims at unifying Muslims and bringing their hearts together. It forbids divisions and differences among them. So, Allah the Almighty, as the Qur’an mentioned, favours the believers and made them close and sincere brothers and sisters.

The Qur’an says, ‘And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you – when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers…”’ [3:103]

Brotherhood/Sisterhood in Islam is the highest and greatest rank of relationships. It represents the ties of faith. It is a relationship that cannot be matched by any other; even the relationship between parents and children, relatives, and between spouses are regarded as weak if compared with ties of faith and joint commitment to Allah and establishing peace, harmony and piety on earth. That is why the Qur’an says, ‘The believers are nothing else than brothers…”’ [49: 10]

Achieving brotherhood is the sign of faith and belief. The Prophet Muhammad [pbuh] said: ‘You will not enter Paradise until you have faith, and you will not have faith until you love each other. Shall I direct you to something which if you fulfill you will love one another? Spread peace among yourselves.’ [Muslim] Brotherhood in Islam also means that one should love for one’s brothers what one loves for himself.

Confirming this Prophet [pbuh] said: ‘Each of you cannot be a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.’ In order to achieve this noble state of brotherhood, a Muslim should have deep faith; surrender to the law of Allah, be strong and consistent in his worship; love what Allah loves and hates what He hates.

Brotherhood should not be taken for granted. To maintain it, its rights and duties must be fulfilled. Some of these rights are obligatory and others are recommended. These rights are so important and bear such great consequences on the individual and society that they should never be overlooked.

The Prophet [pbuh] mentions some of these rights in different narrations. He said, "The right of the Muslim on the Muslim are six.” It was said, "What are they, Messenger of Allah?” He said, "When you meet him, salute him; when he invites you, respond to him; when he seeks counsel, give him advice; when he sneezes and praises Allah, say to him: Allah has mercy on you; when he is sick, visit him; and when he dies, follow his funeral.” [Muslim] In another narration, he mentioned five rights.

According to the hadith, Muslims have these rights on their Muslim brothers and sisters:

To greet them in the Islamic manner when they meet [that is, 'as-salamu ‘alaykum]; and to accept their invitation [when offered]; to advise them [when the situation calls for it] When your Muslim brothers and sisters seek your advice regarding something, you have to sincerely advise them. In this regard, the Prophet [pbuh] said, "Religion is founded on sincere advice." Among the rights of a Muslim over his Muslim brother is to seek Allah's mercy for them when they sneeze and praise Allah; and to visit them when they are sick for visiting sick Muslims is highly encouraged.

Among his rights is to follow their funeral when they die for following Muslims’ funerals is one of their rights upon their brethren. Those who follow the funeral until the deceased's body is prayed over will receive great reward. And if they follow the funeral procession until the body is buried, then they will receive more reward. Following the funeral procession fulfills a right for Allah, a right of the deceased, and a right of the living relatives of the deceased.
Among the rights of a Muslim over his Muslim brother is to love to see good for every Muslim: your heart should be
glad to see Muslims receiving all forms of goodness. And this is in fact obligatory in Islam and a condition of being a
true believer. The Prophet \[pbuh\] told us that when he said: “You are not a true believer until you love for your
Muslim brother what you love for your self.”

It’s also part of rights of brotherhood for a Muslim to put on smiling face when he meets his brothers in faith.
Allah’s Messenger [peace and blessings be upon him] said: ‘Don’t belittle any good deed even to meet your brothers
with a smiling face.’ He also said: ‘Your smile in the face of your brothers is an act of charity.’

That is why the Messenger [pbuh] had a smiling face all the time. Among the rights of a Muslim over his Muslim
brother is to avoid harming other Muslims by words or actions or backbite him or make gossip. Also it is
recommended to show humbleness and modesty: A Muslim should exercise humbleness and modesty in his dealing
with other Muslims, nay even with all other people.

Among the rights of a Muslim over his Muslim brother is to treat him nicely and with best manners: In this
connection Allah says about Prophet Muhammad: ‘And you are indeed of supreme conduct.’ [Al-Qalam: 4] Rights
of brotherhood also imply that one should not forsake his brothers over three days: The Messenger of Allah also
said: ‘Let not any one of you desert his brother more than three days. They meet and each of them turns away from
the other; but the best of the two is the one who start the salutation of peace.’

Among the rights of a Muslim over his Muslim brother is to protect the Muslim and cover his mistake is a noble
behaviour; it is an Islamic principle, and social politeness to cover the mistakes and evil of your Muslim brother or
sister. If every one goes looking for a mistake or wrong or evil in others and then speaks about it, there would never
be any one straight or pure because every one commits mistakes.

The Prophet [pbuh] advises us to do this in many Ahdith and promised u with great rewards in the worldly life and
in the Hereafter. He said, “Allah will screen on the day of Resurrection the faults of the one who covers up the faults
of the others in this world.” [Muslim]

And also said, “Whoever removes from a believer one of his difficulties in this world, Allah will remove one of his
troubles on the day of resurrection. And whoever finds a relief for a hard-pressed person, Allah will make things easy
for him on the day of resurrection …” [Muslim]

Defaming others without proof is forbidden in Islam. The Qur’an promises those who defame others and spread
wickedness in the Muslim community with a severe punishment. The Qur’an declares: “Those who like that [the
crime of illegal sexual intercourse should be propagated among those who believe, they will have a painful torment in
in this world and in the hereafter.” [An-Nur 24: 19] The Qur’an also declares: “Those who annoy believing men
and women undeservedly, they bear on themselves the crime of slander and plagi sin.” [33: 58].

Dear brother and sisters: Finally I ask Allah to guide us all