



NURTURING OF CHILDREN

Part 8

PREPARING THE YOUTH FOR THEIR FUTURE ROLES



*ENTRENCHING IN THE HEART OF THE CHILD THE PRINCIPLES
OF GOOD SOCIAL & THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS*

SPIRITUAL LIGHT

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PREPARING THE YOUTH FOR THEIR FUTURE

ROLES IN THE COMMUNITY

A child has to be taught the principles of good social-conduct, how to treat his elders, how to behave with his friends, and how to deal with other people. Four aspects should be kept in mind:

- (a) The principles of good conduct have to be entrenched in the heart of the child
- (b) The child should be made aware of the rights of others
- (c) The child should be taught *adaab* (social etiquette)
- (d) The child should realize his responsibility for the welfare of humanity



The principles of good conduct have to be entrenched in the heart of the child

They are:

- (1) *Taqwaa* (The fear and consciousness of the presence of Allaah Ta'ala)

This quality is created by constantly reminding oneself of the omnipresence of one's Creator, of the rewards Allaah Ta'ala has prepared for the righteous and of the punishment in store for the transgressors. Allaah Ta'ala has in many verses of the Noble Qur'aan enumerated the virtues of *taqwaa* and has in various ways encouraged and ordered man to develop this noble quality.

For this reason the sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) paid great attention to its acquisition and would constantly remind each other of its obligation. Once 'Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) asked Ubayy bin Ka'b (radiyallaahu anhu) to explain the true meaning of *taqwaa*. He replied, "When travelling along a road laden with thorns, how do you tread your path? 'Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) replied, "With the greatest of caution, to ensure that no thorn hooks unto me." 'Ubayy (radiyallaahu anhu) exclaimed, "That is the reality of *taqwaa*!" (i.e. the demand of *taqwaa* is extreme caution

that one does not fall into the displeasure of one's Creator). Development of *taqwaa* is the most essential weapon to ensure a healthy, upright society.

Incidents regarding Taqwaa from the Lives of our Seniors

Yunus bin 'Ubayd (rahimahullaah) was a cloth merchant. Once, in his absence, his nephew sold a cloth marked at two hundred dirhams for double its price. Even though the buyer was prepared to purchase it at that amount, Yunus bin 'Ubayd (rahimahullaah) was adamant that the extra money be returned. Their businesses were run in accordance to the demands of wishing well for others, and to practice upon this command meant more than the world and all its contents.

Once on a journey, 'Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) crossed paths with a slave herding the sheep of his master. As a test, 'Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) offered to purchase one of his sheep, saying that he could tell his master that the sheep had been devoured by a wolf and pocket the money. The shepherd most beautifully replied, "And what about Allaah!" 'Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) was so impressed by his answer that he purchased the slave and set him free, saying, "Your statement has earned you your freedom in this world, and I have hope that it will result in your freedom on the Day of *Qiyaamah* as well."

A mother instructed her daughter to mix water in the milk they were to sell the next day. The daughter refused, saying that the *Amir* had forbidden such an act. The mother scolded the girl, saying that the *Amir* was not around to see what they were doing. The daughter replied, "Yes the *Amir* is not looking, however the *Rabb* of the *Amir* is watching."

If the consciousness of Allaah Ta'ala's presence is developed from an early age, it will manifest itself brilliantly in later years.

(2) Brotherhood

This is a quality that spurs the feelings of love, compassion, and concern for one's fellow Muslim brothers and sisters.

Allaah Ta'ala states in the Noble Qur'aan,

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ (الحجرات)

The Believers are but a single Brotherhood

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) is reported to have said, "A Muslim is a brother to another Muslim. He will neither oppress him, desert him, nor disgrace him. It is sufficient for one to be regarded as evil

if one taunts and mocks at his Muslim brother. The blood, wealth and honor of every Muslim is sacred.” Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) then pointed to his most blessed chest and said, “*Taqwaa* is here, *taqwaa* is here, *taqwaa* is here!” [Sahih Muslim]

لا يؤمن احدكم حتى يحب لاخيه ما يحب لنفسه (بخارى , مسلم)

“You cannot be a true believer unless you desire for your brother what you love for yourself.”

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) has also mentioned, “The example of the believers in the love, mercy and compassion that they show for each other is similar to a body that experiences pain. At the time of difficulty, the entire body heats up and shares the discomfort which one part is experiencing.” [Sahih Muslim]

“On the Day of *Qiyamaah*, Allaah Ta’ala will shade those who loved each other solely for His pleasure under His mighty throne. [Sahih Muslim]

Our elders have exhibited such feats of self-sacrifice in practicing upon the demands of Islamic-brotherhood that has left man bewildered until today. A few examples of this are mentioned hereunder:

(a) Mu’aawiyah (radiyallaahu anhu) once sent eighty thousand *dirhams* to ‘Aa’ishah (radiyallaahu anhaa). She immediately had it distributed amongst the poor and needy not even sparing one *dirham*. Her maid-servant complained that she should at least keep some money in order to buy meat because there was nothing in the house for *iftaar*. ‘Aa’ishah (radiyallaahu anhaa) responded that if she been told earlier she would have kept something. [Mustadrak Haakim]

(b) ‘Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) once sent his slave with a sack containing four hundred *dinaars* for Abu ‘Ubaydah bin Jarrah (radiyallaahu anhu). He immediately called his servant and said, “Give this to so and so, give this to so and so, and that to so and so.” He continued in this manner until the entire amount was spent. The slave related what he had seen to ‘Umar (radiyallaahu anhu). He was then sent to Mu’aadh bin Jabal (radiyallaahu anhu). Mu’aadh (radiyallaahu anhu) also instructed his slave to distribute the money amongst different families of the area. When his wife heard the commotion and realized what was happening, she exclaimed, “Are we also not in need? Why do you not leave something behind for us?” By that time, there were only two dinars left. Mu’aadh (radiyallaahu anhu) picked up the bag and threw it in her direction. The slave narrated this incident to ‘Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) as well. ‘Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) was extremely pleased and remarked, “They are all brothers of each other.” [Mu’jam-e- Kabir]

(c) ‘Abdullaah bin ‘Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) has narrated that a time came upon the sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) during which they felt as though they had no right in whatever extra remained by them (i.e. due to the great amount that would be spent on others, it seemed as though one had no right to keep back anything.) [Al Adab Al Mufrad]

(3) Mercy

This is a quality that causes one’s heart to melt and tears to be shed upon seeing another in distress. Due to this quality, one refrains from oppression and desires nothing but good for those around. Showing mercy to others is a sign that Allaah Ta’ala will surely shower His mercy upon one. Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

الراحمون يرحمهم الرحمن ارحموا من في الارض يرحمكم من في السماء (ترمذى)

“Those who show mercy to others, Allaah will surely shower them with His mercy. Show mercy to those on earth, He who is in the heaven will show mercy to you.”

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) once said to the sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum), “Your *imaan* can never reach perfection if you do not show mercy!” The sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) enquired, “O Messenger of Allaah, don’t we all show mercy?” Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) explained, “I am not referring to having mercy upon those who are close to you, but rather showing mercy to all mankind and even to the animals that are around you.”

Sterling examples of kindness and compassion

(a) Once, after the conquest of Egypt, ‘Amr bin ‘Aas (radiyallaahu anhu) noticed that a pigeon had built a nest at the top corner of his tent. He felt it inappropriate to disturb it. When the time came to move on, he ordered that his tent be left as is. Later on, people began building houses around that tent and soon the area developed into a city known as The City of *Fustaat* (The City of the Tent).

(b) Before accepting Islam, ‘Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) was known for his hard-heartedness. After accepting Islam he dramatically changed. He would regard himself responsible for every calamity that would occur. When news reached him of a donkey having stumbled in one area of ‘Iraaq, he continued reprimanding himself that had he paved that road, the animal would never have slipped.

(c) Abu Bakr (radiyallaahu anhu) offered the following advice to Usaamah bin Zayd (radiyallaahu anhu) before sending him out on an expedition, “Remember, you are not to kill children, or the elderly. Do not cut or

uproot fruit-bearing trees. You may come upon people who have devoted themselves to the church or monastery, do not interfere with them.”

(4) Giving Preference to Others (*Ithaar*)

In setting up a society based on mutual love and co-operation, this quality should be regarded as the centre pillar. It was this quality that earned the *Ansaar* the highest words of praise and appreciation from Allaah Ta’ala, viz:

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ
حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُونَ (الحشر)

‘Those who were already settled in the abode, and in faith, before they came, love those who have made hijra to them and do not find in their hearts any need for what they have been given and prefer them to themselves even if they themselves are needy. It is the people who are safe-guarded from the avarice of their own selves who are successful.’[Surah al-Hashr (the Gathering) 59:9]

The examples of giving preference to others that the *Ansaar* portrayed are unparalleled in History, for example:

(a) ‘Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) has narrated that a sahaabi (radiyallaahu anhu) received the head of a lamb as a gift. He had it sent to another sahaabi (radiyallaahu anhu), feeling that he was more in need. That sahaabi (radiyallaahu anhu) also had the same thought and sent it elsewhere. In this way the head of the lamb was circulated between seven households before finally ending up back by the first recipient of the gift. [*Ihya-ul-‘Ulum*]

(b) Due to the sacrifices that Ummul-Mu’minin Zainab bint Jahsh (radiyallaahu anha) would make for others, she received the title of *Ummul-Masaakin* (The mother of the poor).

(5) To Forgive and Forget

Through this noble trait, one learns to overlook the errors of others, and to forgive them even if they had greatly wronged one. However, it must be borne in mind that to overlook those actions that are in direct conflict with the *shari’ah* is not part of good character. It is a sign that one is lax concerning his *din*. Allaah Ta’ala and Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) have expounded on the great virtue of this trait, for example:

وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (آل عمران)

‘those who control their rage and pardon other people – Allaah loves good-doers.’ [Surah Aal ‘Imraan (the Family of ‘Imraan) 3:134]

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ (الاعراف)

‘Make allowances for people, command what is right, and turn away from the ignorant.’

Examples of Overlooking and Forgiving from the Lives of the Elders

(a) ‘Abdullaah bin Taahir (rahimahullaah) has narrated that the Khalifah Ma’mun Al-Rashid once summoned one of his slaves. His call was not responded to. After calling out a couple of times, a Turkish slave appeared with an angry look on his face. The slave rebuked the *khalifah*, saying, “Can’t you leave us for even a little while. Do we not at least have the right to eat in peace? For how long are you going to carry on in this manner? The *khalifah* lowered his head and remained silent. I felt that very soon he would give the command for the slave to be be-headed. When he finally did speak, he said, “O ‘Abdullaah, our kindness to our slaves has made them bold against us, acting harsh with them is the only thing that can correct their attitude, but unfortunately that we are unable to do.”

(b) Zaynul-‘Aabidin bin Husayn (rahimahullaah) once called out to his slave but received no answer. Later, when the slave was present, he asked, “Did you not hear me calling for you?” The slave replied, “I heard, but since you are so soft, I did not feel afraid of ignoring your call!” Zaynul-‘Aabidin (rahimahullaah) became pleased with his remark and said, “I praise Allaah that he has made me such, that even my slaves do not fear me.”

Ubaadah bin Saamit (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) once asked the sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum), “Should I not show you an action, through which Allaah raises his servant’s rank and honor?” The sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) replied, “Most definitely!” Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) then mentioned, “Be forbearing in front of the one who treats you badly, forgive the one who oppresses you, give to the one who has never given you and join ties with those who try to break it. [Tabaraani]

(6) Bravery

The strength of this noble quality will depend on the strength of one's trust in Allaah Ta'ala, and one's faith in *taqdir* (pre-destination). After the *ambiyaa'* (alayhimus salaam), this quality was most distinct in the life of Abu Bakr (radiyallaahu anhu). During his rein, he portrayed such acts of bravery, that 'Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) himself was forced to admit, "By Allaah, if the *imaan* of Abu Bakr (radiyallaahu anhu) was placed on one pan of the scale and the *imaan* of the rest of the *ummah* on the other, the *imaan* of Abu Bakr (radiyallaahu anhu) would surely outweigh it!"

After the demise of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), the sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) fell into a state of utter bewilderment and were unable to control their emotions. 'Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) at that time stated that he would sever the neck of anyone claiming that Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) had passed away. Only Abu Bakr (radiyallaahu anhu) had the courage to speak. He was in complete control over his emotions. He mounted the pulpit and proclaimed:

من كان يعبد محمداً فان محمداً قد مات
ومن كان يعبد الله فان الله حي لا يموت

"Whoever used to worship Muhammad (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), let him know that Muhammad ((sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) has today left this world. However, if one was worshipping Allaah, then remember that Allaah is Ever-Living."

He then recited the following verses of the Noble Qur'aan:

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ (آل عوران)

'Muhammad is only a Messenger and he has been preceded by other Messengers. If he were to die or be killed, would you turn on your heels? Those who turn on their heels do not harm Allaah in any way. Allaah will recompense the thankful.'

When it came to dispatching the army of Usamah (radiyallaahu anhu), which had already been prepared by Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), many sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) expressed the desire that the army be kept back, since the Muslim capital was now most in need of protection. Abu Bakr (radiyallaahu anhu) however did not waver in his determination to carry out every single command of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) even in the most adverse of conditions. He expressed his decision in the bravest of words, saying, "I take an oath on the Being in whose hands lies the life of Abu Bakr, even if I was convinced

that wild animals were going to devour me, then too would I send out the army of Usaamah. I do not have the courage to open the knot (i.e. reverse the decision) which Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) tied before leaving this world (i.e. the decision he (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) had made).

After the death of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) many tribes turned apostate, while others refused to continue paying their *zakaah*. Abu Bakr (radiyallaahu anhu) ordered that war be waged upon both groups. Many sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) tried to make him change his mind, or at least delay with his plans to fight against those not paying *zakaah*. This was because the Muslim army did not have the capacity to fight on so many fronts at the same time.

Abu Bakr (radiyallaahu anhu) refused to budge and admonished the sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) saying, "O 'Umar, before accepting Islam you would act so brave! Why are you now acting so cowardly? The period of revelation has terminated and our *din* has been completed! Must I now allow changes to be made to Islam? Never! By Allaah, even if people refuse to give a single rope, which should have been given in *zakaah*, then too shall I wage war against them!" Islam demands bravery and boldness when speaking out the truth. Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

افضل الجهاد من قال كلمة حق عند سلطان جائر

"The most virtuous form of jihaad is to proclaim the truth in front of an oppressive ruler."

Allaah Ta'ala has praised those who propagate the message of Islam, fearing none but Allaah Ta'ala:

الَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ رِسَالَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَخْشَوْنَهُ وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا (الاحزاب)

'Those who conveyed Allaah's message and had taqwaa of Him, fearing no one except Allaah. Allaah suffices as a Reckoner.'

These are the vital ingredients required in one's children, if one desires them to be of benefit to one's society. Without these qualities, an effort to bring good to society and humanity at large will prove fruitless. Similar to the one who writes on water or who blows in the dust.

The child should be made aware of the Rights of Others

The rights of others refers to the rights of one's parents, family, neighbors, teachers, companions and elders. The rights of each of these people are discussed below:

The Rights of Parents

The child should be taught that:

(1) The pleasure of Allaah lies in the pleasure of one's parents. Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

رضى الله في رضى الوالدين وسخط الله في سخط الوالدين (سبل السلام)

"Allah's pleasure is earned through the pleasure of one's parents, and the displeasure of Allaah is earned through the displeasure of the parent."

(2) Obedience and kindness towards one's parents is to be given preference in practically all conditions, even over *jihad*. 'Abdullaah ibn 'Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) has narrated that a man once asked Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) for permission to take part in *jihad*. He was asked if his parents were alive and he replied in the affirmative. Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) ordered him to return and serve his parents.

(3) It is their right that after their death, one continues to make *du'aa* for them and one maintains good relations with those who were close to his parents. Allaah Ta'ala mentions regarding one's parents:

وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذِّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا (الاسراء)

'Take them under your wing, out of mercy, with due humility and say: 'Rabb, show mercy to them as they did in looking after me when I was small.'

Abu Hurayrah (radiyallaahu anhu) has mentioned that the deceased will notice his ranks in *jannah* always going higher. Upon enquiry he will be told, "Your son has sought forgiveness for you, thus your rank has been elevated." [Al Adab-al-Mufrad]

A man from the tribe of Banu Salama once asked Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) if he could do any virtuous deed for his deceased parents. Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) instructed him to do the following: a) Take part in their *janaazah salaah* b) Seek forgiveness on their behalf c) Fulfill the promises and agreements they had made to others d) Honor their friends e) Maintain close relations with those family members with whom they were close.

‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) once met a man on the road to Makkah Mukarrama. He made *salaam* to him, tied his turban around the head of the man, and gave the man his donkey to ride. His companions asked in amazement, “These are village people, who become happy with very little. Why have you given him so much?” ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) replied, “His father was a close friend of my father. I had heard Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) saying, “From the most virtuous of deeds is to do good to those who were close to one’s parents.”

(It is also necessary that one show kindness and good conduct to the wife of his father (one’s stepmother), since she is the closest to him throughout his life. Similarly, it is binding upon women to show kindness towards the children of her husband (i.e. her stepchildren).

(4) The right of the mother precedes the right of the father. A man asked Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) who was most deserving of being treated well. Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) replied, “Your mother.” He repeated his question for a second and third time and received the very same answer. On the fourth time, Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) replied, “Your father.”

(5) There are etiquettes to be observed in front of one’s parents. The basis of these etiquettes is the following verses of the Noble Qur’aan:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِنَّمَا يُنَلِّقَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا
وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ ۖ قُلْ لَّهُمَا قَوْلٌ كَرِيمًا
وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا (الاسراء)

‘Your Rabb has decreed that you should worship none but Him, and that you should show kindness to your parents. Whether one or both of them reach old age with you, do not say, ‘Ugh!’ to them out of irritation and do not be harsh with them but speak to them with gentleness and generosity. Take them under your wing, out of mercy, with due humility and say: ‘Rabb, show mercy to them as they did in looking after me when I was small.’

Whilst explaining these etiquettes Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

ما برأباه من سدد اليه الطرف بغضب (مجمع الزوائد)

“Looking at one’s parents angrily is against the demands of kindness to parents.”

‘Aa’ishah (radiyallaahu anhaa) narrated that a father and son once presented themselves in front of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). Addressing the son, Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

فلا تمش امامه ولا تجلس قبله ولا تدعه باسمه ولا تستسب له

(مجمع الزوائد)

“Never walk in front of your father, do not sit before him, do not call him by his name and do not do such actions whereby others swear him.”

A few incidents of the Pious

Umar bin Zayd was asked, “Did your son deal kindly with you?” He replied, “Yes, I did not set out during the day except that he was behind me. At night, he would walk ahead of me. He never climbed the roof below which I was seated.” [*Uyun al Akhyaar*]

Khalifa Ma’mun said, “I have never seen anybody acting more kindly and doing more good to his father than Fadl bin Yahya. He was very obedient. His father used warm water to make *wudu’*. Once, both father and son landed in jail. On a cold winter night, the guards stopped him from going to collect firewood. Fadl then went to fill the container in which they used to warm the water. He held the container close to the flame of a lamp. He stood there holding the container until morning. He did this so that his father could make *wudu’* with warm water in the morning.

NOTE: *Subhaanallah!* What an example of obedience to one’s parents he has set. Similarly, what an example of striving to see to the comfort of ones parents he has set. This is the reason why they reached such great heights. May Allaah Ta’ala bless everyone with such obedient children. *Aameen*

(6) Warn against Disobedience:

To look at one’s father with fiery eyes while angry is also disobedience. It is also an act of disobedience to ruefully introduce ones father, especially if one has attained some high position.

One will also be disobedient if he does not care to see to the needs of his parents if they are needy. The greatest act of disobedience is if one looks with scorn, feels constrained, and raises his voice above that of his parents when it comes to doing any work/task of his parents. The following hadith condemns this,

Abu Bakr (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “Shall I not inform you of the greatest sin?” He repeated

this thrice. The sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) replied, "Definitely, O Messenger of Allaah." Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "To join partners with Allaah and to disobey one's parents." Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) was leaning while seated, He sat upright and said, "Lies and giving false witness." He (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) repeated this so many times until we said to ourselves (out of mercy for him) 'if only he would now keep silent.' [*Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim*]

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) also said, "It is amongst the major sins to swear one's parents." [*Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim*]

Abu Bakr (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said that Allaah delays the punishment for every sin for as long as He wishes, except the sin of disobeying one's parents. The punishment for this sin is meted out in this world before the sinner's death. [*Mustadrak Haakim*]

Aadaab (etiquettes) for Parents and Teachers

1. To obey every command of one's parents, except if they command such a thing that conflicts with the law of Allaah Ta'ala.
2. To speak to them with kindness and honor.
3. To protect their honor and wealth.
4. To consult with them in every matter.
5. To make a lot of *du'aa'* for them, and to make a lot of *istighfaar* (seeking forgiveness) on their behalf.
6. If a guest arrives, then one should sit close to the door. If there is a necessity to be fulfilled then it could be done simply by the look or gesture of one's parents.

NOTE: *Subhaanallaah!* What beautiful *adab* this is. It is based on experience because sometimes in the absence of the son, the father is placed into great difficulty when seated with guests.

7. One should not speak with a raised voice in front of them.
8. They should not be interrupted when speaking.
9. One's wife and children should not be given preference over them.
10. They should not be rebuked for doing something not to one's liking.
11. One should not laugh in front of them for no reason.

12. One should not lie down or sleep while they are seated in front of one, except with their permission.
13. One should not sit with one's legs outstretched in front of them.
14. One should not eat in front of them.
15. Their call should be immediately responded to.
16. Their friends and companions should be respected and honored.
17. One should not affiliate oneself to those who do not behave towards one's parents with kindness.
18. One should always make du'aa' for them, especially after their demise. This du'aa' should be made in abundance,

رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا

Rights of Relatives

Relatives refer to those people with whom one is connected by family. The order of relatives is as follows,

Parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, father's brothers, father's sisters, brother's children, sister's children, mother's brothers, mother's sisters. Thereafter those who are further away, in order of closeness.

It is sufficient to prove the virtue of this simply by the fact that mercy (*rahm*) is taken from the root word *rahmaan*. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said with regards to this, Almighty Allah says: "I am Allaah, and I am Rahmaan. I have created mercy and relations, and I have named it from My name. I will join relations/ties to that person who joins relations/ties. I will break off relations/ties with the person who breaks relations/ties.

Without doubt, this is something that shakes the insides of enthusiasm to establish relations. It also gives incentive for feelings of brotherhood. After these realities have been explained, it is the responsibility of the mentors to strive to bring it alive. The reason for this is that once the child reaches the level of understanding, he can already be aware of the rights of relatives. The reason for this is that the child can honor his relatives at the appropriate occasion, he will be able to respect/honor the seniors and have mercy on the juniors. Similarly, he will be able to shed tears and sympathise with relatives if they are struck with any calamity.

Allaah Ta'ala has drawn our attention to establishing ties and being good to relatives in various aayaat, they are quoted hereunder:

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

‘Have taqwaa of Allaah in whose name you make demands on one another and also in respect of your families. Allaah watches over you continually.’ [Surah an-Nisaa’ (Women) 4:1]

وَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا

‘Give you relatives their due, and the very poor and travelers but do not squander what you have.’[Surah al-Israa’ (the Night Journey) 17:26]

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ

‘Worship Allaah and do not associate anything with Him. Be good to your parents and relatives and to orphans and the very poor, and to neighbors.’[Surah an-Nisaa’ (Women) 4:36]

At the same time, the Qur’aan warns us of breaking off relations/ties. It has also referred to breaking relations as such rebellion and trouble on earth that the one guilty of it deserves curses and a terrible abode.

وَالَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ

‘But as for those who break Allaah’s contract after it has been agreed and sever what Allaah has commanded to be joined, and cause corruption in the earth, the curse will be upon them. They will have the Evil Abode.’[Surah ar-Ra’d (Thunder) 13:25]

It is the duty of parents and mentors to inform their children of the consequences of breaking off relations/ties. Similarly, they should explain the fruits and benefits of joining relations/ties. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) has explained the various benefits of joining ties.

“He who believes in Allaah and the last day should honor his guest. He who believes in Allaah and the last day should join ties. He who believes

in Allaah and the last day should speak that which is good, otherwise he should keep silent.” *[Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim]*

It is explained in other narrations that joining ties saves one from an evil death. It is also narrated that it brings prosperity and increases wealth. According to another narration, joining ties causes the forgiveness of sins and expiated one’s shortcomings. It also eases ones reckoning and enters the doer into paradise.

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “The one who breaks off relations/ties will not enter paradise.”

When the mentor will explain the above mentioned virtues then he will be inclined to go forward and join relations/ties. He will fulfil the rights of his relatives. He will share their happiness and grief – this is the goal of joining relations/ties. There is a great need for such mentors and teachers who will make their children understand these realities and guide them towards adopting good character and praiseworthy qualities.

The Rights of Neighbors

One of the categories of rights that must be given due attention to is the rights of neighbors. Who are ones neighbors?

Everybody that surrounds you, forty houses to the right and left, in front and behind are classified as one’s neighbors and they all have rights upon one.

The rights of neighbors in Islam are based on four principles.

- (1) A person should not give difficulty to his neighbor
- (2) He should save his neighbor from those people who give difficulty
- (3) He should be cordial with his neighbor
- (4) He should respond with kindness to the evil temperament of his neighbor



- (1) A person should not give difficulty to his neighbor

There are different forms of giving difficulty. The gravest of them is adultery, stealing and to destroy the honor of one’s neighbor. These are the things that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) mentioned to the sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) while he ((sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)) was explaining the good character traits that one should adopt and the evil traits that one should abandon. The following is explained in a hadith,

‘To commit adultery with ten different women is of lesser severity than committing adultery with the wife of one’s neighbor.’ Similarly, ‘To steal the wealth of ten people is of lesser severity than stealing the wealth of one’s neighbor.’

With regards to giving difficulty to one’s neighbor by the tongue, Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) mentioned, “By Allaah, he is not a believer. By Allaah, he is not a believer. By Allaah, he is not a believer.” The sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) asked, “Who is that, O Messenger of Allaah?” Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “That person whose neighbor is not safe from his evil.” [*Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim*]

(2) He should save his neighbor from those people who give difficulty

To protect one’s neighbor and to support him is a great character trait. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) explained,

‘A Muslim is a brother to another Muslim. He does not oppress him, nor does he hand him over to an enemy. He who remains occupied in the needs of his brother, Allaah will fulfil his needs. He who removes difficulty from his Muslim brother, Allaah will remove the difficulties of *Qiyaamah* from him. He who covers the faults of his Muslim brother, Allaah will cover his faults on the Day of *Qiyaamah*.’

If the above applies to a normal Muslim brother, then it applies to an even greater degree to one’s neighbors.

(3) He should be cordial with his neighbor

It is part of cordiality to share in the happiness and grief of one’s neighbor. One’s neighbor should be visited when he is ill. He should be first in offering *salaam*. He should also guide and help him in his affairs, according to his understanding. He should gift fruit to him when he purchases some for himself. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) has also included being good to one’s neighbor as part of *imaan*.

He (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “He who believes in Allaah and the last day should be good to his neighbor.” [*Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim*]

“Jibril (alayhis salaam) emphasised so much with regard to neighbors that I thought a neighbor will be included amongst one’s heirs.” [*Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim*]

It is part of the rights of one’s neighbor that when he asks for items of necessity, he should be given them. Not to give them is a sign of wickedness and a sick soul.

(4) He should respond with kindness to the evil temperament of his neighbor

It is a praiseworthy quality to overlook the faults of one's neighbor, and to forgive him when he exceeds the limits. This is especially if he does something unintentionally and he is regretful over it. Forgiving somebody sometimes becomes a means for correction of a person's evil.

Allaah Ta'ala says,

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ
حَمِيمٌ

'A good action and a bad action are not the same. Repel the bad with something better and, if there is enmity between you and someone else, he will be like a bosom friend.' [Surah Fussilat (Made Plain) 41:34]

Parents and mentors should nurture their children such that they act cordially with the neighbors once they reach an age of understanding. Similarly, they should be trained to tolerate the antagonistic behavior of the neighbors.

The Rights of Teachers

This is one important right. The child must be trained to honor, respect and fulfil the rights of his teacher. This is more-so when the teacher is pious and distinguished with good character.

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said,

ليس من امتي من لم يحل كبيرنا ويرحم صغيرنا ويعرف لعالمنا (حقه) (احمد/حاكم)

"He is not from my ummah who does not honor our elders, have mercy on our juniors and recognize the rights of our 'ulemaa' (learned ones)."

'Attain knowledge and learn dignity and tranquillity for attaining knowledge. Be humble to those from whom you attained knowledge.'
[Tabaraani]

"Only a hypocrite degrades the following three people:

- 1- An old Muslim.
- 2- A learned person ('aalim).

3- A just ruler.” [Tabaraani]

A FEW GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

(1) A student should adopt humility in front of his teacher. He should always consult with him. He should realize that lowering himself in front of his teacher is in fact honor. Humility is a stairway to loftiness and esteem. ‘Abdullaah bin ‘Abbaas (radiyallaahu anhu) would hold the packsaddle of the beast of Zayd bin Thaabit (radiyallaahu anhu) inspite of his own honor and great status. He would say that we have been commanded to deal with our *‘ulemaa’* in this manner.

(2) The student should hold his teacher in esteem and honor, and regard him as perfect. Imam Shaafi’i (rahimahullaah) states, “I used to turn the pages of my book so silently in front of Imaam Maalik (rahimahullaah) so that he would not hear the movements of the leaves.

Rabi’ (rahimahullaah) states, “By Allaah, due to the awe of Imaam Shaafi’i (rahimahullaah), I never had the courage to drink water while he was watching me.”

(3) The student should not address the teacher with the word “you”. With great respect, he should say, *‘My respected ustaadh’*, *‘O my ustaadh’*, *‘Esteemed Maulana’*. Similarly, in his absence, the name of the *ustaadh* should be taken in such a manner that any person listening can easily gauge the respect and honor the student has for his teacher e.g. Say *‘Our honorable teacher has said’*, *‘Esteemed ustaadh has mentioned’*, *‘Our so-and-so guide has said in this manner.’*

(4) The student should understand the right of the teacher and remember his status and virtue. Shu‘bah (rahimahullaah) states, “When I hear a hadith from anyone, then I become his slave for the rest of my life.”

(5) The student should continue making *du‘aa’* for his teacher for the rest of his life. After the teacher passes away, he should bear in mind the status of his children, friends and family. He should visit his grave, seek forgiveness for him and offer charity on his behalf. He should keep his character and habits in view and follow them.

(6) The student should tolerate the harshness and severity of the teacher. He should seek forgiveness for any shortcomings and regard himself to be the cause of his teacher’s anger. In this case, the love of the teacher will become entrenched thus ensuring benefit for the student in his *din* (religious life), *dunyaa* (worldly life) and his life in the hereafter.

‘Abdullaah bin ‘Abbaas (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates, “I chose disgrace while attaining knowledge, now I have become honorable and respected.”

(7) The student should sit in front of the teacher with complete humility and honor, listening to him attentively. Without necessity, he should not look around.

(8) It is incumbent on the student of knowledge to stay far away from any such action which is contrary to the respect, honor and modesty of the teacher. Therefore, do not stare at him. If any noise or commotion occurs, then do not turn your attention towards it. This is more-so when the teacher is teaching. (Similarly, when a *dini* (religious) talk is taking place, then do not turn hither or thither -Translator.

(9) The student should not play with his hands or feet in front of the teacher. He should not place his finger in his nose, clean his nostrils, open his mouth, grind the teeth, hit his hands on the ground, draw lines on the ground, and enter fingers of one hand into the other. He should not speak without necessity, nor laugh loudly. He should smile without making any sound. Without necessity, he should not eat. As far as possible, he should abstain from spitting and removing mucus from the nose. When sneezing, he should keep the sound low and cover his face with handkerchief. When yawning, then he should try as far as possible to control it, otherwise he should place his hand on the mouth.

(10) The student should never enter the house or study-room of his teacher without permission. If permission is not granted despite seeking it, he should go away. He should not seek permission more than thrice. He should knock at the door softly with respect and honor. However, if the room is at a distance from the door, then there is no harm in knocking loudly, ringing the bell, or calling out loudly.

(11) The student should present himself in the company of his teacher with a good countenance and in clean clothing. If he is going to a lesson, then more care should be taken since this is a gathering of knowledge and *dhikr*.

(12) When the student goes to the teacher, his mind should be free from other thoughts so that he could remember the words of the *ustadh*.

(13) When the student arrives at the gathering of knowledge and the *ustadh* is not present, and then he should wait for him, so that no portion of the lesson is missed out. If the *ustadh* is resting, then wait for him to awaken. This is the way of our pious predecessors.

(14) If the student hears the proof of any law or some point that he has already heard, then too he should listen attentively.

‘Ataa’ (rahimahullaah) mentions, “When I hear any hadith from someone and I happened to know it very well from before, then too I make apparent by my appearance that I do not know this hadith.”

(15) Once the student knows and understands any point, then he should not ask for it to be repeated since this will waste time, and at times, the teacher's heart could be vexed.

Imaam Zuhri (rahimahullaah) states, "To repeat and revise a hadith is weightier on me than carrying a rock from one place to another."

(16) The student should not show any laxity in listening and understanding the words of the teacher. He should not keep his mind occupied with any other matter resulting in him having to request his teacher to repeat any explanation. This is disrespect. If the teacher is sitting at such distance from the student that he cannot hear, or, inspite of effort, he cannot understand, then it is the right of the student to request repetition. He should do so with great respect, and he should forward his excuse and reason.

These etiquettes are regarding those teachers (*asaatidhah*) who are pious and Allaah-fearing. If the teacher is an atheist and materialist, then one should neither have respect for them nor have awe in the hearts. They have destroyed the honor bestowed upon them due to their irreligiousness. They have destroyed their dignity by their disbelief and misguidance. They are responsible for their own dishonor.

If the father knows that an irreligious teacher is teaching his child matters of disbelief and misguidance, then he should become angry for the sake of Allaah Ta'ala and not choose such a teacher for his child.

The Rights of Companions

It is imperative that good companions be selected for one's child. Company plays a great influence on one's character and actions. Someone stated, "Do not ask me who I am! Ask me whom I accompany, by this you will realize who I am!"

Recount the following ahaadith of Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)

(1) The example of a good companion is like that of a musk-seller whilst the example of an evil companion is of a kiln-blower. The first will either give you musk, you may buy it from him or at least you will enjoy its smell. Either the person blowing the kiln will burn your clothes or you will receive its bad odour. [*Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim*]

(2) Do not accompany anyone but a believer. Let not anyone eat your food but a pious person. [*Sunan Abu Daawud, Jaami' at- Tirmidhi*]

(3) Stay away from evil company, since you are recognised by them. [*Ibn-e-'Asaakir*]

(4) A person is on the religion of his friend. So let everyone of you see who his friends are. [*Jaami' at-Tirmidhi, Sunan Abu Daawud*]

The mentor should thus ensure that he chooses good company for his children. It is even more important when the child reaches the age of puberty that his friends are screened. This will result in a well-balanced, active personality who will fulfil the rights of society in the way which Islam commands, in such a manner that Allaah Ta'ala will be pleased.

The Rights of Friendship

(1) To greet with *salaam* when meeting

A person asked Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), "Which are the most virtuous amongst the etiquettes of Islam?" He replied, "Feeding, and making *salaam* to those you know and to those whom you do not know." [Sahih al-Bukhaari]

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) also said, "You cannot enter *jannah* until you believe, and you cannot truly believe until you have mutual love. Should I not inform you of that action which if you observe would create mutual love? Make the *salaam* common amongst yourselves." [Sahih Muslim]

Note: *Subhaanallah*, what an easy and beautiful prescription for entry into *jannah*. How sad that even in this we are negligent.-Translator

(2) To visit one's companion when he is ill

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "Visit the sick, feed the hungry and free the prisoners." [Sahih al-Bukhaari]

NOTE: Many innocent people are being detained in prison. In such cases, to take guarantee for them and to try to free them is a means of great reward.-Translator

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) has also stated, "A Muslim has 5 rights over another Muslim:

- 1- To reply to his *salaam*.
- 2- To visit him if he becomes sick.
- 3- To attend his *janaazah*.
- 4- To accept his invitation.
- 5- To reply to his sneeze. [Sahih al-Bukhaari]

(3) To reply to a sneeze

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "When any of you sneezes, then he should say '*Al Hamdulillaah*'. His companion or brother should reply with '*Yar hamukallaah*'. When this person had replied with '*Yar hamukallaah*', then the sneezer should say '*Yahdi kumullaahu wa*

Yuslihu Baalakum' (May Allaah guide you and correct your condition)
[*Sahih al-Bukhaari*]

(4) Meeting for the sake of Allaah Ta'ala

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "Whoever visits a sick person or his Muslim brother for the pleasure of Allaah, then an angel proclaims, "May you remain well, may your walking be blessed and you have built a palace in *jannah*." [Jaami' at-Tirmidhi, Ibn-Maajah]

(5) Helping and assisting at the time of difficulty

Rasulullah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. Neither does he oppress him, nor does he leave him without any help. Allaah fulfils the needs of that person as long as he is involved in solving the needs of his brother. Whoever removes any difficulty from a Muslim then Allaah will remove his immense difficulties on the Day of Judgement, and whoever conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allaah will conceal his faults on the Day of Judgement." [Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim]

(6) Accepting the invitation of a Muslim

As has been mentioned in the hadith under (2.), accepting the invitation of a Muslim is amongst the rights of a Muslim.

(7) Offering congratulations on different events like *jumu'ah* and 'id

'Abdullaah bin 'Abbaas (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates, "Whoever meets his brother when returning from *jumu'ah* should say, '*Taqabballaahu minna wa minkum*' (May Allaah accept this action from us and from you.) [Daylami]

When Ka'b (radiyallaahu anhu)'s repentance was accepted, then Talhah (radiyallaahu anhu) stood up and congratulated him. [Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim]

(8) Offering gifts at various and appropriate occasions

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "Exchange gifts, mutual love will be created." [Mu'jam al-Awsat-Tabaraani]

Once Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) addressed the believing women, "Exchange gifts even if it be the hoof of a goat. This will create love and remove ill-feelings."

Another hadith states, "Make *musaafahah* (shake hands). This will remove hatred. Exchange gifts, this will create mutual love and dispel hatred and ill-feelings." [Mu'atta Imaam Maalik, Translation p. 419]

NOTE : This shows the virtue of exchanging gifts. This is more so when there exists some ill-feelings. At such times, definitely give gifts so that the heart becomes clean and mutual love and affection is created.-
Translator

Therefore, o mentors! These are important principles which should be taught to one's child as soon as his eyes open. When the society is based on the foundations of love, sincerity, mutual assistance and well-wishing, then unity, peace and safety will become firm and established. By this, the atmosphere of justice, equality, and brotherhood will spread throughout the world.

The Rights of Seniors

By senior is meant every such person who is older in age, knowledge, piety, honor, respect, or status. It is necessary for the juniors to recognize the status of the elders and to fulfil their rights.

1. Anas (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said,

ما أكرم شيخا لسنه إلا قىض الله له من يكرمه عنه سنه (ترمذي)

“Whichever young person honors an older person due to his age, Allaah will appoint for him those people who will honor him in his old age.”

2. “He is not from amongst us who does not have mercy on our juniors and does not honor our seniors.” [Sunan Abu Daawud, Jaami‘ at- Tirmidhi]

3. “The demand of honoring and exalting Allaah Ta’ala is to honor an aged Muslim, the bearer of the Qur’aan - except he who exceeds the bounds in it or leaves the Qur’aan - and to honor a just ruler.” [Sunan Abu-Daawud]

4. ‘Abdullaah bin ‘Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “I saw in a dream that I was making *miswaak*. Two people came to me. One was older than the other. I presented the *miswaak* to the younger one. I was told, “Give it to the elder one.” I then handed the *miswaak* to the elder one.” [Sahih Muslim, Translation p. 422]

From these ahaadith, many religious and social etiquettes are extracted. Those entrusted with the responsibility of upbringing should create the following etiquettes in their children that is to be observed in front of elders:

(1) Modesty

This is such a trait which encourages one to leave sins and which prevents one from being negligent of the rights of elders. It also encourages and forces a person to fulfil the rights of others. Modesty is thus only goodness upon goodness. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) has mentioned, “Shamelessness and immodesty is not found in anything

except that it spoils it. Modesty is not found in anything except that it beautifies it.” [Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim]

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) has also stated, “Every religion has a distinguishing feature. The distinguishing feature of Islam is shame and modesty. [Ibn Maajah]

(2) Standing to receive someone

Standing up for one’s guest, a traveller, one’s father, a scholar (‘aalim) of *din* or any senior person is a very important social etiquette which children should be commanded to do.

‘Aa’ishah (radiyallaahu anha) narrates, “I have not found any body resembling Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) more than Faatimah (radiyallaahu anhaa) in habits and character, walking mannerisms and movements. When Faatimah (radiyallaahu anhaa) used to come to Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), then he would stand up to welcome her, kiss her and seat her in his place. When Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) would go to her, then she would stand up from her place, kiss him and seat him in her place.” [Sahih al-Bukhaari, Jaami’ at-Tirmidhi, Sunan Abu Daawud]

Abu Hurayrah (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates, “Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) would speak to us. When he would stand up, then we too would stand up. We would continue standing until he entered the house of one of his noble wives.” [Sunan Nasaa’i, Sunan Abu Daawud]

When Sa’d bin Mu’aadh (radiyallaahu anhu) came closer to the masjid, Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said to the *Ansaar*, “Stand up for your master.” [Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim]

The narrations mentioning the prohibition of standing up refer to that person who desires and intends that people stand for him. This can also refer to that standing in which exaltedness and pride is found as is the habit of some non-arabs eg. An honorable person sits with great respect and people stand around him. [Translation p. 426]

(3) Kissing the hand of elders

The ahaadith of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), the actions of the Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum), and the statements of the Imaams of *ijtihaad* point to the permissibility of kissing the hands.

Zaari (radiyallaahu anhu) (who was part of the delegation of ‘Abdul-Qays) said, “When we reached Madinah Munawwarah, we quickly emerged from our palanquins and began kissing the hands and feet of Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam).” [Sunan Abu Daawud, Musnad Ahmad, Al Adab Al Mufrad]

Abu 'Ammaar narrates that an animal was brought to Zayd bin Thaabit (radiyallaahu anhu) to mount. 'Abdullaah bin 'Abbaas (radiyallaahu anhu) caught hold of its packsaddle. Zayd (radiyallaahu anhu) said, "O cousin of Allaah's rasul (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)! Go to one side" i.e. Leave the packsaddle.

He said, "We have been commanded to treat our '*ulemaa*' and elders in this manner."

Zayd (radiyallaahu anhu) said, "Give me your hand."

On stretching out his hand, Zayd (radiyallaahu anhu) kissed his hand and said, "We have been commanded to treat the ahl al bayt (family of Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)) in this manner." [*Ibn-e-'Asaakir*]

Suhayb (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that I saw 'Ali (radiyallaahu anhu) kissing the hands and feet of 'Abbaas (radiyallaahu anhu). [*Al Adab Al Mufrad*]

Many incidents with regards to kissing the hands of the learned and virtuous people have been narrated. The mentor should ensure that the child imbibes within himself these beautiful qualities so that the child grows up honoring and respecting the elders and '*ulemaa*'. It should be borne in mind that one should not exceed the bounds or exaggerate when standing and kissing the hands.

GENERAL SOCIAL ETIQUETTE

Teach children the following general social morals that are discussed under the following headings:

- (1) Etiquettes of eating and drinking
- (2) Etiquettes of *salaam*
- (3) Etiquettes of seeking permission to enter
- (4) Etiquettes of a gathering
- (5) Etiquettes of conversation
- (6) Etiquettes of humor
- (7) Etiquettes of congratulating
- (8) Etiquettes of visiting the sick
- (9) Etiquettes of condolence
- (10.) Etiquettes of sneezing and yawning



(1.1) The etiquettes of eating

(a) Wash hands before and after eating.

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said,

بركة الطعام الوضوء قبله والوضوء بعده (ابو داؤد، ترمذي)

“Washing one’s hands before and after meals is a means of obtaining *barakah* (blessings)” [Sunan Abu Daawud, Jaami‘ at-Tirmidhi]

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) also said, “The person who wishes that Allaah Ta’ala must increase *barakah* (blessings) in his house, then he should wash his hands before coming to eat and after eating.” [Sunan Ibn Maajah, Bayhaqi]

(b) Recite ‘*Bismillaah*’ when beginning to eat and ‘*Alhamdulillah*’ on completion.

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “When any of you eats food, then begin with the name of Allaah. If you forget to take the name of Allaah in the beginning, then recite ‘*Bismillaahi Awwalahu wa Aakhirahu*’ (I eat with the name of Allaah in the beginning and ending). [Sunan Abu Daawud, Jaami‘ at-Tirmidhi]

After eating and drinking, Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) would recite

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَنَا وَسَقَانَا وَجَعَلَنَا مُسْلِمِينَ

“All praise is to Allaah who has fed us, given us to drink and made us Muslims.” [Musnad Ahmad]

When eating by someone else’s house, then recite this *du‘aa’*,

اللَّهُمَّ أَطْعِمْ مَنْ أَطْعَمَنِي وَاسْقِ مَنْ سَقَانِي

“O Allaah, feed him who has fed me and grant him to drink who has granted me to drink.”

(c) Do not find fault with whatever food is placed in front of one

Abu Hurayrah (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) never ever criticized any food. If he liked the food, he would eat. If it was not to his liking, he would leave it.” [Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim]

(d) Eat with the right hand and the food nearest to you

‘Amr bin Abi Salamah (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates, “I was a child growing up in the lap of Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). My hand was moving all over the plate. Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said to me, “O son, take the name of Allaah, eat with the right hand and eat that which is close to you.” [Sahih Muslim]

(e) Do not eat while reclining

To eat while leaning is harmful to the health. It is also a sign of arrogance. Wahb bin ‘Abdullaah (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “I do not eat whilst leaning.” [Sahih al-Bukhaari]

Anas (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that he saw Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) eating dates sitting in the *tashahhud* position. [Sahih Muslim]

(f) To speak is commendable whilst eating

In an authentic hadith, it is mentioned that at most occasions Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) would speak to the Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) whilst eating.

(g) To make *du‘aa’* for the host after eating is *mustahab*

Anas (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) went to Sa’d bin Abi ‘Ubaadah (radiyallaahu anhu), who brought bread

and olive oil¹ for him. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) ate this and then said,

أَفْطَرَ عِنْدَكُمْ الصَّائِمُونَ وَأَكَلَ طَعَامَكُمْ الْآبَرَارُ وَصَلَّتْ عَلَيْكُمْ الْمَلَائِكَةُ

“May the fasting people breakfast by you, may the pious eat your food, and may the angels make dua’ of forgiveness for you.” [Sunan Abu Daawud, Jaami’ at- Tirmidhi]

When the *dastarkaan* (dining cloth) is lifted, then recite

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا غَيْرَ مَكْفِيٍّ وَلَا مُوَدَّعٍ وَلَا مُسْتَعْنَى عَنْهُ

(h) Do not eat before any elder.

Hudhayfah (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates, “When we would eat together with Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), then we would not place our hands in the container until Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) placed his blessed hands.” [Sahih Muslim]

(i) Lick the fingers and the utensil

Anas (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates, “When Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) would finish eating he would lick his three fingers. He (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) also said, “If any morsel falls down, then pick it up. If anything comes into it, then remove it and do not leave it for *shaytaan*.” Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) has commanded us to lick the utensils with our fingers and he used to say, “You do not know in which portion of your food there is blessing.”

(1.2) The etiquettes of drinking

(a) Read ‘*Bismillaah*’ before drinking and ‘*Alhamdulillah*’ after. Drink in two or three sips.

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said,

لا تشربوا واحدا كشر البعير ولكن اشربوا مثنى وثلاث وسموا اذا انتم شربتم واحمدا
اذا انتم رفعتم (ترمذي)

¹ NOTE: In Musnad Ahmad and Tabaraani the word ‘zabib’ (raisins) has been mentioned. This is correct. Haafidh states that the word erroneously had been transcribed into ‘zayt’ (olive oil).- Translator

“Do not drink in one drought like a camel. Drink in two or three sips. Take the name of Allaah when you begin drinking and praise Allaah when you have completed.”

(b) To drink directly from a water bag or jug is *makruh* (disliked)

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) prohibited from drinking directly from the mouth of a water bag or jug, because this is contrary to the temperament of society. There is also a fear that something may have fallen into it which is harmful to one's health and one is not aware of it.

(c) The prohibition of blowing into a utensil

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) had prohibited breathing into a utensil and blowing in it. There are also medical harms in these actions. And its being contrary to social etiquettes is no hidden matter.

(d) Eating and drinking whilst sitting is *mustahab*

Anas (radiyallaahu anhu) has narrated that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) prohibited standing and drinking. Qataadah (rahimahullaah) states, “We asked Anas (radiyallaahu anhu), “What is the ruling regarding eating while standing?” He said, “This is even worse.” [Sahih Muslim]

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) also said, “None of you should stand and drink. Whoever forgets (and drinks whilst standing) should vomit it out.” [Sahih Muslim]

Regarding those narrations wherein Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) stood and drank, this was to show permission (due to some *shar'i* necessity).

NOTE: In those instances where there is no place to sit or there is reprehension in sitting due to filth and dirt, then permission has been granted to stand and drink. In such cases, people should not be reprimanded.-Translator

There are however some occasions when standing and drinking is more virtuous e.g. standing and drinking *zamzam* water or the left over of *wudu'* water.

(e) Prohibition of drinking in gold and silver utensils

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “The person who drinks in a silver utensil is filling his belly with the fire of *jahannum*.” [Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim]

NOTE: What a severe warning! If one still too does not abstain, then this is astonishing!

In another narration, it is mentioned that a person who drinks from a gold or silver utensil is kindling the fire of *jahannum* in his stomach.” [Sahih Muslim]

NOTE: The same ruling applies to eating utensils. This law is applicable to both men and women. This is contrary to jewellery, which are permitted for women.-Translator

(f) Prohibition of eating and drinking to one’s fill

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “No person has filled a utensil worse than his stomach. Those few morsels are sufficient which can keep the back straight. If he wishes to consume more, then let him leave one portion for water, one portion for food and one portion for air.” [Musnad Ahmad, Jaami’ at-Tirmidhi]

It is also appropriate to teach one’s child the etiquettes and *du’aa’s* when going to sleep and upon awakening e.g.

Read this *du’aa’* when going to sleep:

اَللّٰهُمَّ بِاسْمِكَ اَمُوْتُ وَاَحْيَا

“O Allaah, with Your name do I die and with Your name do I live.” [Sahih al-Bukhaari]

On awakening, recite

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ اَحْيَاَنَا بَعْدَ مَا اَمَاتَنَا وَاِلَيْهِ النُّشُوْرُ

“All praises are for Allaah who has granted us life after He has given us death, and only to Him is our return.” [Sahih al-Bukhaari]

NOTE: Besides these, teach and habituate in them the etiquettes and *du’aa’s* of morning, evening, travelling etc. so that an Islamic society and way of life is formed. There are virtues for *dhikran kathira* (an abundance of zikr). For this Hakimul Ummah Maulana Ashraf ‘Ali’s book ‘*Munaajaat-e-Maqbul*’, and this lowly one’s book ‘*Guldistaare-Adhkaar*’ will prove to be beneficial Inshaa-Allaah.-Translator

(2) The etiquettes of *salaam*

There are etiquettes when greeting in Islam. Teach these to the child and make him firm and punctual on them.

(a) Teach the child that the *shari'ah* has given the command of *salaam*.

Allaah Ta'ala states,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ (النور)

'You who believe! Do not enter houses other than your own until you have asked permission and greeted their inhabitants. That is better for you, so that hopefully you will pay heed.'

In another place, He Ta'ala mentions

فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ بُيُوتًا فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةٌ مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ مُبَارَكَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ (النور)

'And when you enter houses greet one another with a greeting from Allaah, blessed and good. In this way Allaah makes the Signs clear to you so that hopefully you will use your intellect.'

A person asked Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), "Which action is the best?"

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said,

تطعم الطعام وتقرء السلام علي من عرفت ومن لم تعرف

"Feed and make salaam to those you know and those you do not know." [Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim]

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) also mentioned, "You people cannot enter *jannah* until you believe. You cannot believe until you do not have mutual love. Should I not tell you of such an action which if you practise upon, will create mutual love? Spread the *salaam* amongst you."

(b) The method of making *salaam*

The person saying *salaam* should say

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

The person answering should say

وَعَلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامُ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

Even if the person commencing the *salaam* or the one answering is alone, then too the plural form should be used.

A sahaabi (radiyallaahu anhu) came to Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) and said,

السلام عليكم

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) replied and he sat down. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) remarked, "Ten rewards."

Another person came and said,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) replied to him and he also sat down. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) remarked "Twenty rewards."

A third person came and said,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) replied to him and he too sat down. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) remarked, "Thirty rewards." [Sunan Abu Daawud, Jaami' at-Tirmidhi]

NOTE : From here we learn that to say 'Assalaamu 'Alaykum' is sufficient. By adding 'Wa Rahmatullaahi wa Barakaatuhu', more reward is attained.

(c) Teach the child the etiquettes of *salaam*

Abu Hurayrah (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "The one on a conveyance should make *salaam* to the one walking. The walking person should make *salaam* to the one sitting. The smaller group should make *salaam* to the larger group." [Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim]

Another narration states, "The younger ones should make *salaam* to the elder ones." [Sahih al-Bukhaari, Translation p. 437]

(d) Prevent the child from imitating other nations

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "He who imitates others, is not from amongst us. Do not imitate the Jews or the Christians. The greeting of the Jews is with their fingers and the greeting of the Christians is a gesture of the hands." [Jaami' at-Tirmidhi]

The purpose of this prohibition is that the social etiquettes and moral specialities of Islam should be kept distinct from the features of other nations and groups.

(e) The mentor should precede the child in making *salaam*

The purpose of this is so that the child learns this habit from his mentor. One will also be imitating the action of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), since Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) would greet with *salaam* when passing by children.

In a hadith, it is mentioned that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) passed by some children who were playing. He (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) greeted them. [Sunan Abu Daawud]

In one narration, Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said to them, "O children, As *salaamu* 'alaykum.'" [Ibn us-sunni]

(f) Teach the child to say 'wa 'alaykum' in response to the greeting of a non-Muslim. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "When the *ahl al kitaab* (Jews and Christians) make *salaam* to you, then say 'wa 'alaykum'. Do not take the initiative to say the *salaam*. A narration states, "Do not precede the Jews and Christians in making *salaam*." [Sahih Muslim]

NOTE: If due to some experience, some other greeting words are used, then there is no harm in this.-Translator

(g) To initiate the *salaam* is *sunnah* and to reply is *waajib* (compulsory). Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "Whoever answers the *salaam*, then it is a means of rewards for him. Whoever does not answer is not from amongst us." [Ibn us-sunni]

Abu Umaama (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) was asked, "O Rasul of Allaah! If two people meet, then who should initiate the *salaam*?" Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "He whose relationship is closer to Allaah." [Jaami' at-Tirmidhi]

Another narration states that the person who greets with *salaam* first is closer to Allaah Ta'ala. [Sunan Abu Daawud]

It is *makruh* (disliked) to make *salaam* to the following people:

A person making *wudu'*, bathing, eating or those who are arguing and fighting. Similarly, a person making *tilaawah* of the Noble Qur'aan, *dhikr* of Allaah Ta'ala, *talbiyah* during Hajj, a person giving a *khutbah* or delivering a lecture, a person imparting lessons or advice in a *masjid* or *madrasah*, a person giving *adhaan* or *iqaamah* as well as a person involved in fulfilling his basic necessities.

If any person greets one of those persons, then it is not compulsory for them to answer.

NOTE: It is appropriate not to make *salaam* to a person driving a motor-bike or bicycle, because a slight amount of negligence on their part can lead to an accident. However, if the rider regards it appropriate and he makes *salaam*, then there is no harm in this. Similarly, it will be permissible if the person eating himself makes *salaam*.-Translator

(3). Etiquette of seeking permission to enter

There are a few etiquettes of seeking permission that should be embedded and taught to the child.

Allaah Ta'ala states,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِيَسْتَأْذِنَكُمْ الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ وَحِينَ تَضَعُونَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِنَ الظَّهِيرَةِ وَمِنْ بَعْدِ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ ثَلَاثُ عَوْرَاتٍ لَكُمْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌ بَعْدَ هُنَّ طَوَّافُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

‘You who believe! Those you own as slaves and those of you who have not yet reached puberty should ask permission to enter at three times: before the Dawn Prayer, when you have undressed at noon, and after the ‘Ishaa’ prayer – three times of nakedness for you. There is nothing wrong for you or them at other times in moving around among yourselves from one to another. In this way Allaah makes the Signs clear to you. Allaah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.’ [Surah an-Nur (Light) 24:58]

In this *ayah*, Allaah Ta'ala is commanding the mentors to teach their children who have not matured as yet to seek permission at three times:

- (1) Before Fajr –since people are sleeping at this time.
- (2) In the afternoon – since this time is for *qaylulah* (siesta).
- (3) After Esha – this is the time for sleeping.

Once these children reach the age of puberty, then at all times they should seek permission, practicing on the following *ayah*.

وَإِذَا بَلَغَ الْأَطْفَالُ مِنْكُمُ الْحُلُمَ فَلْيَسْتَأْذِنُوا كَمَا اسْتَأْذَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

‘Once your children have reached puberty, they should ask your permission to enter as those before them also asked permission. In this way Allaah makes His signs clear to you. Allaah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.’ [Surah an-Nur (Light) 24:59]

These guidelines of the Noble Qur’aan show us that Islam lays a lot of stress on social training and moral upbringing of children so that when they reach the age of puberty, they can portray a living example of the perfect person in their character, etiquettes and lifestyle.

The method of seeking permission

(a) First make *salaam*, and then seek permission. A hadith states, "First make *salaam*, then request, 'May I enter?' " [Sunan Abu Daawud]

(b) At the time of seeking permission, mention your name or title. Abu Musaa (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) went to the well of a certain garden. Abu Bakr (radiyallaahu anhu) also came and sought permission to enter. Abu Musaa (radiyallaahu anhu) asked, "Who is there?" He answered, "Abu Bakr!" Then 'Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) came and sought permission. On being asked who was there, he replied, "'Umar." [Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim]

Jaabir (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates, "I went to the house of Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) and knocked on the door. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) asked, "Who is there?" I replied, "Me." Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) remarked, "Me, me (how will I know who you are?)."

From here we learn that at such an occasion, one's name or title should be mentioned so as not to inconvenience the questionnaire.

(c) Seek permission thrice

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "Seek permission thrice. If you are granted permission then very well. Otherwise return."

It is preferable that between the first and second knocking, so much time passes in which a person can perform four rakats of *salaah*. It is possible that when permission was sought, the person inside was engaged in *salaah* or relieving himself.

NOTE: An increase or decrease in this amount can be applied according to time and occasion. This should also be kept in mind when ringing the bell i.e. Ring after a while so that the house people are not placed in difficulty.-Translator

(d) Do not knock too loudly on the door.

This is more so when the owner of the house is one's father, *ustaadh* (teacher) or spiritual guide. The pious predecessors used to knock on the doors of their pious with their fingernails. However, if the door is far from the room, then knock accordingly so that the purpose is attained. Similarly, the bell should not be sounded too loudly so that the people inside the house are put into difficulty, and they can gauge the good character and soft nature of the visiting person.

(e) At the time of seeking permission, stand on the side of the door. When Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) would go to the house of any person, he (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) would not stand in front of the door, but would stand on the left or right side and then say, '*Assalaamu 'Alaykum*'. [Sunan Abu Daawud]

In one narration, Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "Seeking permission has been stipulated due to the gaze." [*Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim*]

Therefore, when seeking permission, never stand in front of the door since the gaze may fall onto the women folk of the house.

(f) If the house people do not grant permission, then go away happily (ie. not taking offence)

Allaah Ta'ala states,

وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمْ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ (النور)

'And if you are told to go away then go away. That is purer for you.'

These are the Islamic etiquettes that the mentor should imbue within himself and should teach his child.

(4) The etiquettes of a gathering

(a) Make *musaafahah* (shake hands) with whomsoever you meet in a gathering.

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "When two Muslims meet, shake hands, praise Allaah and seek His forgiveness, then Allaah will forgive them both." [*Sunan Abu Daawud*]

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "When any two Muslims meet and shake hands, then before separating, Allaah forgives them both." [*Jaami' at-Tirmidhi*]

'Ataa' Khuraasaani (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said to him, "Shake hands with each other. It removes hatred and jealousy. Exchange gifts. It creates love and dispels enmity."

(b) The guest should sit wherever the host asks him to sit

This is because the owner of the house is aware of the more suitable sitting place and it is his right to seat the guest whersoever he wishes. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "Whichever person goes to any house, then he should sit at that place which the home-owner directs him to since he knows fully well what is suitable." [*Majma' uz-Zawaa'id*]

(c) Do not sit in the middle of a gathering

This is a social etiquette. By sitting in the middle of a gathering, the backs of some will be towards others, thus causing inconvenience. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) cursed the person who sat in the middle of a gathering. [*Sunan Abu Daawud*]

If due to lack of space, a person is forced to sit in the centre then there is no sin or harm. [Translation p. 444]

(d) Do not sit between people without their permission

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "It is not permissible for any person to sit between two people and be a cause of their separation, unless they grant permission." In one narration, it is stated, "No person should sit between two people except with their permission."

(e) The latecomer should sit wherever the gathering ends

Jaabir bin Samurah (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates, "When we used to go to Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), then we would sit wherever there was place." [Sunan Abu Daawud, Jaami' at-Tirmidhi]

This law applies when the visitor is an ordinary person. However if the person is an 'aalim or person of status, then there is no harm if the owner of the house or the people in the gathering offer him a suitable or distinguished place.

(f) If three people are in a gathering, then two should not speak privately.

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "When you are three, then two should not speak privately, excluding the third, so that he is not offended (and so that he is not afflicted by evil thoughts)." [Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim]

(g) Du'aa' for expiation of the gathering

When Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) intended to arise from a gathering, then he would say,

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ

"O Allaah! You are pure and all praises are solely for You. I testify that there is none worthy of worship save You. I seek Your forgiveness and I turn to You." [Mustadrak Haakim]

One person enquired, "O Messenger of Allaah, today you have recited a du'aa' which you have not recited before."

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "This du'aa' will make amends for those errors which occurred in the gathering."

(5) The etiquettes of Conversation

From childhood, the mentor should tutor his child in the method of conversation and the principles of answering. Some of these are mentioned hereunder.

(a) Speak in fluent Arabic

The Arabic language is the language of the Noble Qur'aan, Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) and the language of the devoted adherents of Islam, the Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum). It is an act of ingratitude to leave eloquent and pure Arabic and to use kitchen Arabic that has no relationship with the Arabic language. To speak with eloquence is an ornament for a person. Talking in a sweet tone is a means of beauty for one. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) once stated, "Man's beauty is his eloquence and rhetoric. *[Mustadrak Haakim]*

NOTE: The same law applies to other languages as well.

(b) Speak slowly and clearly

'Aa'ishah (radiyallaahu anha) stated that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) did not speak hastily like you people. He would speak in such a way that if someone wanted to count the words of his speech, they could do so." *[Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim]*

In Ismaa'ili's narration, it is mentioned that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s speech was so clear and distinct that it would affect the heart.

In *Sunan Abu Daawud*, 'Aa'ishah (radiyallaahu anha) states that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s speech was so clear and distinct that every listener could understand it.

(c) The prohibition of exaggeration in eloquence

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "Allaah dislikes the person speaking in this way that he moves his tongue in the same way as a cow moves its tongue (in its mouth)". *[Sunan Abu Daawud, Jaami' at-Tirmidhi]*

Anas (radiyallaahu anhu) mentions that when Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) used to say anything, he would repeat it thrice so that he could be understood, and when he would pass by any people, he would make *salaam* to them.

The conversation of Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) was very eloquent. It was not very lengthy, nor too concise. He would not speak a lot. He disliked speaking unnaturally by twirling the mouth.

(d) Speak according to the understanding of people

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "We, the group of *Ambiyaa'*, have been commanded to speak according to the understanding of people." *[Daylami]*

‘Ali (radiyallaahu anhu) stated, “Speak to people such things which they understand and know. Do you like that Allaah Ta’ala and His Messenger ((sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)) be belied?” [Sahih al-Bukhaari]

(e) Speak neither too concise, nor too long

The speaker should not be so short that it causes difficulty in understanding the message, nor so long that it will exhaust the people. Jaabir bin Samurah (radiyallaahu anhu) states that he performed *salaah* with Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). His *salaah* was moderate and his *khutbah* was moderate. (Sahih Muslim)

(f) Listen attentively

When Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) spoke to the sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum), they would listen attentively. It seemed as though birds were perched atop their heads. Similarly, Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) would listen with complete attention to any person who asked him a question and he would reply to the person in a very gentle and soft manner.

Anas (radiyallaahu anhu) states, “I never saw Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) moving his head from any person who wished to speak to him (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) until that person moved his head away first; and I never saw Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) removing his blessed hand from the hand of any person until that person himself did not remove it.” [Sunan Abu Daawud]

NOTE : *Subhaanallaah!* This was the character of Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) regarding whom we have been commanded to follow. On this basis, Allaah Ta’ala states:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

And you possess lofty character. [Surah al-Qalam 68:4]

(g) Address all present during one’s speech

Etiquette of speech is that the speaker should keep his attention focussed on all those present. Every person should feel that he is being personally addressed. This was the manner of Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) that every sahaabi (radiyallaahu anhu) felt that he was the beloved of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam).

(h) Add some light hearted speech during the lecture

During and after the lecture, interpolate the speech with some humorous and light-hearted talk so that the people do not become tired and bored.

(6) The etiquettes of humor

Islam encourages Muslims to become familiar with others and let others become familiar with them. It commands its followers to imbibe good character, a good nature, a smiling countenance, and beautiful qualities and to display beautiful conduct. When people meet them, they become attracted to them. Humor and light-heartedness also have certain etiquettes and bounds which must be followed.

(a) There must be moderation in humor

Abundance of laughter kills the heart and creates enmity and antagonism. It encourages juniors to take liberties with their elders.

‘Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) states, “The person who laughs a lot, his awe decreases, and he who jokes a lot, his dignity diminishes.”

(b) Do not insult others whilst joking

Humor with friends, family members and household members is commendable. However, the condition of this humor is that no one should be caused inconvenience, nor should anyone be embarrassed or disgraced and this humor should not cause grief to anyone.

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) prevented the sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) from such humour that caused offence to anyone.

‘Abdullaah bin as-Saa’ib (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates from his father who narrates from his grandfather that he heard Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) saying, “None of you should take the possessions of another person, in jest or in earnestness. Whichever Muslim takes the staff of his Muslim brother should return it.” [*Sunan Abu Daawud, Jaami‘ at-Tirmidhi*]

‘Aamir bin Rabi‘ah (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that one person took the shoe of someone else and hid it. This was brought to the notice of Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) who said, “Do not frighten any Muslim, because to frighten him is a very great injustice.”

Think for yourself! What will be the condition of the person that lowers the respect of another, backbites, disgraces someone, or destroys the sanctity of *din* while joking. It is obvious that such a person is a sinner. Whether he is aware or not, he is involved in an impermissible and *haraam* action.

NOTE: In these times, generally joking exceeds the limits. Therefore, one should abstain from doing so, as has been mentioned above.

(c) Abstain from lies whilst joking

Many people enact gatherings wherein they mention fabricated and fictional events. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) has severely reprimanded such people. "Destruction to that person who says such words which are untrue just to make people laugh. For him is destruction, for him is destruction." [*Sunan Abu Daawud, Jaami' at- Tirmidhi*]

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) also said, "It is an act of great betrayal of trust that you utter such words to your brother which he regards to be true, whereas you are speaking lies." [*Sunan Abu Daawud, Musnad Ahmad*]

In another narration, Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "None of you can be a true believer until he does not abstain from lies in his jokes or fights, even if he is on the truth." [*Musnad Ahmad, Tabaraani*]

In our areas, playing April fools has become common. It is a very demeaning and evil action. This has been adopted from the western culture. It has no relationship with our lofty Islamic traits and beautiful habits. Together with this, it is a lie which is completely *haram*. This should be abandoned completely.

NOTE: How unfortunate that decent people are also involved in it!-Translator

A few examples of Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam)'s humor

(1) Anas (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that a Bedouin by the name of Zaahir (radiyallaahu anhu) presented a gift to Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). When he decided to return to his hometown, Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) sent gifts for him. On one occasion, Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "Zaahir is our village friend and we are his city friend." [*Jaami' at-Tirmidhi*]

Regarding exchanging of gifts, Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) had such beautiful conduct which should be followed by everyone, whether it be a common person or learned one, a shaykh or a murid (disciple)-Translator

(2) Zayd bin Aslam (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that a woman came to Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) and said, "My husband is thinking of you." Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) asked, "Who? The one in whose eyes there is whiteness." She said, "There is no whiteness in his eyes."

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "Definitely there is whiteness in his eyes."

She said, "By Allaah, it is not so."

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) then said, “There is no person in whose eyes there is no whiteness. In every person’s eyes there must be whiteness.”

The mentor should ensure that he follows the pattern of Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) in this aspect also and teaches it to his children so that they can live in society adopting Islamic character traits.

(7) The etiquettes of Congratulations

Congratulating Muslims and making them happy is a great act of virtue in Islam. After the obligatory duties, this is most pleasing to Allaah Ta’ala, a means of forgiveness and a path leading one to *jannah*.

(1) Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “That person who meets his brother to please him, in the way which he likes, Allaah will make him happy on the Day of Judgement.” [*Tabaraani*]

(2) Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “Amongst the causes of forgiveness is that you make your Muslim brother happy.” [*Tabaraani*]

(3) Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) also mentioned, “After the *faraa’id* (obligatory duties), the most beloved action in the sight of Allaah is to make a Muslim happy.” [*Tabaraani*]

(4) Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “Whoever pleases a Muslim family, Allaah will not be pleased with any reward less than *jannah* for him.” [*Tabaraani*]

EXPRESSIONS AT THE TIME OF CONGRATULATING

(1) When a child is born

When congratulating a person who has just got a child say

بُورِكَ لَكَ بِالْمَوْهُوبِ وَشَكَرْتَ الْوَاهِبَ وَرَزَقْتَ بَرَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَشَدَّهُ

“May Allah Ta’ala bless you in the gift, may you be granted the ability to be grateful to the giver of the child, may the child be obedient to you and may he reach adulthood.”

The person being congratulated should reply

بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لَكَ وَعَلَيْكَ وَرَزَقَكَ اللَّهُ مِثْلَهُ

“May Allaah Ta’ala bless you, send His blessing upon you and grant you likewise.”

The above *du‘aa’s* are quoted from Hasan bin ‘Ali (radiyallaahu anhu) and Hasan Basri (rahimahullaah).

(2) When one returns from a journey

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي سَلَّمَكَ وَجَمَعَ الشَّمْلَ بِكَ وَأَكْرَمَكَ

“All praises are solely for Allaah who has protected you, made you successful and honoured you.”

These words have been narrated from the pious predecessors.

(3) On returning from *jihaad*

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي نَصَرَكَ وَأَعَزَّكَ وَأَكْرَمَكَ

“All praises are solely for Allaah who has assisted you, honored you and elevated you.”

(4) On returning from Hajj

قَبِلَ اللَّهُ حَجَّكَ وَغَفَرَ ذَنْبَكَ وَأَخْلَفَ نَفَقَتَكَ

“May Allaah Ta’ala accept your Hajj, forgive your sins and grant you a recompense for your expenses.”

(5) On the occasion of marriage

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) used to congratulate the person who got married with the following words,

بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لَكَ وَبَارَكَ عَلَيْكَ وَجَمَعَ بَيْنَكُمَا فِي خَيْرٍ

“May Allaah bless you, send blessing upon you, and unite the two of you in goodness.” [Sunan Abu Daawud, Jaami’ at-Tirmidhi]

(6) On the day of ‘*Id*

After ‘*Id salaah*, one Muslim should say to the next,

تَقَبَّلَ اللَّهُ مِنَّا وَمِنْكَ

“May Allaah Ta’ala accept from us and from you.”

(7) Showing gratitude for a favor

If someone has done a favor to you, then it is *mustahab* to say the following words to him,

بَارَكَ اللَّهُ فِي أَهْلِكَ وَمَالِكَ وَجَزَاكَ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا

“May Allaah Ta’ala grant blessing in your family and wealth and may He grant you a good recompense.”

Usaamaah bin Zayd (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates the Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “If one does good to another and he says ‘Jazaakallaahu Khayra’, then he has fulfilled the right of appreciation.”

Remember that when congratulating and making du’a’, no such words must be used which have been taken from non-Muslims or which portray the era of ignorance. The reason for this is so that a Muslim remains firm and steadfast on his beliefs and Islamic principles even on such occasions.

It is *Mustahab* to present a Gift together with congratulating

When a child is born, when someone returns from a journey or during any happy occasion, then together with congratulating it is better that one presents a gift as well. Many ahaadith encourage giving of gifts. ‘Aa’ishah (radiyallaahu anha) narrates

تَهَادُّوا وَهَاجِرُوا تُورِثُوا أَبْنَاءَكُمْ مَجْدًا وَاقْبَلُوا الْكِرَامَ عَثْرَاتِهِمْ (طبراني وعسكري)

“Exchange gifts and migrate so that you can give your children honor. Overlook the faults of your honorable people.” [Tabaraani, ‘Askari]

‘Aa’ishah (radiyallaahu anha) narrates that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said,

تَهَادُّوا تَحَابُّوا

“Exchange gifts, this will engender love.” [Tabaraani]

Ordinarily, it is *mustahab* to exchange gifts. On occasions of happiness, to bestow gifts is superior. This is a splendid mode to create unity amongst the Muslims.

NOTE: Gifts should not be given due to custom. One should give a gift sincerely and should not desire anything in exchange for it as generally occurs during weddings-Translator

(4) Etiquettes of Visiting the Sick

From amongst the important etiquettes which the mentor should direct his child to adopt is that of visiting the sick. This is so that the child learns to share in the sorrow and pain of others. For this reason, Islam has not only enjoined visiting the sick, but has regarded it as a right of one Muslim over the other.

Abu Hurayrah (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates from Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam),

حق المسلم على المسلم خمس رد السلام وزيارة المريض واتباع الجنائز واجابة الراعي وافشاء السلام (بخاري ومسلم)

“The right of one Muslim over another is five:

1. Replying to the *salaam*
2. Visiting the sick
3. Following the bier
4. Accepting an invitation
5. Spreading the *salaam*.”

The etiquettes of visiting a sick person are as follows:

(a) Hasten to visit

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

اِذَا مَرِضَ فَعُدَّهُ

“When a Muslim falls ill, then visit him.”

From this hadith, we learn that as soon as possible, one should visit the sick person. From other ahaadith, we learn that after three days should one visit. The ‘ulemaa’ have reconciled these ahaadith by stating that if the sickness is grave, then one should visit as soon as possible. For normal sicknesses, one should visit after three days.

(b) Do not prolong the visit

A visitor should not prolong his visit causing inconvenience to the ill person. If the ill person attains comfort by the visitor, and his heart feels gladdened by him, then there is no harm in staying longer.

(c) Make *du‘aa* by the sick person

‘Aa’ishah (radiyallaahu anha) narrates that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) would pass his right hand over the sick and recite,

اَللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّ النَّاسِ اَذْهَبِ الْبَاسَ اِشْفِ اَنْتَ الشَّافِي لَا شِفَاءَ اِلَّا شِفَاؤُكَ شِفَاءً لَا يُعَادِرُ سَقَمًا

“O Allaah, Rabb of the people, remove the illness. Cure, for you are the curer. There is no cure, but you cure, such a cure that will not bring back illness.” [Sahih al-Bukhaari, Sahih Muslim]

(d) Remind and teach the sick person a *du‘aa’*

Abu ‘Abdullaah ‘Uthmaan bin Abul-‘Aas (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that he complained to Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) of pain in his body. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “Place your hand on that portion of the body where there is pain. Read *Bismillaah* thrice and the following *du‘aa’* seven times,

اَعُوْذُ بِعِزَّةِ اللّٰهِ وَقُدْرَتِهِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا اَجِدُ وَاُحَاذِرُ

“I seek refuge with Allaah, through His Honor and Power, from the evil of the pain which I find and which I fear.”

(e) Enquire about the health of the sick person from his family members

In *Sahih al-Bukhaari* mention is made that ‘Ali (radiyallaahu anhu) went to Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) during his final illness. People asked, “O Abul Hasan! How did Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) spend the night?”

He replied:

اَصْبَحَ بِحَمْدِ اللّٰهِ بَارِئًا

“All praise is to Allaah, he is much better this morning.”

(f) To sit at the head-side is *mustahab*

‘Abdullaah bin ‘Abbaas (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that when Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) used to visit any sick person, then he would sit at the head side and recite 7 times,

اَسْأَلُ اللّٰهَ الْعَظِيْمَ رَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيْمِ اَنْ يَّشْفِيكَ

“I beseech Allaah, the Great, Lord of the supreme throne, that He cure you.”

(If the sick person is a woman, then ‘*An Yashfiki*’ will be recited)

(g) Delight the sick person by giving him *du'aa'*

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "When you visit a sick person, then make *du'aa'* for long life for him. What is ordained (*taqdir*) will not change, but the heart of the sick person will become pleased." Say this to him,

لَا بَأْسَ ظَهَرَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

"Do not be perplexed. If Allaah wishes, this will be an expiation of sins."

(h) Request for *du'aa'* from the sick person

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "When you visit a sick person, then request him to make *du'aa'* for you, since his making *du'aa'* for you is like the *du'aa'* of the angels."

NOTE: There is general neglect of this sunnah. Therefore, we should practice on it since much virtue has been established for a sick person's *du'aa'*.

(i) Remind the sick one to recite the *kalimah* if death approaches

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said,

لَقِّنُوا مَوْتَاكُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

"Remind your dying ones of 'Laa ilaaha illa Allaah'.

In *Sunan Abu Daawud*, the following narration is mentioned,

مَنْ كَانَ آخِرُ كَلَامِهِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ

"The person whose final speech is 'Laa ilaaha illa Allaah' will enter jannah."

The reciter will be from amongst the first groups to enter *jannah*. As for a disbeliever, it is necessary for him to testify in *risaalah* (accepting Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) as a messenger) also.

(9) The Etiquettes of Condolence (*Ta'ziyah*)

It is a Muslim's duty to offer *ta'ziyah* to the bereaved when either someone passes away or he is afflicted with some loss. *Ta'ziyah* means to condole the bereaved of a deceased person by words of sympathy and *masnun du'aa's* in such a way that his grief becomes less and it becomes easy for him to endure the loss.

Thus, it is *mustahab* to sympathize and offer condolences, even if it be to a *dhimmi* (disbeliever).

(1) Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “Whichever believer offers condolence to his Muslim brother at the time of calamity, Allaah will clothe him with clothes of honor and respect.” [Ibn Maajah]

(2) Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “The person who consoles a bereaved person will get the same reward as the bereaved.” [Jaami‘ at-Tirmidhi]

It is appropriate to offer condolences to all the members of a deceased person’s family whether big or small, men or women. This can be done before or after burial but should be done within three days. If the person offering condolence or the bereaved person is not present, then there is no harm in offering condolence after three days. The important principles of condolence are:

(a) As far as possible, offer condolences with the *masnun* words

Imaam Nawawi (rahimahullaah) has written that it is permissible to use any words of condolence. However, our elders have regarded the following words to be *mustahab*,

أَعْظَمَ اللَّهُ أَجْرَكَ وَأَحْسَنَ عَزَاءَكَ وَغَفَرَ لِمَيِّتِكَ

“May Allaah Ta’ala increase your reward, may he cause you to be patient, and may He forgive your deceased.”

(b) Arrange food for the household members of the deceased

Islam has regarded the arrangement of food for the household members of the deceased as *mustahab* (preferred). Due to the demise of a close family member or friend, their hearts are shattered. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) thus said, “Arrange food for the family of Ja’far (radiyallaahu anhu), since such a calamity has befallen them which has made them inattentive.”

There is unanimity of the great imaams that it is *makruh* for the household members to cook food for those who come for condolence. The jurists have excluded those people who come from far-off distances for condolences, and there is no other avenue except that the household members host them.

(c) To express grief and remorse at the time of condolence

Express feelings of sorrow in front of the deceased person’s family. Mention those ahaadith related to the virtues of exercising patience on calamities and difficulties. To smile, laugh, futile speech and joking is

disrespectful. The best manner is to make *du'aa'* of mercy for the deceased, express sorrow and mention his good qualities. The pious predecessors used to do likewise.

(d) Advise in a suitable manner on seeing some wrongdoing

When going to a house for condolence and on seeing any matter contrary to the *shari'ah*, then it is one's responsibility to proclaim the truth in a well-wishing tone, without fear of blame. One should not fear the reproach of any person.

Jarir (radiyallaahu anhu) states that he pledged allegiance to Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) on obedience and well-wishing for every Muslim.

(10) The Etiquettes of Sneezing

(a) A person who sneezes should say

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

and the one who hears should reply with the words

يَرْحَمُكَ اللَّهُ

Abu Hurayrah (radiyallaahu anhu) narrated that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "If any of you sneezes, he should say

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

In reply, his companion should say

يَرْحَمُكَ اللَّهُ

The one who sneezed should then say,

يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ or يَهْدِيكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيُصْلِحْ بَالَكُمْ

[Jaami' at-Tirmidhi, Sunan Abu Daawud]

(b) If the one who sneezed did not say '*Alhamdulillah*', then a reply should not be given.

Abu Musaa Ash'ari (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "If any one of you sneezes and says '*Alhamdulillah*' then answer him with '*Yarhamukallaah*'. And if he does not say '*Alhamdulillah*', then do not reply to him."

(c) When sneezing, place the hand on the mouth and lower the sound.

Abu Hurayrah (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that when Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) was about to sneeze, he would place his hand or handkerchief over his mouth. By this, he would keep the sound down. [Sunan Abu Daawud, Jaami' at-Tirmidhi]

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) also mentioned, "Allaah Ta'ala does not like raising the voice when sneezing or yawning." [Ibn us-Sunni]

(d) Answer a person's sneeze only three times.

If a person sneezes continuously, then it is *sunnah* to answer only thrice. Salmah bin Akwa' (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates, "A person sneezed in front of Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). I was present there. On that person's 'Alhamdulillah', Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) replied with 'Yarhamukallaah'. On his second or third sneeze, Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "'Yarhamukallaah', he has got a cold." [Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abu Daawud, Jaami' at-Tirmidhi]

Many 'ulemaa' have stated that it is *mustahab* not to say 'Yarhamukallaah' after the third sneeze but to make *du'aa'* of good health for that person. [Translation p. 473]

(e) A non-Muslim's sneeze should be replied to with the words

يَهْدِيكُمْ اللَّهُ

Abu Musa Ash'ari (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that the Jews would purposely sneeze in front of Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) so that he would answer them with the *du'aa'*

يَرْحَمَكَ اللَّهُ

However, he (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) would answer with

يَهْدِيكُمْ اللَّهُ وَيُصْلِحْ بَالَكُمْ

(f) Reply should not be given to a strange woman

The view of most 'ulemaa' is that if a strange women sneezes, then it is *makruh-tahrimi* to answer. If the woman is old, then there is no harm in answering.

Ibn Jawzi (rahimahullaah) states that an 'aabid (worshipper) person sat near Imaam Ahmad bin Hanbal (rahimahullaah). Imaam Ahmad's wife sneezed. The person answered. Imaam Ahmad (rahimahullaah) exclaimed "This is an ignorant worshipper." What he meant was that this

person did not even know the ruling that to answer a strange woman is *makruh*.

(11) The Etiquettes of Yawning

(a) Yawning should be suppressed to the best of one's ability.

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "Allaah Ta'ala likes sneezing and dislikes yawning. Whoever of you sneezes and says '*Alhamdulillah*', then whoever hears him should answer with '*Yarhamukallaah*'. Yawning is prompted by *shaytaan*. When a yawn comes to you then suppress it to the best of your ability because when any of you yawns, then *shaytaan* laughs at you."

(b) At the time of yawning, place the hand on the mouth

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "When a yawn comes to one of you, then he should place his hand over his mouth, because *shaytaan* enters the mouth."

The view of most '*ulemaa*' is that it is *mustahab* to place the hand over the mouth, whether one is in *salaah* or not.

(c) To raise the voice whilst yawning is *makruh*

Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "Allaah Ta'ala loves sneezing and dislikes yawning. When any one of you wants to yawn, then he should not say Ah! Ah! (i.e. make any sound), since this is prompted by *shaytaan*. On hearing this sound, he laughs."

NOTE: The pious predecessors have said that when one has the urge to yawn then he should reflect that Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) never yawned. If Allaah Ta'ala wishes, the urge to yawn will fade away.-Translator

All of these etiquettes are of great importance. The mentor should ensure that he implements them in his home with his children and family members so that they can adorn themselves with Islamic teachings in their social life.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF SOCIETY

From a young age, the child must be trained to observe society carefully. This is very important for his character building. Whenever the need arises, he must be taught to offer constructive criticism and suggestions and he should be ready to correct his companions. In whichever he finds wrongdoing, he should continue advising and encouraging. Important points concerning this are:

(1) Moulding public opinion is a social obligation

Islam requires the guiding of public opinion along correct lines. This is a duty imposed on the whole *ummah* by commanding righteousness and forbidding evil. No one is exempted from this responsibility. This obligation has been placed on every Muslim, be he a ruler, scholar or common person, men, women, young, old, employer or employee. The proof is the following verse of the Noble Qur'aan,

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

‘You are the best nation ever to be produced before mankind. You enjoin the right, forbid the wrong and believe in Allaah.’ [Surah Aal ‘Imraan (the Family of ‘Imraan) 3:110]

Regarding the collective and social obligation of the Muslims, Allaah Ta’ala states,

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

‘The men and women of the believers are friends of one another. They command what is right and forbid what is wrong, and establish the prayer and pay zakaah, and obey Allaah and His Messenger. They are the people on whom Allaah will have mercy. Allaah is Almighty, All-Wise.’ [Surah at-Tawba (Repentance) 9:71]

When the sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) pledged allegiance to Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), he commanded them to be obedient in ease and difficulty, in happiness and in sorrow and that they will speak the truth wherever they may be. They should not fear the criticism of any criticizer in conveying the truth and the message of Allaah Ta’ala.

Commanding good and preventing evil is compulsory on all individuals of the Muslim *ummah* and this is a social obligation. Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “When the Bani Israa’il fell into sin, then their ‘*ulemaa*’ prevented them. The people did not listen. Their scholars continued eating, drinking and mingling with them. Allaah Ta’ala made their hearts similar. Daawud (alayhis salaam) and ‘Isaa (alayhis salaam) cursed them. This was due to their disobedience and because they exceeded the bounds.”

Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) also said, “I take an oath by that Being in whose hands my life lies, continue commanding good and preventing evil. Otherwise, soon Allaah will send punishment on you. You will then make *du‘aa*’ and He will not accept.” [Jaami‘ at-Tirmidhi]

The mentor should create boldness and courage in the words and action of the new generation so that from the beginning he can grow up protecting the rights of others, fulfilling the obligation of commanding righteousness and preventing evil.

(2) Important principles

(a) The preacher's words and deeds should match

Allaah Ta'ala states,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

'You who believe! Why do you say what you do not do? It is deeply abhorrent to Allaah that you should say what you do not do.' [Surah as-Saff (the Ranks) 61:2 & 3]

أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

'Do you order people to devoutness and forget yourselves, when you recite the Book? Will you not use your intellect?' [Surah al-Baqarah (the Cow) 2:44]

Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "On the Day of *Qiyaamah*, a person will be brought and thrown in the fire. People will say, "O so and so, what has happened to you? Did you not command us with righteousness and prevent us from evil?" He will say, "Yes. I used to command righteousness but did not practice accordingly. I used to prevent others from evil, but used to engage in it myself."

In another hadith, Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) states, "On the night wherein I journeyed (*for Mi'raaj*), I passed such people whose lips were being cut by scissors of fire. I asked Jibraa'il (alayhis salaam), "Who are those people?" He replied, "These are the lecturers of your *ummah* who used to say such things which they did not practice upon. They used to recite the book of Allaah but would not practice on it." [*Ibn-e-Abi ad-Dunyaa, Bayhaqi*]

It was the habit of the pious predecessors that before bringing themselves and their children onto good actions and inculcating the fear of Allaah Ta'ala, they disliked calling others to Allaah Ta'ala and teaching. Before commanding others to do anything, 'Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) would strictly command his family members to practice upon *din*.

The lecturers and advisers should therefore create in themselves these beautiful qualities so that people could accept their speech and practice on their advices.

(b) The evil stopped should be an action whose prohibition is unanimous

If any Muslim stops another Muslim from an evil action, then this action should be such an evil which the jurists and imaams of *fiqh* are unanimous. If the matter is such in which the trustworthy and reliable imaams differ, then in the eyes of the *shari'ah* this will not be regarded as abominable. Understand this well!

Thereafter the respected author has clarified the importance and necessity of *taqlid* that is worth studying. He says,

من قَلَّدَ عَالِمًا لَقِيَ اللَّهَ سَالِمًا

“Whoever follows an ‘aalim, will meet Allaah Ta’ala in a perfect state.”

Thereafter he states, “Those who object to others that they are *muqallids* (followers), are actually making the claim that they are the *mujtahids* of this era. By this evil action of theirs, they are forgetting the unity of the *ummah* and are becoming a barrier in the path of Muslim honor, success and benefit.” (May Allaah Ta’ala save us)

Thereafter the author (rahimahullaah) advises that we should unite and practice on those *masaa'il* and matters which the ‘ulemaa’ and jurists are unanimous upon. In those *masaa'il* in which there is difference of opinion, we should regard each other as excused and we should not belie or belittle others.

NOTE: *Subhaanallaah!* If we practice on it, then many arguments will be easily solved. A pleasant atmosphere of unity will be established.

Similarly, in this era, every group that is serving *din* according to the *sunnah* pattern, in whichever branch it may be, should be supported and aided. They should all be regarded as *ma'jur* (worthy of reward) and not *ma'dhur* (excused).

(c) Condemnation of evil should be done gradually

Firstly, the source of evil must be traced without spying. The person doing the evil must be reminded that his acts are evil. Through lectures and talks, one should encourage the person to give up his evil. If this does not have an effect, rebuke the evildoer strongly. If this too fails, warn the evil doer of stern retribution. As a final resort, if one can, one should stop the evil physically. For this, the whole nation (in fact, the government) should be prepared so that mischief does not spread.

(d) The reformer/corrector should be soft natured and have good character

A Soft-nature and noble character are such qualities that are necessary and binding on those involved in the effort of *da'wah* and *tabligh*.

'Amr bin Shu'ayb (radiyallaahu anhu) narrates that Rasulullaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "Whoever commands righteousness should do so in a beautiful manner." Another narration states, "Allaah Ta'ala is gentle and He loves gentleness. He grants due to gentleness that which He does not grant to anything else." [Sahih Muslim]

Abu Hurayrah (radiyallaahu anhu) mentions that once a village dweller urinated in the masjid. People went towards him to punish him. Nabi (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "Leave him. Pour a bucket of water over the urine. This is because you have been sent to spread gentleness and not harshness."

An orator went to Abu Ja'far Mansur and spoke to him very harshly. Abu Ja'far said, "Sir, be gentle because Allaah Ta'ala sent a personality better than you i.e. Musaa ((alayhis salaam)), with his brother to a person worse than me i.e. Fir'aun. He commanded them

فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى

'But speak to him with gentle words so that hopefully he will pay heed or show some fear.' [Surah Taa Haa 20:44]

(e) Bear suffering and difficulties patiently

There is no doubt that the person who criticizes society (for their ill doing) and who fulfils the compulsory duty of calling to Allaah Ta'ala will become the target of different types of trials and difficulties. In every era, this has occurred with the *ambiyaa'*, pious people and inviters to the truth.

Allaah Ta'ala says,

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ
وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ

'Or did you suppose that you would enter the Garden without facing the same as those who came before you? Poverty and illness afflicted them and they were shaken to the point that the Messenger and those who believed with him said, 'When is Allaah's help coming? Be assured that Allaah's help is very near.' [Surah al-Baqarah (the Cow) 2:214]

(To console them, this answer was given), "Behold, verily the help of Allaah is close."

Luqmaan (alayhis salaam) advised his son:

يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ
الْأُمُورِ

‘My son, establish the prayer and command what is right and forbid what is wrong and be steadfast in the face of all that happens to you. That is certainly the most resolute course to follow.’ [Surah Luqman 31:17]

Therefore, those bearing the flags of Islam and who desire to establish the rule of Allaah Ta’ala on the surface of the earth should remain patient and steadfast. They should bear the trials and calamities found in the path of Allaah Ta’ala.

(3) Deriving lesson from the exploits of the pious predecessors

By studying the exploits and actions that our predecessors did in order to remove evil, the motivation to be courageous and brave will become entrenched and established. If these exploits are presented in the correct manner, they will have a great effect on the lives and values of the newer generation. These exploits will encourage them to be firm against the evil-minded and misguided people who have no thoughts for the honor and sanctity of Islam and in whose gaze there is no value for noble character.

The author (of the Arabic book) thereafter has narrated many incidents of the pious predecessors that are worthy of study. We are not mentioning them here for the sake of brevity. Whoever wishes to should refer to the original book.

Thereafter, the author writes,

‘There are innumerable incidents of this nature by the pious predecessors. All of them show that they fulfilled the obligation of enjoining good and preventing evil so that society may be protected from religion becoming a plaything or from strife, and so that the whole *ummah* remains unified and strong. Each person in society is like a single brick in an edifice. The preachers should turn the attention of people to those things that will benefit them, and remove harm from them. Every person is entrusted to mix with the people and join hands to establish the edifice of society with principles of pure Islamic belief and noble character; and to state the truth without fear for any reproach.

Where Islam had made every person a guardian for himself by its unique principles, it has also made them guardians for others, so that they can fulfill their great responsibility in reforming society.

Allaah Ta'ala has revealed this comprehensive *surah* in the Noble Qur'aan,

وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ ﴿٣﴾ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٤﴾

'By Time, truly man is in loss – except for those who believe and do right actions and urge each other to the truth and urge each other to steadfastness.' [Surah al-'Asr (Time) 103:1-3] [Bayaanul-Quraan, Tarbiyatul-awlaad vol.1 p 496]

