THE NEIGHBOR

Sayyed Jawad Ameli, a great Mujtahid, was having his dinner when someone knocked at his door. A servant from his master, Ayatullah Sayyed Mehdi Bahrul Uloom, appeared and said: “Your master has sent for you to come immediately. He has just sat down for his dinner but refuses to eat until he sees you.” There was no time to lose. Sayyed Jawad Ameli left his dinner and rushed to Ayatullah Bahrul Uloom’s residence. Just as he entered, the master looked disapprovingly at him and said: “Sayyed Jawad! You have no fear of Allah! Don’t you feel ashamed in front of Allah?” This came as a shock to him, as he could not remember doing anything to incur the wrath of his master. He said: “My master may guide me where I have failed.” Ayatullah Bahrul Uloom replied: “It is now a week that your neighbor and his family are without wheat and rice. He was trying to buy some dates from a shop on credit but the shopkeeper refused to grant him any more credit. He returned home empty-handed and the family is without a morsel of food.” Sayed Jawad was taken by surprise. “By Allah,” he said, “I have no knowledge about this.” That is why I am displeased all the more. How can you be unaware of your own neighbor? Seven days of difficulties have passed and you tell me you do not know about it. Well, If you had known and ignored him despite your knowledge, then you would not even he a Muslim, Ayatullah Uloom adjoined. Then he instructed him to take all the dishes of food before him to his neighbor. “Sit with him to eat, so that he does not feel ashamed. And take this sum for his future ration. Place it under his pillow or carpet so that he is not humiliated, and inform me when this work is completed, for not until then shall I eat.”

“That man is not from me who sleeps contentedly while his neighbor sleeps hungry.” Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)