

DECENT LIVING

وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا
 وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
 وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ . وَمَا
 مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ . «النساء ٣٦»

*Wa' bud-ullāha wa la tushriku bihi Shai'an wa bilwali-
 daini ihsana wa bidhil qurbā wal yatāmā wal masakini
 wal Jāri dhil qurbā wal Jāril junubi was Sahibi bil
 jambi wab nissabeeli wa mā malakat aimānukum.*

Offer devotions to Allah

Appoint no one His Partner

Be Good to

Your Mother and Father,

Your Kith and Kin,

The Orphans,

The Needy,

The Neighbour——who is a relative, and

The Neighbour——who is not a relative,

The Companion——in whose fellowship you spend some
 time, however brief it may be, and

Be kind to the traveller, and

The captives (slaves) who are under your charge.

Etiquettes of Dealing with Parents

1. Behave well towards your father and mother and consider this good conduct as a propitious act which will earn God's grace in this world as well as in the next. Next to God, man owes the greatest obligation to his parents. The greatness and value of this obligation towards one's parents may be realised from the fact that the Holy Qur'an at several points mentions the rights of parents and the rights of God simultaneously at one place. Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an has ordained the duty of offering thanks to the parents along with thanksgiving to the Lord.

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا

«بنی اسرائیل - ۲۳»

*Wa qadā rabbuka an-llā ta'budū illa iyyāhu wa bil wāli-
dāini ihsānā.* (17 : 23)

"Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none save Him and (that ye show) kindness to parents".

Hadrat 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (God be pleased with him) relates "I submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) which deed will win the highest favour of God?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) answered : "The prayer which is offered at the appointed hour". I submitted again : "Next to this which other deed will win the greatest favour of God ?" The Holy Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed : "Good conduct towards father and mother". I again submitted : "And next to this ?" The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "Jihad (Fighting) in the way of Allah". *(Bukhari, Muslim)*

Hadrat 'Abdullah (God be pleased with him) reports : "One day a person went to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and submitted : "I give my hand into your hand and swear allegiance for performing Hijrat and Jihad and I beseech a reward from God in return for this". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired : "Is one of your parents alive ?" He submitted : "Yes, praise be to God, both my father and mother are alive". Thereupon the Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "Well then do you really want to receive a reward from God for performing Hijrat and Jihad ?" The man replied : "Yes, indeed, I beseech reward from God in return for these acts". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "Go then. Attend to your parents and serve them well". *(Muslim)*

Hadrat Abu Umama (God be pleased with him) relates : "A man enquired from the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) : "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! What are the rights of parents over their offspring ?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed : "Your entry into Paradise or Hell depends on your good or bad conduct towards your parents". *(Ibn Majah)*

In other words, if you treat them well, you will be sent to Paradise and if you violate the rights that your parents have over you, you will be consigned to serve as fuel for Hell-Fire".

2. Be grateful to your parents. Thanksgiving and an acknowledgement of debt and gratitude are the first duties which a beneficiary owes to the Benefactor. It is a fact

that the parents are the palpable cause for our existence. Again, it is under their protection and upbringing that we grow up to an age of maturity. The extraordinary self-sacrifice, unparalleled devotion and deep affection with which they patronise us demand that our hearts should be filled with sentiments of reverence, indebtedness, love and an acknowledgement of their magnanimity and every fibre of our heart should pulsate with feelings of gratitude to them. It is for this reason that God has ordained offering of gratitude to parents along with thanksgiving to Him.

ان اشكرني ولو اديك .

Anishkurli wali walidaika.

“(We willed) that you should offer thanks to Me and remain grateful to your father and mother”.

3. Always try to make your parents happy. Do not say anything in opposition to their will or temperament which may displease them, especially when they are advanced in age they acquire a peevish and irritable temperament. In old age the parents start making unexpected demands and begin proffering impossible claims. In this case also tolerate their behaviour in good cheer and do not say anything in anger in response to their demands which may cause them pain and may injure their feelings.

اما يبلغن عندك الكبر احدهما او كلاهما فلا تقل لهما
اف ولا تنهرهما .

Imma yablughanna 'indakal kibara ahadu-huma au kilahuma fala taqullahuma uffin wa la tanharhuma.

“If one or both of thy parents reach an advanced age with thee, say not ‘fie’ unto them nor reprimand them”.

As a matter of fact, the strength to tolerate unpleasant things is sapped during old age and weakness increases the sense of self-importance in old people. Hence they react sensitively to even the minor offensive matters. Keeping in view their delicate and sensitive nature, do not let your parents feel angry by any of your words or deeds.

Hadrat 'Abdullah b. Amr (God be pleased with him) relates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed: "The pleasure of God is contained in the pleasure of the father even as His displeasure is contained in the displeasure of the father."

(Tirmidhi, Ibn Hibban, Hakim)

In other words, any one who wants to please God should seek the pleasure of his father, for if the father is angry, the favour of God cannot be earned. The one who makes his father angry provokes the wrath of God."

Another statement of Hadrat 'Abdullah (God be pleased with him) runs as follows: "A man left his parents weeping and came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for the purpose of offering allegiance to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for Hijrah. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed to him: "Go back to your parents and return after making them happy as you came after leaving them crying".

(Abu Dawud)

4. Do service to your parents with heart and soul. If God has afforded you the opportunity to serve your parents, it is in fact a favourable opportunity for you to earn entitlement to Paradise and to win the Pleasure of God. Good service to parents secures blessings and grace in both worlds and man obtains salvation from the calamities of this world and the next. Hadrat Anas (God be pleased with him) relates :

“Any man who desires that his life should be prolonged and his subsistence may be increased ought to do good service to his parents and show kindness to them”.

(Al-Tarhib-o-Tarhib)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed :

“Let that man be disgraced, and disgraced again and let him be disgraced even more”. The people enquired : “O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) who is that man?” The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed : “I refer to the man who finds his parents old in age——both of them or one of them——and yet did not earn entitlement to Paradise by rendering good service to them”. *(Muslim)*

On one occasion, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave precedence to the obligation of looking after one's parents over one of the supreme forms of worship like Jihad. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade a companion (God be pleased with him) to proceed on Jihad and urged him to look after his parents.

Hadrat ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr (God be pleased with him) relates that a person came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with the intention of participating in the Jihad. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired from him : “Are your father and mother alive?” He submitted : “Yes, they are alive”. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) thereupon observed : “Go and render good service to them. This is the Jihad”. *(Bukhari, Muslim)*

5. Respect and adore your parents and do not show disrespect to them by a single word or action. The Holy Qur'an affirms :

وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا . . . «بني اسرائيل ٢٣»

Wa qullahumā qaulan karīmā.

(17 : 23)

“But speak to them a gracious word”.

On one occasion Ḥadrat ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar (God be pleased with him) enquired from Ḥadrat Ibn ‘Abbas (God be pleased with him) : “Do you wish to ward off Hell and gain entry into Paradise ?” Ibn ‘Abbas (God be pleased with him) answered : “Yes, why not; I swear in the name of God I cherish this desire”. Ḥadrat Ibn ‘Umar (God be pleased with him) then asked : “Are your parents alive ?” Ibn ‘Abbas (God be pleased with him) replied : “Yes, my mother is alive”. Ibn ‘Umar (God be pleased with him) remarked : “If you talk to them in a polite manner and look after their needs and feed them well, you will certainly be admitted to Paradise provided you abstain from capital evils”.
(*Al-Adab-ul Mufrad*)

Ḥadrat Abu Huraira (God be pleased with him) once saw two men. He asked one of them : “What is your relationship with the other man”? The person replied : “He is my father”. Ḥadrat Abu Huraira (God be pleased with him) thereupon advised him, “Look, never call him by his proper name, walk ahead of him nor sit before he takes his seat”.
(*Al-Adab-ul Mufrad*)

6. Be faithful and humble towards your parents.

وَاحْفَظْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ .

Wakhfid lahumā janāhadh dhulli minar rahmah.

“And lower unto them the wing of submission through mercy”.

(17 : 23)

To offer humble obedience to parents implies to pay constant regard to their dignity. Do not assume a haughty attitude towards them, nor treat them with insolence.

7. Love your parents and consider this act as a privilege and a source of reward in the eternal world. Hadrat Ibn 'Abbas (God be pleased with him) relates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“The pious offspring who casts a single look of affection at his parents receives a reward from God equal to the reward of an accepted Hajj.” The people submitted : “O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) : If someone casts a hundred such glances of love and affection at his parents, what then ?” The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : “Yes, indeed, even if one does so a hundred time a day, he will get a hundred fold reward. God is far greater than you imagine and is completely free from petty narrow mindedness.” (Muslim)

8. Obey your parents with full devotion. Even if they show some intransigence, obey their will cheerfully. Keeping in view the great favours which they have done to you, try to fulfil all their demands willingly which may be offensive to your own taste or temperament, provided, of course, they are not derogatory to the tenets of religion.

Hadrat Abu Sa'id (God be pleased with him) narrates that a person came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from Yemen. The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired from him : “Do you have any relations in Yemen ?” He submitted : “Yes, my father and mother are there”. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then asked : “Did they give you permission to leave ?” He submitted : “No, I did not take their permission”. The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) thereupon observed : “Go back then and ask the permission of your father and mother. If they agree, come back and join the Jihad, otherwise, attend on them and render good service to them”. (Abu Dawud)

Realise the value of rendering obedience to parents from the fact that a man came from miles intending to join the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in Holy war for the glory of religion, yet the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) turned him back saying: "You can join the Holy War only if both your father and mother allow you to do so".

Hadrat Ibn 'Abbas (God be pleased with him) reports that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "The man who wakes up in the morning having previously discharged all the duties and obligations laid upon him by God concerning his parents, he will find the two gates of Paradise open for him on waking up in the morning; and in case there is only one parent, the person will find one door of Paradise open for him. And in contrast if a man wakes up in the morning having previously disregarded any obligations or duties laid upon him by God concerning his parents, then he will find two gates of Hell open for him on waking up in the morning; and in case one of the parents is alive, then the man will find one gate of Hell open for him". The man submitted: "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you), if the parents are treating him wrongly, what then?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed: "Yes, even if they are treating him wrongly; yes, indeed, even if they are treating him wrongly". (Mishkat)

9. Consider your own goods as the property of your parents and spend your capital on them with an open hand. The Holy Qur'an affirms:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُ مِنْ خَيْرٍ

فَلِلَّوَالِدَيْنِ . «البقره ۲۱۵»

*Yus'alunaka mādhā yunfiqūna qul ma anfaqum min
khairin falil walidaini. (2 : 215)*

They ask thee, what they shall spend. Say what ye spend for good must go to parents".

On one occasion a man came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and complained that his father took whatever goods he wanted from him. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent for that man's father. An old, infirm man came walking with the help of a stick. When the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) interrogated him on the point, the old man submitted: "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! There was a time when I was strong and he was weak and helpless. I had money and he was empty-handed. I never forbade him then to lay his hands on anything that I possessed. Today, he is strong and healthy and I am old and infirm. He has money and I am empty-handed. He now denies me access to his goods". Upon hearing this tale of the old man, the Benefactor of the humanity (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) burst into tears and addressing the son of the old man observed: "You and your goods are the property of your father".

10. Even if your father and mother are non-Muslims, treat them well. Continue to pay them respect and devotion and serve them faithfully. However, in case they command you to become a polytheist or indulge in a sinful act, refuse to obey them and sternly repulse their demand.

وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا

تطعهما وصاحبهما في الدنيا معروفًا .

*Wa in jahadaka ala antushrika bimā laisa laka bihi
'ilmun fala tuti 'huma wa sahibhuma fiddunya ma 'rūfa.*

“And if your (parents) pressurise you to associate some one with Me of which you have no knowledge, obey them not, yet continue to treat them well in the world.”

Hadrat Asma' (God be pleased with her) states : “In the sacred lifetime of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), my mother visited me on one occasion. She was a polytheist at that time. I submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) : “My mother has come to pay me a visit and she is an unbeliever in Islam. How should I treat her ?” The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : “Yes, you should continue to show kindness to your mother”.

(Bukhāri)

11. Offer prayers begging grace for your parents, Bring to mind their fervent appeals to the Lord and beg His mercy for them with a zealous and sincere heart. God ordains :

وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْنِي صَغِيرًا

Waqul rabbirhamhumā kamā rabbayāni saghira.

“And say : My Lord ! Have mercy on them both as they did care for me when I was little.”

In other words, say : “O Creator, with mercy, devotion, affection and love my Lord they reared me in childhood and sacrificed their own pleasure and ease for my sake but, they, in their infirmity and helplessness of old age, are more deserving of kindness and love than I ever was. God ! I can pay them no recompense. Do patronise them and show them mercy in their miserable state”.

12. Observe special care in looking after your mother, By nature, the mother is weak and more sensitive and needs your better treatment and devotion. Moreover, her favours and sacrifices are comparatively far greater than

the father. Hence religion has conceded preferential rights to the mother and has enjoined upon the believers to treat their mothers with special consideration. The Holy Qur'an affirms :

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا ، حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا

وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا وَفِصَالُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا .

«الاحقاف ١٥»

Wa wassainal insāna biwālidaihi ihsānā. Hamalat-hu ummuhu kurhan wa wada' athu kurhan wa hamluhu wa fisaluhū thalāthūna shahrā. (46 : 15)

“And We have commanded unto man kindness towards parents. His mother beareth him with suffering, bringeth him forth with suffering, bearing of him and weaning of him is thirty months”.

While enjoining upon the believers to show good behaviour towards both father and mother, the Holy Qur'an has drawn a poignant picture of constant suffering of pain and hardships by the mother and has excellently pointed out in a psychological manner the fact that the devoted mother deserves comparatively more of your service and kind behaviour than your father. The same fact has been elucidated in greater detail by the Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Hadrat Abu Huraira (God be pleased with him) reports: “A man came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and submitted : “O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! Who deserves the noblest treatment from me ?” The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : “Your mother”. He again submitted : “And next ?” The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of

Allah be upon him) observed : "Your mother". When the man submitted for the fourth time : "And who next" ? The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "Your father". (*Al-Adabul Mufrad*)

Hadrat Jāhma (God be pleased with him) paid a call on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and submitted : "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! I wish to join you in the Jihad and have come to solicit your guidance in this matter. I seek your command". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired from him : "Is your mother alive?" Jahma (God be pleased with him) submitted : "Yes, she is alive". Thereupon the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), said "Return to her then and devote yourself to her service, for Paradise lies under her feet". (*Ibn Majah, Nasa'i*)

Hadrat Awais (may God show him mercy) was a contemporary of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), but he could never attain the privilege of calling on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He had an old mother to whose service he devoted himself day and night. He cherished a great desire to see the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and it was but natural for every Muslim to have a burning desire to catch a glimpse of the Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Hadrat Awais (God be merciful to him) indeed wanted to pay a call, yet the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade him to come. Similarly, Hadrat Awais (mercy of God be on him) cherished an ambition to discharge the obligation of Hajj, yet as long as his mother remained alive, Hadrat Awais (God be merciful to him) never set out for the Hajj alone. He fulfilled the desire to perform Hajj only after his mother's demise.

13. Treat your foster mother well. Do service to her and

show her respect and adoration. Hadrat Abu Tufail (God be pleased with him) states: "I once witnessed the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) distributing meat at a place called 'Ja'rana'. Presently, a lady arrived and approached near the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) spread out his sheet for her and the lady sat on it. I enquired from the people, "Who is this lady?" The people told me: "This lady is the foster mother of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). (Abu Dawūd)

14. Remember your parents after they have passed away. Observe the following etiquettes to render good service to your deceased parents :

1. Offer prayers continuously invoking mercy of God upon your dead father and mother.

The Holy Qur'an enjoins upon the pious to say this prayer :

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ

Rabbanaghfirli waliwālidayya wa lil mo'minīna yauma yaqumūl hisāb.

O our Lord! Grant forgiveness to me and my parents and pardon all the faithful on the day of Reckoning.

Hadrat Abu Huraira (God be pleased with him) states: "When the deceased is elevated to high degrees of favour, he enquires in astonishment: "How so?" He is informed by God, "Your offsprings have been offering prayers begging mercy for you (and God has accepted those petitions of mercy)".

Hadrat Abu Huraira (God be pleased with him) also states :

"The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: The opportunity to do something

ends with one's death, yet there are three things which continue to afford benefit to him after death—a recurring charitable act ; knowledge which he has imparted to others from which people derive benefit and thirdly, pious offsprings who continue to offer prayers invoking mercy of God upon him.

2. Fulfil all the contracts and promises made by your parents and carry out their will. Your parents must have made many agreements with some people, they might have made a covenant with God ; they might have taken a vow ; they might have promised to deliver goods to someone ; they might have owed a debt to somebody but were unable to discharge it before death overtook them ; they might have made a will at the time of their death. Fulfil all these obligations to the extent of your means.

Hadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Abbas (God be pleased with him) narrates : "Hadrat Sa'd b. 'Ubada (God be pleased with him) submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! My mother had taken a vow, but she expired before discharging it. Can I carry out the vow on her behalf ?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed : "Why not ! You must carry out the vow taken by her".

3. Show good conduct to the friends of your father and the female companions of your mother. Treat them with respect. Seek their advice just as you seek the advice of your elders and pay due regard to their opinions and advice. On one occasion, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "There is no superior deed of piety than that man should do good service to the companions and friends of his father".

Once Hadrat Abu Darda (God be pleased with him) fell ill and his condition continued to aggravate till they lost all hopes of his life. Hadrat Yusuf b. 'Abdullah (God be pleased with him) made a long journey and came to

enquire after his health. On seeing him, Hadrat Abu Darda asked in astonishment: "How are you here?" Yusuf b. 'Abdullah (God be pleased with him) replied: "I have come here only to enquire after your health, for you were on terms of deep friendship with my late father".

Hadrat Abu Barda (God be pleased with him) relates: "When I arrived in Medinah, 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (God be pleased with him) paid me a visit and said: "Abu Barda (God be pleased with you), do you know why I have come to see you?" I replied: "No. I have no idea why you have come here." Thereupon Hadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (God be pleased with him) said: "I have heard the Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as affirming: "The man who wishes to render good service to his father, who is in the grave, ought to show good treatment to his father's companions and friends." Having related this saying of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (God be pleased with him) remarked: "Brother, my father 'Umar and your father (God be pleased with him) were on terms of deep friendship. I wish to commemorate this friendship and fulfil its duties." *(Ibn Hibban)*

4. Show constant good treatment to the relations of your parents and entertain full respect and pay due regard to the sanctity of these connexions. An indifferent and irresponsible conduct towards these relations is tantamount to treating your own parents with indifference and negligence. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "Do not observe indifference towards your forefathers. To show carelessness in your conduct towards your parents is to display ingratitude to God."
15. If, God forbid, you have been guilty of negligence in treating your parents well or discharging your full obligations towards them during their lifetime, do not despair of God's mercy. Offer prayers constantly invoking blessings

of God upon your deceased parents. It is possible God may forgive your sin of negligence and admit you among the ranks of the pious people.

Hadrat Anas (God be pleased with him) relates : The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed :

“If a person does not observe filial devotion to his parents during their lifetime, and both parents or one of them passes away, the person ought to offer prayers for his deceased parents and beg His Mercy and beseech Him to grant salvation to them till God in His Mercy ordains their admission to the rolls of the pious people”.

Etiquettes of Married Life

The sublime culture and civilization which Islam envisages can only come into existence when we succeed in building up the structure of a righteous society. And a stable and well-organized family system is a prerequisite for the birth of a righteous society. Family life begins with the sacred matrimonial connexion between husband and wife and the development of this connexion into a permanently happy and pleasant matrimonial life chiefly depends on the full awareness of the etiquettes and duties of marital life in both husband and wife and their zeal, sincerity and devotion to observe those etiquettes and discharge obligations of married life. Let us in the first place deal with those etiquettes and obligations which concern the husband and then we shall proceed to discuss the etiquettes and duties to be observed by the wife.

1. Treat your wife well in life. Discharge your obligations towards her with a liberal heart and adopt a favourable and self-sacrificing attitude in every matter concerning your wife. God ordains :

وَ عَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ .

Wa āshirūhunna bilma'rufi.

“And live with them in a good manner”.

In a sermon to a mammoth congregation on the eve of Hajja-tul-Widah (Last Hajj) of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the Holy Prophet (peace

and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined upon the Muslims :

“O people ! Listen ! Behave well towards women, for they are like captives with you. You have no right to give them harsh treatment save in the case when they show open disobedience. If they are guilty of disobedience, keep away from them in the bed room. In case you punish them, take care not to cause them severe injury. When they come round and obey your will, do not find pretexts to harass them. Listen carefully ! you have some rights over your wives and your wives have some rights over you. They owe an obligation to you not to let your beds be trampled by anyone whom you dislike and not let anyone trespass into your house whose visit you do not like. And listen, you owe a duty to them to feed them well and provide good clothing to them”. *(Riyad-us-Salihin)*

In other words, make such provisions for their feeding and clothing as are befitting to a marital relationship of unique intimacy, union of hearts and a spirit of companionship.

2. Entertain a good opinion about your wife as far as possible and adopt an attitude of politeness, toleration and magnanimity for the sake of amicable living with her. If she lacks beauty of face or person or is deficient in good manners, morality, good sense or skill in household affairs, bear these faults with patience. Look to her virtues and maintain a harmonious relationship by means of generosity, liberality of mind and self-sacrifice. God ordains :

وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ .

Was-sulhu khair.

“And amity contains goodness.”

And the believers are enjoined upon as follows :

فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَمَعْسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُنَّ شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ فِيهِ
خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا . «النساء ١٩»

*Fa-in-karihtumūhunna fa-'asā antakrahu shai'an wa ya'j
alallāhu fīhi khairan kathīra. (4 : 19)*

“For if ye hate them it may happen that ye hate a thing wherein Allah hath placed much good”.

The same subject has been elucidated by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the following Tradition :

“No believer should hate his pious wife. If he dislikes one habit of his wife, it is possible he may like her for some other aspects of her character”.

As a matter of fact each woman has some weakness of one sort or another and if the husband turns against her on account of her bearing a certain deficiency and conceives a hatred for her, a pleasant home life becomes impossible for the couple. Commonsense dictates that man should adopt a liberal attitude and reposing his trust in God should endeavour to live amicably with his wife. It is possible that God may vouchsafe to that man, merely for the sake of this woman, such bounties which his limited mind cannot comprehend. For instance, this woman may possess excellent virtues of religion, faith, character and morality in reward for which God may shower blessings upon her own family or may be a pious soul is born of this woman who may prove beneficial for the whole mankind and may serve as a Sadaqa Jariah (Continuing Charity) in favour of the father till the end of his life, or perhaps the woman may serve as a means of reforming the character of her man and thus may help him to gain proximity to Paradise or it may be that God may bless this man with large subsistence and prosperity because such a blessing

of prosperity was destined for his wife. At any rate, do not ruin your married life impetuously on the grounds of an apparent defect in the woman. On the other hand, be wise and try to promote gradually an atmosphere of happiness and concord in the home.

3. Adopt an attitude of forgiveness and kindness. Forget all the faults of omission, stupid actions and disobedient attitude of your wife. The woman is deficient and weak in wisdom and commonsense and bears an extremely passionate temperament. Hence try to bring her round with patience, calmness, kindness, affection and devotion. Try to get along with her with patience and restraint. God ordains :

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَّكُمْ

فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ وَإِن تَعْفُوا وَتَصْفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ

غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ . «التغابن ١٤»

Yā-ayyuhalladhīna āmanu inna min azwājikum wa aulādikum aduwwan lakum fahdharūhum wa-in ta'fū watasfahū wa taghfirū fa-innallaha ghafūrurrahīm.

(*Attaghabun : 14*)

“O ye who believe ! verily, among your wives and your children, there are enemies for you, therefore beware of them. And if ye efface and overlook and forgive, then Allah is Forgiving, Merciful”.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed :

“Be good to women. The woman has been created out of the rib and the uppermost part of the rib ends in a curve ; so if you try to straighten out the curve, it will

break, yet if you leave it alone, the curve will remain. Hence, be good to women". (*Bukhāri, Muslim*)

4. Treat your wife politely and show love and affection to her. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed :

"The believers who possess perfect faith are those who display the best manners, and the best among you are those who treat their wives in the best possible manner". (*Tirmidhi*).

Politeness and tenderness of behaviour can best be judged in the home. People are constantly living amidst their family members and the real temper and moral conduct of man is completely revealed in the free and uninhibited atmosphere of the home. It is a fact that only such believers possess perfect faith who display civility, kindness and affectionate behaviour towards their family members and who support, sympathise, love and adore inmates of their household.

Ḥadīrat 'Ā'isha (God be pleased with her) reports : "I used to play with dolls along with my playmates in the house of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). On the arrival of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) all of them used to hide themselves in the nooks and corners of the house. The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to search out each one of them and send them to join me in the play". (*Bukhāri, Muslim*)

Once on the occasion of Hajj, the camel of Ḥadīrat Safiyya (God be pleased with her) sat down on the ground and she was therefore left behind while the entire caravan passed on. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came to her and found her weeping without restraint. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stood there wiping off her tears with the edge of a sheet with his own holy hands. While the Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) wiped

off tears from her eyes, she (God be pleased with her) continued to weep unrestrainedly for a long time”.

5. Make liberal provisions for all the needs of your wife and do not stint in expenses. Feel a sense of pleasure and comfort in spending your lawful earnings on members of your family. You owe an obligation to your wife to provide her with food and clothing and to struggle energetically, in order to earn enough money to discharge this obligation, is the most pleasant duty of a husband. The performance of this duty with an open and cheerful heart earns for the believer the reward of a happy marital life in this world and a favourable recompense and bounty in the world to come. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed :

“You spend a dinar in the way of God ; you spend another dinar to ransom a slave ; you give away one dinar as alms to a beggar ; and there is one dinar which you spend on your family. Among all these, the dinar that will earn the best reward and blessings of God is the one which you have spent on you family”.

(Muslim)

6. Teach your wife the rules and manners enjoined by religion. Let her observe Islamic morality and make her life graceful. Make every possible effort to train and mould her according to the Islamic pattern of life so that she may prove to be a good wife, good mother and a pious devotee of God and may discharge her duties as a wife efficiently and faithfully. God affirms :

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا .

Yā-āyyuhāllādhiṅ manu qū anfusakum wa āhlikum nārā.

“O ye who believe! Save yourselves and your family from the Fire of Hell”.

As the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) devoted himself to preaching and teaching the laws

of religion outside the home, likewise he continued to perform the same function inside his home. Making an illusion to this fact, the Holy Qur'an addresses the wives of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in these words :

“And remember the verses of God and the matters of wisdom that are conveyed to you in your house”.

The Qur'an has advised the believers through the ministry of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) :

وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا .

Wa'mur ahlaka bissalāti wastabir 'alaihā.

“And urge upon the inmates of your house to observe prayers and fully abide by this obligation yourself too”.

The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirms :

“When a man wakes up his wife during the night and they offer two Rak'ahs of Prayers together, God ordains that the man's name should be included in the rolls of the male rememberers of God and the woman's name in the register of those females who offer praises to God and remember Him.” (Abu Dawud)

The second Caliph Hadrat 'Umar (God be pleased with him) used to stand all night offering devotions to God. Near the hour of dawn he used to wake his wife saying : “Rise, get up and say prayers”, and later he (God be pleased with him) used to recite this verse also :

وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا .

Wa'mur ahlak bis-salati wastabir a'laika.

“And urge upon the inmates of your house to observe prayers and fully abide by this obligation yourself”.

7. If you possess several wives, show equal treatment to all of them. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to observe great care in dispensing equal treatment to his wives. On the eve of setting out for a journey the Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to draw lots and took with him the wife whose name was decided by the toss. Hadrat Abu Huraira (God be pleased with him) states that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“If a man has two wives, but does not treat them with equality and even-handed justice, he shall be resurrected on the Day of Judgement in such a condition that half of his body is paralysed”. *(Tirmidhi)*

‘Justice’ and ‘equality’ imply to treat them equally in all matters and show the same kind of behaviour to each wife. As regards the fact that a man may be specially attracted towards one wife or may be drawn to her or cherish deeper feelings of love for her, God will award no punishment to the man for it.

8. Obey your husband with a willing heart and feel pleasure and satisfaction in being faithful to him. This is what God commands a wife to do and the believing woman who acts according to the will of God wins His Favour. The Holy Qur’an affirms :

فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ

Fas sālihātu qānitātun.

“The pious wives are those who show obedience to their husbands”.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“No woman should keep fast without the permission of her husband”.
(*Abu Dāwūd*)

Stressing the importance of rendering obedience and devotion to her husband, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has warned the woman :

“There are two types of persons whose prayers do not rise above their heads—the prayer of a slave who deserts his master until he returns to his service and the prayer of a woman who shows disobedience to her husband until she recants from this behaviour”.

(*Al-Tarhib-o-Al-Tarhib*)

9. Protect your honour and chastity. Keep away from all matters or activities which contain a possible threat to violate your honour or chastity. This is what God commands and it is also an essential prerequisite for making your marital life happy and pleasant. No amount of devotion and obedience of the wife can win the heart of her husband if the seeds of suspicion about her infidelity are once sown in his mind. Even an ordinary act of carelessness on the wife's part may prompt the devil to fill the heart of her husband with indelible doubts and suspicions. Hence keeping in view this human weakness, exercise utmost vigilance in such matters.

The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed :

“If the woman offers prayers five times a day, protects her honour and chastity, remains faithful to her husband, she may enter Paradise by whichever gate she likes”.

(*Al-Tarhib-o-Al-Tarhib*)

10. Do not go out of the house without leave or permission of your husband. Do not call at homes of which your husband disapproves, nor admit anyone into your house whom your husband dislikes.

Hadrat Mu'adh ibn Jabal (God be pleased with him) narrates that the Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed:

“It is not lawful for a woman who believes in God to admit a man into her house whose visit is disapproved by her husband or that she should go out of the house against her husband's will or she should obey the will of someone else in opposition to her husband's wishes”.

(*Al-Tarhib-o-Al-Tarhib*)

In other words, obey the wishes of your husband, even watch and be mindful of the slightest indications of his approval or disapproval. Do not follow the counsels of others which are in opposition to the will of your husband.

11. It should be your permanent concern to make your husband happy by your words, actions, behaviour and manners. This is not only the real secret of a successful marriage, but a means to win the favour of God and admittance into Paradise. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed :

“The woman who dies in such a state that her husband was entirely satisfied and in concord with her, will certainly enter Paradise”.

(*Tirmidhi*)

Furthermore, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“When a man calls his wife to fulfil the sexual urge and she declines and for this reason the husband remains angry with her all night, the angels send curses upon such a wife till dawn.”

(*Bukhari, Muslim*)

12. Love your husband and value his companionship. He is the adornment of your life, your life's support and a great companion and helper in the course of your life. Give thanks to God for this great Bounty and value this Bounty too with all your heart and soul. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed on one occasion :

“For the two who love one another there is no better thing than the ‘Nikah’ (matrimonial tie)”.

Hadrat Safiyya (God be pleased with her) cherished deep love for the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). When illness overcame the Holy Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Hadrat Safiyya (God be pleased with her) spoke with genuine concern: “Would God that I had fallen ill instead of you, O Holy Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)!” At this expression of deep love by Hadrat Safiyya (God be pleased with her), the other wives of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) looked towards her in astonishment. Thereupon the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed:

“She is not merely making a show of her affection; she is expressing her genuine love”.

13. Acknowledge the debt of gratitude you owe to your husband and remain grateful to him. Your greatest benefactor is your husband who is always concerned with making you happy, providing for your needs and feels satisfied when he has made all provisions for your comfort.

Hadrat Asma' (God be pleased with her) narrates the Tradition: I was once with my neighbour friends when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed near me. He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said ‘Salam’ (peace be on you) to us and observed: “Avoid being ungrateful to those whom you owe a debt of gratitude. One of you, for instance, lives with her parents in an unmarried state for a long period. Then God confers upon her a husband. Subsequently, God grants her offspring. Yet in spite of all these favours when she feels enraged with her husband on some matter, she utters, ‘Never have I received anything good from you’.

(*Al-Adab ul Mufrad*)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in a warning statement to an ungrateful and unthanking wife observed :

“On the Day of Judgement, God will not even look at a woman who is ungrateful to her husband, despite the fact that a wife can never get along without her husband”.
(*Nasa'i*)

14. Feel happy in doing service to your husband and afford maximum comfort to him at the expense of your own inconvenience. Devote yourself to his welfare in all matters and by means of this sincere service capture the deep affections of his heart. Hadrat 'Ā'isha (God be pleased with her) used to wash the clothes of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with her own hands, annointed his sacred head with oil, combed his hair, and rubbed perfume on his holy person (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The other contemporary pious ladies (God be pleased with them) served their husbands in the same manner.

On one occasion, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“It is unlawful for a human being to prostrate before another human. If it had been permissible, the wife would have been ordained by God to offer prostration to her husband. The husband has the supreme right over his wife, and such is the optimum degree of this right that in case a husband's whole body is covered with wounds and the wife licks them all with her tongue, the obligation she owes to her husband is even then not discharged in full measure”.
(*Musnad Ahmad*)

15. Safeguard the home, property and goods of your husband. After marriage consider the husband's home as your own and spend the wealth of your husband wisely and economically on the adornment of your home, on the enhancement of the prestige of your husband and on securing a better

future for your children. Consider the advancement and prosperity of your husband as your own personal achievements. Praising the virtues of the women of the tribe of Quraish, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“How excellent are the women of the tribe of Quraish! They are most affectionate towards children and most efficient guardians of their husband’s homes”. (*Bukhari*)

Describing the virtues of a pious wife, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“Next to the fear of God the most useful and the bountiful reward for a believer is a pious wife. When he asks her to do something, she does it cheerfully. When he looks at her, she pleases him to the core of his heart. When he swears upon her trust, she fulfils his oath. When he goes away, she protects her honour and chastity in his absence and finally in superintendence of her husband’s goods and property she remains truly faithful and devoted to his interest.”

(*Ibn Majah*)

16. Observe cleanliness, manage your household affairs wisely and look after the decoration and furnishing of your homes. Keep your house clean. Arrange everything tidily and use things with proper care and skill. A clean and tidy home, neatly furnished rooms, good management of household affairs and home economy and a beautifully dressed and adorned wife wearing a pleasant smile on her lips.....all this charges the home atmosphere with currents of deep love and affection and the marital life is enriched with happiness and blessings. This is the only way for a wife to gain her personal salvation and to win the favour of God.

On one occasion during a meeting Hadrat ‘Ā’isha saw that the wife of ‘Uthman b. Maz‘ūn (God be pleased

with both of them) was dressed in plain clothes and wore no adornments. Hadrat 'Ā'isha (God be pleased with her) was taken aback and enquired :

“My good lady! Has your husband 'Uthman gone out on a journey?”

You can judge from the exclamation of Hadrat 'Ā'isha (God be pleased with her) what a propitious act it is for a married woman to adorn and beautify herself for her husband.

Once a Muslim lady of Medina (God be pleased with her) presented herself before the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). She was at that time wearing gold bangles. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) expressed his disapproval of her wearing the gold bangles. The lady submitted :

“O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! If a woman does not adorn herself and make her person attractive for her husband, she would soon lose her value for him.

(Nasa'i)

Etiquettes of Bringing up The Children

1. Consider your children as a bounty of God. Celebrate the birth of a child with joy and exchange messages of congratulation on such occasions. Welcome the birth of children with prayers for grace and blessings of God. Offer thanks to the Lord that He has conferred upon you the favour of rearing one of His creatures and that He has afforded you the opportunity of leaving behind an heir to represent you in spiritual as well as mundane life.
2. If you are childless, pray to God for favour of granting you pious offspring in the same manner as the venerable Prophet of God Ḥadrat Zakaria (peace be upon him) had prayed to God for the grant of pious offspring.

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ .
«آل عمران ٣٨»

Rabbi habli min ladunka dhurriyyatan tayyibatan innaka sami' -ud-du'a. (3 : 38)

Lord! Bestow upon me by Thy bounty goodly offspring. Lo ! Thou art the Hearer of prayer".

3. Do not feel downcast on the birth of a child. Strictly guard against feeling remorse or considering the birth of a child as a burden on account of financial hardship, ill-health or for any other reason.

4. Do not procure an abortion. Abortion or killing a child after birth are both acts of heinous barbarity, gruesome cruelty and extreme cowardice and entail ruination in this world and hereinafter God affirms :

قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ قَتَلُوا أَوْلَادَهُمْ سَفَهًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ .

Qad khasi-ralladhina qatalū aulādahum safahan bighair-i-'ilm. (6 : 140)

“Those who kill their children out of their foolishness are the greatest losers”.

In an impressive condemnation of human shortsightedness, God has clearly forbidden the genocide of children :

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَ

إِيَّاكُمْ إِنْ قَتَلْتُمْ أَنْ كَانُمْ خَطَاً كَبِيرًا . «بنی اسرائیل-۳۱»

Walātaqtulū aulādakum khashyata imlāq nahnu narzuqūhum wa iyyākum innā qatlahum kāna khita'n kabira. (17 : 31)

“Slay not your children fearing poverty. We shall provide for them and for you. Lo ! the slaying of them is great sin”.

“On one occasion a companion (God be pleased with him) enquired from the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), “O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! Which is the greatest sin”? The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : “Polytheism”. The companion (God be pleased with him) again asked : “And what next” The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : “Disobedience to parents”. The companion (God be pleased with him) enquired the

third time : "And which sin is the greatest next to it?" In answer to this, the Holy Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "To kill your children fearing that they will share your sustenance."

5. At the time of delivery, recite Āyat-ul-Kursi and the following two verses of Surah Al-Ā'raf near the pregnant woman. Recite also Surah 'Al-Falaq' and Surah 'An-Nas' repeatedly and after each recitation blow your breath over the woman awaiting delivery :

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ

عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا

يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ

وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ .

(البقره ٢٥٥)

*Allahu lā-ilaha illahu-wal-hayyul qayyum lā ta'khudhuhū
sinatun wa lānaum lahu ma fīsamāwāti wa mā fil ard
man dhalladhī yashfa'u indahu illa bi-idhnihi y'alamu
mā baina aidihim wa ma khalfahum wa la yuhittuna bi-
shai-im-min 'ilmihi illa bimā shā'a wasi'a kursiyyu-hu-
samāwati wal arda wa lā yaūduhū hizhumā wa huwal-
'aliyyul 'azim.*

(2 : 255)

Allah ! There is no God save Him, the Alive, the Eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtaketh Him, unto Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is that intercedeth with Him save by His leave ? He knoweth that which is in front

of them and that which is behind them while they encompass nothing of His knowledge save that what He wills. His throne includeth the heavens and the earth and He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime, the Tremendous”.

The two verses of Surah A'raf are as under :

اِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللّٰهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ
 اَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ، يُغْشِي الْيَلَّ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ
 حَثِيثًا وَالشَّمْسِ وَالْقَمَرِ وَالنُّجُومِ مَسْخَرَاتٍ بِاَمْرِهِ . اَلَا
 لَهٗ الْخَلْقُ وَالْاَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ . اُدْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ
 تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً . اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِيْنَ .
 «الاعراف ٥٤ ، ٥٥»

*Inna rabbaku-mulla-hulladhi khalaqas-samawati wal-
 arda fi sittati-ayyamin thummastawa 'alal 'arshi
 yughshillail-annahara yatlubuhū hathithan wash-
 shamsa walqamara wannu-juma musakharatin bi-amrih.
 Ala lahulkhalqu wal-amru. Tabarakallahu rabbul
 'alamin. Ud'au rabbakum tadarru'an wa khufyah
 innahū lā yahibbul mu'tadin. (7 : 54-55).*

“Lo ! your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then sat upon the throne of his Kingdom. Who makes the night cover the day which is in haste to follow it and has made the sun and the moon and the stars subservient by His Command. His verily is all creation and commandment. Blessed be Allah the Lord of the worlds ! (O mankind) Call upon your Lord humbly and in secret. Lo ! He loveth not aggressors”.

6. After birth, bathe the infant and say *adhan* in its right and *qamat* in its left ear. On the birth of Hadrat Husain (God be pleased with him), the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had said *adhan* and *Iqamat* in his ears". (Tabrani).

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is also reported to have affirmed: "Whenever someone begets a child and says *Adhan* in its right and *Iqamat* in its left ear, the child is immunised against the affliction of *Umm-ul-Sibiyan*¹ by this act". (Abu Ya'la)

There is great wisdom in conveying the names of God and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to the ears of a new-born infant.

"In his work entitled '*Tuhfa-tul-Wadud*', Allama Ibn Qayyim observes: The significance of this act is that the proclamation of the Greatness and Glory of God should be the first to reach the ears of a human being". And the affirmation of belief which he will render in full consciousness later in order to enter the fold of Islam should be conveyed to him in the very first day of his life as a man is prompted to recite *Kalimah Tauhid* (Affirmation of belief in One God) at the time of his death. Another advantage of saying the *Adhan* and *Iqamat* in the ears of the child is that the devil, who lies in ambush planning to entrap the human being in trials, flees on hearing the sound of *Adhan* and before the devil can draw the soul of the child towards himself, the child is called towards Islam and worship of God".

7. After the *Adhan* and *Iqamat* get a date chewed by some pious man or woman and paste its pulp on the palate of the infant and ask that man or woman to offer a prayer invoking grace and blessings of God upon the child. Hadrat Asma (God be pleased with her) reports: "When 'Abdullah ibn Zubair (God be pleased with him) was born I

1. "*Umm-ul-Sibiyan*" refers to Epilepsy which develops in children due to polluted air. The children faint under the effect of this ailment.

put him in the lap of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked for a date, chewed it and applied his sacred saliva inside the mouth and pasted the chewed pulp of date on the palate of 'Abdullah ibn Zubair (God be pleased with him). Afterwards, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) offered a prayer invoking grace and blessings of God upon the child".

Hadrat 'A'isha (God be pleased with her) states : "Infants were brought to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to *Tehnik*¹ and pray for the favour and blessings of God upon them". (Muslim)

When Hadrat Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (may God be merciful to him) was blessed with a child, he asked for Meccan date which was available in the home and requested a pious lady Umm 'Ali (may God show her mercy) to perform the *Tehnik*.

8. Give your child a fine name, preferably a name resembling that of the Prophets (peace be upon them) or put a prefix 'Abd with some attribute of God, just as 'Abd-Allah or 'Abd-Rahman, to make up a name for your child.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed : "On the Day of Judgement, you shall be called by your names. So prescribe fine names for yourselves". (Abu Dawud)

Furthermore, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "Among all your names 'Abdullah and, 'Abdul Rahman are the most favourite of God". In addition; the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed : "Prescribe those names

1. '*Tehnik*' means to chew the date into a soft pulp and apply this pulp on the palate of the infant.

which resemble the names of the Prophets (peace be upon them)".

It is recorded in *Bukhari* that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also observed : "Name your children after my name, but do not give them my '*Kuniyyat*'".

9. If you have prescribed a wrong name due to ignorance, change it and prescribe some good name. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to alter wrong names. The name of one of Hadrat 'Umar's (God be pleased with him) daughter was 'Asiya. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) changed it and named her Jamila (God be pleased with her). (Muslim)

The original name of Hadrat Zainab (God be pleased with her) the daughter of Abu Salama (God be pleased with him) was 'Barrah', which means 'the pious one'. On hearing this name, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "Do you make a self-proclamation of piety?" The people submitted, "What other name shall we prescribe then?" The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "Name her Zainab". (Abu Dawud)

10. Perform the '*Aqiqah*' ceremony on the seventh day of the birth of a child. Sacrifice two lambs for a boy and one if the baby is a girl. However, it is not obligatory to slaughter two lambs for a boy. You may sacrifice one animal also. Get the hair of the head of the baby shaved off and give away in charity gold or silver equal in weight to these hair. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed :

"Prescribe a name for the child on the seventh day after birth and perform '*Aqiqah*¹ ceremony after getting the baby's head shaved off". - (Tirmidhi)

1. See the prayer to be offered at the time of '*Aqiqah*' on p. 452.

11. Get the male child circumcised on the seventh day after birth. However, if for some reason the operation is put off, it is obligatory to get the circumcision performed before the male child reaches the age of seven. Circumcision is part of Islamic faith.
12. When the child learns to speak, teach him first of all to recite : لا اله الا الله, *La ilaha illallahu*. (There is no god but Allah). The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed :

“When your offspring starts speaking, teach him to recite’ :— لا اله الا الله’ *La ilaha illallahu*. (There is no god but Allah) and never fear about his end. When the milk teeth are uprooted, order your child to observe prayers”.

The Tradition also records that whenever a child in the household of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) began to speak, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to teach him the second verse of Surah al-Furqan in which the concept of the belief in One God has been beautifully expressed in a concise form.

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ
تَقْدِيرًا .

Alladhi lahu mulkussamāwāti walardi wa lam yattakhidh waladan wa lam yakun lahu sharikun fil mulki wa khalaqa kulla shaiin faqaddarahu taqdirā.

“He unto Whom belongeth the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, He hath chosen no son nor hath He any partner in the sovereignty. He hath created everything and hath meted out for it a role”.

13. Feed the child on your breast-milk. The mother owes this obligation to the child. The Holy Qur'an has made repeated references to this favour of the mother to her child and has enjoined the pious to treat their mothers with extraordinary devotion in return for their favour. It is the duty of the mother to inculcate in the soul of the child belief in One God, devotion to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and love of religion along with the drops of her milk which she feeds to the child. She should make sure that the heart and soul of her child completely assimilates the spirit of religion. Do not ease your burden by transferring the duty of rearing the child to a nurse. Perform this pleasant obligation of religion yourself and enjoy spiritual satisfaction and ecstasy.
14. Avoid frightening the children. The fright instilled in the mind of the child in the early years overshadows his mind and intellect for the remainder of his life and these children usually prove incapable of achieving extraordinary success in life.
15. Make it a point not to shout at, reproach or rebuke children on every trifling matter. Make an affectionate endeavour to train the children to form good habits with devotion and good sense instead of expressing annoyance or contempt on the faults of children. However, act in such a way that children must remain in fear that you will not tolerate any of their actions which do not conform to the dictates of religion.
16. Always treat your children with affection, love and tenderness. Keep them happy by providing for their needs and requirements according to your means. Promote sentiments of loyalty and devotion in your children.

Once Hadrat Mu'awiya (God be pleased with him) asked Ahnaf ibn Qais (God be pleased with him), "Say, in what manner the offspring should be treated?"

Ahnaf ibn Qais (God be pleased with him) answered: "Amir-ul-Mo'minin, the offspring are the fruit of our

hearts, a support for our backs ; we are like the sky providing a protective shade over them ; we are like a soft and harmless ground on which they recline. It is they who give us the incentive to perform great deeds. Hence if they demand anything from you, fulfil their demand with a generous heart. If they are stricken with sorrow, alleviate their grief. Consequently they will love you and appreciate your paternal concern. Do not be an intolerable burden on them to the extent that they should in annoyance wish that you were better dead than alive and hate to come near you".

Hadrat Mu'awiya (God be pleased with him) was deeply moved on hearing this wise speech of Ahnaf ibn Qais (God be pleased with him) and remarked : "Ahnaf (God be pleased with you) I swear in the name of God that when you came and sat beside me I was burning with rage against Yazid".

Later, when Hadrat Ahnaf (God be pleased with him) departed Hadrat Mu'awiya's (God be pleased with him) anger had cooled down and he felt reconciled to Yazid. He at once sent two hundred dirhams and two hundred dresses as a token of love to Yazid. On receiving these presents, Yazid divided them into two equal portions and despatched one hundred dirhams and a hundred dresses as a gift to Hadrat Ahnaf ibn Qais (God be pleased with him).

7. Pat the heads of children with affection; take them up and seat them in your laps, fondle them and treat them in good humour. Do not rule over them as an irate tyrant. Such an attitude stunts the growth of affectionate sentiments towards parents in the hearts of children, destroys their self-confidence and adversely affects the development of their inborn faculties.

On one occasion Aqra' ibn Habis (God be pleased with him) came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was at that time

engaged in fondling Ḥaḍrat Hassan (God be pleased with him). Aqra' (God be pleased with him) felt rather surprised and submitted, "O Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) do you also fondle children. I have ten children and have never shown fondness to even one of them"—The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) raised his eyes and taking a look at Aqra' observed: "If God has deprived your heart of kindness and affection, what can I do!"

Ḥaḍrat 'Amir (God be pleased with him) held a high post in the government during the reign of Ḥaḍrat Umar (God be pleased with him). He once paid a call at the house of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar (God be pleased with him) and was astounded to see that a few children had mounted the chest of the Caliph and were engaged in play. The Caliph realized the feelings of annoyance writ large on the face of 'Amir (God be pleased with him) and enquired, "What manner of treatment do you show to your children?" 'Amir (God be pleased with him) now got the opportunity to express his viewpoint on the matter. He said: "Amir-ul-Mo'minin, as soon as I enter my house the people of my household are struck with terror and stand dumb with fear". On hearing this, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar (God be pleased with him) said in a deep tone of sorrow:

" 'Amir (God be pleased with you), you are a follower of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and yet are ignorant of the important injunction that a Muslim should behave towards his family members with extreme love and deep tenderness."

18. Concentrate all your efforts to train and educate your children in piety and honesty and consider the greatest sacrifice too little to achieve this purpose. This is an obligation laid upon you by religion; it is a favour you owe to your children; and it is the greatest good that you can do to yourself. The Holy Qur'an affirms:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا .

Yā-ayyuhalladhīna āmanu qū anfusakum ua ahliikum nārā.

“O Believers, protect yourself and the people of your household from the fire of Hell”.

The only means of obtaining salvation from Hell-Fire is that man should be aware of all the requisite knowledge about religion and his life should pass in loyalty and devotion to the commands of God and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed : “The best gift that a father can bestow upon his son is to arrange good education and training for him.” *(Mishkat)*

In addition to this, the Apostle of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed : “The actions of man cease with his death. But there are three deeds whose reward and blessing continue to reach him even after death : One that he should make a *Sadaqa Jariah* (Recurring Charity). Secondly, he should leave behind a legacy of knowledge from which people may continue to derive benefit ; thirdly, pious offspring who continuously invoke mercy of God upon him.” *(Muslim)*

In fact the pious offspring are the only means of keeping alive your cultural traditions, religious doctrines and the concept of faith in One God, after you have expired. The believer prays for pious offspring so that the younger generation may keep the message of the old generation ever green and alive.

When the children attain the age of seven years, teach them ‘Namaz’ and urge them to observe prayers. Take them to the mosque with you to arouse their interest. If the children neglect to observe prayers when they have attained

the age of ten, administer suitable punishment to them. By word and action make it absolutely clear to them that you will not tolerate their evasion of saying prayers.

20. When the children attain the age of ten years, give them separate beds to sleep in. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed :

“When your children are seven years old, urge them to observe prayers. When they attain the age of ten and neglect saying prayers, punish them, and after this age provide separate beds for them to sleep in.”

21. Always keep your children clean and neat. Take care that they are clean, neat and bathed. Keep their dress pure and clean. However, avoid excessive adornment or ostentation in dressing up children. Keep the dress of a female child simple and clean. Do not spoil the nature of your children by dressing them up in gaudy and flamboyant clothes.
22. Do not point out the faults of your children in the presence of others and strictly abstain from degrading or hurting the self-respect of your children.
23. Do not express your dismay at reforming your children in their presence. Instead praise them generously even for their ordinary virtues in order to boost up their morale. Make constant endeavours to encourage them, and to foster self-confidence and boldness in them so that they may strive for the highest goals in the field of life.
24. Keep telling the children the stories of the Prophets (peace and blessings of Allah be upon them), tales of the pious people (God be pleased with them) and episodes of the courageous feats of the illustrious companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This must be considered an essential means of training, civilizing, character-building and arousing love for religion among the young and despite countless other pre-occupations you must find some time to talk on these

subjects with your children. Recite to them the Holy Qur'an in a sweet rhythmical voice frequently and on occasions relate to them the stirring stories and traditions of the life and work of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In this manner, you should try to inculcate in the hearts of the young warm sentiments of true love and devotion to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

25. Let the children distribute food or money to the poor with their own hands sometimes so that the virtues of liberality, generosity and charity to the poor may develop in their hearts. On occasions, let brothers and sisters distribute shares of food or other eatables among themselves without your aid. This will create in them an awareness of the rights of others and accustom them to fair-dealing.
26. Do not comply with each legitimate or non-genuine desire of the children. By means of patience and commonsense teach them to give up this habit. Be strict with them at times and do not turn them into obstinate and self-willed youngsters by showering excessive love upon them.
27. Avoid thundering and shouting at the highest pitch of your voice and urge the children to speak softly in a moderate tone and abstain from shouting or railing at each other.
28. Inculcate the habit of self-help in children. They should not look to the servants to do every little job for them. This habit makes the children lazy and crippled in some ways. Foster the habits of sturdiness, hard work and strenuous application among the children.
29. In the event of an altercation taking place among children, do not lend undue support to your own child. You must realise that the sentiments which you cherish in your heart for your child are exactly the same which other people have for their children. Keep in view the faults of your own child and in all untoward circumstances try to pinpoint the error and fault of your own child and then

make an earnest endeavour to eliminate these childish shortcomings in a wise manner by exercising constant vigilance.

30. Show equal treatment to all your children and avoid going to extremes in the matter of behaving towards children. If you are naturally drawn towards a particular child then, of course, it can't be helped. Yet in behaviour and dispensation of requirements you must show equal treatment and evenhanded justice. Do not show distinctive favour to a child to the dismay of other children. This will foster inferiority complex, hatred and frustration and all this will finally erupt into rebellious conduct. These evil sentiments greatly retard the development of natural faculties of a child and leave an adverse effect on the moral and spiritual growth of the child's personality.

On one occasion Hadrat Bashir (God be pleased with him) took his son Hadrat Noaman (God be pleased with him) to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and submitted: "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! I possessed one slave and I have transferred that slave to the ownership of this son of mine". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired: "Have you given a slave to each of your sons?" Hadrat Bashir (God be pleased with him) submitted: "No". Thereupon the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded him: "Take the slave back from him. Fear God and show equal treatment to all of your children". Hadrat Bashir (God be pleased with him) returned home and revoked the transfer of ownership of the slave to No'man. According to another tradition, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had observed on that occasion: "Do not make me a witness of sin. I shall not be a witness to injustice". In yet another tradition it is reported that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed to

Hadrat Bashir (God be pleased with him) : "Do you wish that all your sons should behave equally well towards you?" Hadrat Bashir (God be pleased with him) submitted : "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) : Yes, why not !" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "Do not act in this manner then". *(Bukhari, Muslim)*

31. Always present a good practical model before the children. Your own life style serves as a mute and permanent precept for your children. Children constantly learn and adopt lessons from your own conduct in life. Do not tell a lie even as a matter of fun before the children.

Hadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Amir (God be pleased with him) relates an episode from his own life as follows : "One day when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was present in our house, my mother called for me and said : "Come here, I have something for you". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was watching. He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed to my mother, "What is it that you want to give to the child ?" My mother submitted : "I wish to give him a date". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "If you had called the boy on the pretext of giving him something and in fact did not give him anything on his arrival, surely this sin of falsehood would have been added to the scroll of your deeds". *(Abu Dawud)*

32. Celebrate the birth of a female child with as much rejoicing as you observe on the birth of a male child. Boy or girl, both are a gift from God and only He knows better whether a boy or a girl is propitious for you. It does not behove a faithful of God to demure or feel crest-fallen on the birth of a girl. Such behaviour is the height of ingratitude and an insolence towards the Omniscient and Merciful God.

The Tradition records : "When a girl is born to someone God sends angels to his home who pronounce : "O

inmates of this house ! peace be on you". The angels take the baby girl under their wings and passing their hands on her head in a gesture of affection observe : "This is a weak creature born out of a weak creature. Whosoever protects and rears this infant girl, God shall sustain him till doomsday". *(Tabrani)*

33. Train and bring up your girls with a sense of great pleasure, spiritual satisfaction and in the spirit of religion. In return for this pious service anticipate from God that He will admit you to the uppermost level of Paradise". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed : "The man who patronises three daughters or three sisters, educates them and teaches them good manners and behaves kindly towards them till they become independent of his care by the will of God, is entitled by God to enter Paradise." Thereupon a person submitted : "If there be only two daughters or two sisters ?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed: "The same reward will be given for similar conduct towards two daughters or two sisters". Hadrat Ibn 'Abbas (God be pleased with him) observes : "Had the people enquired about the reward for rearing one girl in this manner, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would have given the same glad tidings". *(Mishkat)*

Hadrat 'Aishah (God be pleased with her) narrates, "One day a woman accompanied by two small girls came to visit me and begged me to give her something. I had only one date which I handed over to her. The woman divided the date into two halves and gave one half to each girl, leaving nothing to eat for herself. Afterwards she stood up and went out. The same moment the Holy Prophet, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) entered the house. I related the whole matter to him (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). On hearing the case, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him

observed : "Any man who is put to trial on account of daughters being born to him and he comes out of the trial successful by virtue of showing good treatment to his daughters, these girls will serve him as a shield against the fire of Hell on the Day of Judgement". (*Mishkat*)

34. Do not look down upon the female child, nor show preference to the boy over the girl in any matter. Treat both with equal love and behave towards both in an equal manner. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed : "Anyone who is blessed with the birth of a girl and does not bury her alive in the manner of the pagan days and does not look down upon her; neither shows preference to the boy over the girl nor considers the boy in any way superior to the girl, such a man will surely be admitted into Paradise by God". (*Abu Dawud*)
35. Give the prescribed share to the girl out of your property willingly and careful attention. This share is ordained by God and no one has the authority to increase or decrease the amount of this share. It does not behove a pious believer to make excuses in the matter of paying the share of the girl or to feel content by giving away some fraction of it according to his own personal views. Such an action is a breach of covenant with God as well as tantamount to offering an insult to the religion. (God forbid !)
36. Along with these practical measures, say prayers from the depths of your soul and with sincere devotion of heart for your offspring. We may trust the Munificent and Kind God that He will not let earnest prayers offered by the parents out of the depth of their soul go unanswered.

Etiquettes of Friendship

1. Love your friends and become the object of love of your friends. The man who is held in deep affection by his friends and who cherishes feelings of love for his friends is the most fortunate person. The person who avoids the company of other people and whom the people regard with feelings of disgust is the most deprived man. The man who has no wealth is not poor. In point of fact great poverty consists in being friendless. A friend makes life beautiful, acts as a supporter in the journey of life and is a gift of God. Make friends and become friends of others. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed :

“The believer is an embodiment of love and affection. And the man who neither loves others nor is loved by others has no good or virtue in him.”

(*Mishkat, Bab al-Shafqat*)

The Holy Qur'an has affirmed :

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ . «توبه ٧١»

Walmo'minūna walmo'minati ba'duhum auliyāu ba'd.

(9 : 71)

“The believing men and believing women are protecting friends of one another.”

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to cherish deep feelings of affection for all his illustrious companions (God be pleased with them) so

each one of them entertained the happy thought that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) loved him more than any one else.

Hadrat 'Amr b. al-'As (God be pleased with him) reports : "The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to converse with me with such deep attention and sincerity and lavished such great care on me that I came to believe myself to be the best person among my people. And one day I submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) : "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) : Who is better—Me or Abu Bakr ?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "Abu Bakr is the better one." I submitted again : "Who is better—Me or 'Umar (God be pleased with him) ?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed : "Umar is better." I submitted once more : "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you : Who is better—Me or 'Uthman (God be pleased with him) ?" The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "Uthman is better than you". I then requested the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to explain the real matter in detail whereupon the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told me the plain truth. I felt greatly ashamed of myself and wondered what impelled me to ask such questions !

2. Maintain amicable social relations with your friends and try to develop sincere links and continue to cement friendships. Avoid adopting an attitude of annoyance with your friends or keeping aloof from them. When a man lives in the society of other men and has to participate in social matters, it is inevitable that he should suffer different kinds of shocks. Sometimes his sentiments are hurt ; at other times his reputation is tarnished ; one time his peace is disturbed, other times his usual activities are interfered with. Sometimes things are done against his temper and desires ; at other times his patience and endurance are

severely tried and at times he has to suffer great financial loss. In other words, he has to face all kinds of trials and tribulations. But when a man suffers these hardships, his heart is strengthened and he gains in wisdom and experience. Good morals develop in his personality and passing through a natural process of training and purification he makes rapid spiritual and moral progress. He thus acquires the sublime virtues of patience, forbearance, selflessness, affection, sympathy, humanity, respect, loyalty, devotion and co-operation, sincerity and love, generosity and gallantry, kindness and favour to the highest degree and he becomes an instrument of goodness and blessing for the human society. Every man holds him in esteem and values his friendship; each man considers him a source of blessing in his favour. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed:

“The Muslim who participates in social matters with other men and shows forbearance if he suffers any pain from them is a far better person than the one who isolates himself from the people and is dismayed at the hardships caused by others.” (Tirmidhi)

3. Form friendships with the pure and righteous people. In the choice of friends do keep in mind the thought as to how far the people with whom you are forging bonds of amity and friendship can prove useful to you from the viewpoint of religion and morality. There is a famous maxim which says: “If you wish to ascertain the moral state of a man, look at the moral condition of his friends”. And the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed: “A man follows the beliefs of his friend. Hence each man should deeply consider the question as to what kind of a man is the person with whom he is striking a friendship”. (Musnad Ahmad, Mishkat)

The observation that a man will follow the beliefs of his friend implies that when a man keeps the company of his friend he will be affected by the sentiments, thoughts, taste and the mental outlook of his friend. He will inevi-

tably begin to judge things according to the standard of likes and dislikes adopted by his friend. Hence a man should exercise utmost care in choosing a friend and should establish bonds of affection and friendship with a person whose taste, temperament, and activities conform to the tenets of faith and religion. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has enjoined : "Develop a relationship of love and friendship with a believer only and eat and drink in his company only". Furthermore the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed :

"Keep company with the believer and only the righteous should eat from the *Dastar Khwan*¹ of a believer."

Eating together naturally stimulates sentiments of warm affection and love between friends and these links should only be developed with the believers who are God-fearing and righteous people always keep away from those who have forgotten God and are irresponsible and indifferent in carrying out the commands of religion and are immersed in immorality. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has described the nature of relationship with a good and bad friend in a sublime allegory :

"The example of a good or a bad friend is like that of a dealer of musk-perfume and an ironsmith who stokes the furnace. In the company of the perfumer you will certainly derive some benefit i.e. you will buy musk perfume or at least its sweet odour will afford pleasure to you. On the other hand, the furnace of the ironsmith will burn your house or set your clothes ablaze or the foul fumes emitted by the furnace will give you a headache."

(*Bukhari, Muslim*)

The Tradition is recorded by Abu Dawud in the following words :

"The example of a pious friend is like that of a musk-perfumery shop-keeper. If nothing, at least the benefit of

1. Cloth spread on the ground on which food is laid for the diners.

sweet smell can be derived from this friend. The example of an evil friend is like that of a furnace. Even if your clothes are not set ablaze, your dress will certainly be blackened by the fumes of the furnace”.

4. Love your friends for the sake of God. The favourites of Allah are those who join together on the basis of God's religion and struggle shoulder to shoulder with perfect unity of mind and soul to discharge their obligation of establishing the religion of God and stand like a solid wall in defence of their creed.

The Holy Qur'an affirms :

ان الله يحب الذين يقاتلون في سبيله صفا كانهم بنيان
مرصوص . والصف ٤

*Innallaha yuhibulladhina yugatiluna fi sabilihi saffan
ka-annahum bunyanum marsus. (61 : 4)*

“Lo ! Allah loveth those who battle for His cause in ranks as if they were a solid structure”.

And the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed :

“God will ordain on the Day of Judgement : Where are those people who used to love their fellows for my sake only. I shall place them under My own shadow”.

(Muslim)

The enviable state of dignity in which these people will find themselves on the Day of Judgement has been described by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in these words :

“There are some loyal servants of God who, though they are not Prophets or martyrs, yet they shall be elevated to such high status by God on the Day of Judgement that the Prophets and martyrs will envy their good fortune”. The illustrious companions (God be

pleased with them) submitted: "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! Who will be these fortunate persons?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed: "These will be the people who loved each other on the basis of the religion of God—they were not related to one another by blood, nor had any commercial connection with each other. I swear by God, the faces of these people will be glowing with radiance nay they will be the emblems of pure light. When all the people shall be trembling with fear, they shall be free from fear. When all the people will be grief-stricken, they shall know no sorrow". Afterwards the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) recited this verse of the Holy Qur'an:

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ .

يونس ٦٢

Alā inna auliyā allahī lā khaufun ‘alaihim wa lā hum yahzanūn. (10 : 62)

"Lo ! verily the friends of Allah are (those) on whom fear (cometh) not, nor do they grieve".

Hadrat Abud-Darda (God be pleased with him) states that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "Some people shall be raised from their graves on the Day of Judgement in a state that their faces will be glowing with radiant light. They shall be seated on pulpits made of pearls. Other people shall envy their elevated state. These dignified people, however, will neither include Prophets nor martyrs". The companions submitted: "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! Who are these people? Tell us their distinguishing qualities". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "These are the people who love each other for the sake of God only". (Tabrani)

5. Consider the love of pious people as a source of salvation in the eternal life and a means of winning the favour of God. Pray to God to bless you with the love of righteous people and beseech His favour to admit you to the ranks of the pious. Hadrat 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (God be pleased with him) narrates : "A person came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and submitted : "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you), a person loves a pious man for his piety, yet himself does not emulate the good deeds of this pious man, how shall he be treated in the next world ?" The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed : "It does not matter at all. Man shall find himself in the company of that person whom he loves." (Bukhari)

One night the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was blessed with the vision of God. God said to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) : "Ask what thou wilt ?" Thereupon the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said this prayer :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَتَرْكَ الْمُنْكَرَاتِ وَحُبَّ
 الْمَسَاكِينِ وَأَنْ تَغْفِرَ لِي وَتَرْحَمَنِي وَإِذَا أَرَدْتَ فِتْنَةً
 فِي قَوْمٍ فَتَوَفَّنِي غَيْرَ مَفْتُونٍ وَأَسْأَلُكَ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ
 يُحِبُّكَ وَحُبَّ عَمَلٍ يُقَرِّبُنِي إِلَى حُبِّكَ . «مسند احمد»

Allahumma inni as'aluka fi'lal khairati wa tark-al-munkarati wa hubb-al-masakin wa an taghfira li wa tarhamni wa idha aradta fitnatan fi quamin fatawaffani ghaira mastunin wa as'aluka hubbaka wa hubba man

yuhibbuka wa hubba 'amalin yuqarribuni ilā hubbika.
(*Musnad Ahmad*)

“God ! I beseech Thy favour to perform good deeds and avoid evil deeds and I seek the love of the poor and I implore Thee to grant me forgiveness and show me Thy Mercy. When you wish to send a calamity over a people, lift me in a state in which I may enjoy Your protection from the calamity. I implore Thy love and I beseech Thee to grant me love of that person who loves Thee and grant me the favour to perform deeds which may serve as means of obtaining nearness to You”.

Hadrat Mu'adh ibn Jabal (God be pleased with him) states that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed : “God ordains that I owe love to those people who develop links of love and friendship among themselves for My sake and assemble at one place to recite My name and meet each other for the love of Me and show good treatment to each other in order to win My favour.”
(*Ahmad, Tirmidhi*)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) giving an inspiring description of the meeting of two friends, observed :

“A man set out to call on his friend who lived in another habitation. God appointed an angel to await him on the way. The angel enquired of him : “Where are you going ?” The man made the answer : “I am proceeding to that village to see my brother.” The angel further enquired : “Does he owe you a debt of favour which you are now going to receive from him ?” The man replied : “No, I am going to meet him only because I love him for the sake of God”. The angel thereupon told him : “Listen then ! God has sent me to convey to you the glad tidings that God loves you as much as you love your friend for God's sake.”
(*Muslim*)

6. Make friendships with those who deserve to be your friends from the viewpoint of Islam and then try your

utmost to maintain a loyal and devoted friendly relationship throughout your life. As the choice of pious people as friends is a matter of utmost importance, so equally is the continuous endeavour to maintain and strengthen these bonds of friendship.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed : "On the Day of Judgement when there will be no shade anywhere except under the heaven of God, only seven types of people will find place under the shade of God's heaven. Of the first type will be two persons who were friends of each other for no other purpose except for the sake of God. The love of God would have forged a common link of friendship between them and they would separate from each other in the same condition. In other words, their friendship would be based on their common love of God and they would endeavour to maintain and cement this bond of friendship throughout their lives. And when one of them would be near the end of his life, their friendship would be intact at that time and they would part in this world as friends.

7. Trust your friends. Behave cheerfully while you are in their company. Avoid being gloomy and making your friends gloomy. Be informal, frank and good natured amidst friends. Do not frown; nor stand on formality. Try to act as an informal companion, a good-natured mate and a cheerful comrade among your friends. Your friends should not feel bored with your presence; rather they should feel happy and alive in your company and should feel drawn towards you.

Hadart 'Abdullah ibn Hārith (God be pleased with him) relates : "I have never seen a person who smiled more often than the Holy Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). (Tirmidhi)

Hadrat Jābir b. Samrah (God be pleased with him) narrates : "I was present in over hundred sittings with the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be

upon him). In these sittings the illustrious companions (Allah be pleased with them) used to recite verses and related stories and anecdotes dating back to pagan times. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to hear all this in silence and even joined in laughter himself at times". *(Tirmidhi)*

Hadrat Shura'id (Allah be pleased with him) reports that "on one occasion I was sitting behind the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on the back of an animal. During the journey I recited a hundred verses of Umaiya ibn as-Salt to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). After each verse the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked me to recite some more verses and I complied".

(Tirmidhi)

Similarly, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), sometimes himself used to relate stories in his company. Hadrat 'Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) reports: "Once the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) related a story to the members of his household. A lady submitted: "This strange tale resembles the stories of Khurafa.". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked her: "Do you know the real story of Khurafa?" and then himself narrated the true story of Khurafa in great detail." Similarly, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) once related a very interesting story of eleven women to Hadrat 'Aisha (God be pleased with her).

Describing the informal conduct and cheerful temper of the illustrious companions (Allah be pleased with them), Hadrat Bakr ibn 'Abdullah (Allah be pleased with him) relates:

"The illustrious companions (Allah be pleased with them) used to throw the peelings of melon at each other in playful fun, yet when the time came for attack or

defence the valour of the companions (God be pleased with them) outweighed others in this field also".

(*Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad*)

Hadrat Muhammad b. Ziyad (God be merciful to him) reports: I have seen the times of the righteous forebears. Several families of them lived in a single mansion. On many occasions it so happened that a family received a visit from a guest. At that moment food would be cooking in a pot in the quarter of another family. So, the host who had received a guest would go to the quarter of his neighbour and bring over the food without informing the family. The owners of the pot would then go about searching for their pot of food and would ask the people: "Who has taken away my pot?" The host who had taken the pot would then confess to him. "Brother, I had received a visit from a guest so I took away your pot of food". The owner of the pot of food would thereupon say, "May God bless you by increasing the quantity of this food". Muhammad ibn Ziyad (God be merciful to him) also states that when these people baked bread, the same thing happened.

(*Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad*)

A saying of Hadrat 'Ali (God be pleased with him) is as follows:

"Let your heart be free at time. Let your mind conceive pleasant notions, for mind also gets weary even as the body is fatigued".

8. Do not be dull and spiritless. Be of good cheer and keep your spirits high. Beware, however, that your cheerful temper and humour does not exceed proper limits. Along with a cheerful temper, fun and recreation, you should never forget to observe sanctity of religion, prestige and self respect, balance and moderation in your activities.

The illustrious companion of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Hadrat

Abdul Rahman (God be pleased with him) reports that the illustrious companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) neither were devoid of humour nor walked about in a lifeless manner. They used to recite verses and narrate tales and legends of pagan times in their sittings. But when in any matter something was demanded of them which did not conform to justice and truth, the pupils of their eyes were inflated with such intense anger as if they were seized with a fit of madness".

(*Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad*)

Somebody remarked to the renowned traditionist Hadrat Sufyan b. Uyaina (May God show him mercy) that humour is a nuisance. He answered: "No, humour is a Sunnah, but only for that man who knows the suitable occasion on which to practise it and has the ability to indulge in good jokes".

(*Sharh Shama'il Tirmidhi*)

9. If you love someone, you must express your love to that person. Its psychological effect on that person will be that he will develop a sense of nearness to you. The exchange of feelings and passions on both sides will augment love and sincerity to an extraordinary extent. Love then will no longer be merely a feeling confined within the heart but will begin to play a potent role in practical life. Thus people will have an opportunity of taking deep interest in the individual lives of each other and coming nearer to each other.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed: "Any person who cherishes in his heart sentiments of love and sincerity for his brother, he should express these sentiments to his brother and tell him clearly that he holds him in love and affection".

(*Abū Dawūd*)

On one occasion, a man passed in front of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Some people were at that time in attendance on the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). One

of them submitted; "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be on you)! I love this man for the sake of God alone". On hearing this the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired from him: "Have you told this to the man"? The man submitted: "No, I have not". Thereupon the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) urged the man: "Go and tell the man that you love him for the sake of God". The man stood up at once and approaching the passerby expressed to him his sentiments. The passerby made the answer: "May the Lord love thee for whose sake you entertain feelings of love for me".

(Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud)

In order to cement the bonds of friendship and to bring friends closer to each other for their mutual benefit, it is essential that you should take proper interest in the individual and private matters of your friends and express to them your special feelings of devotion and concern.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed:

"When a man establishes ties of friendship and fraternity with another person he should ascertain from him his name, father's name and particulars about his family as this strengthens the roots of mutual friendship".

(Tirmidhi)

10. Adopt a moderate course in expressing your love and in the conduct of mutual relationship. Do not display such unconcern that your love and connexion may appear doubtful, nor permit yourself to go to such extremes of passion that your love and friendship may assume the form of craziness and perchance you may suffer a shock at times (God forbid!) Always observe moderation and keep your feelings at balance. Adopt a moderate attitude which may be enduring and long-lasting. Hadrat Aslam (God be pleased with him) states that Hadrat 'Umar (God be

pleased with him) observed : "Your love should not assume the form of madness, nor should enmity excite you to perpetrate torture on other". I submitted : Sir, how should we do so "? Hadrat 'Umar (God be pleased with him) observed : "In this manner that if you love someone you start hugging him in a childlike fashion and display other forms of childish behaviour. And if you feel angry with someone, you resolve upon the destruction of his life and property and utter ruination". (Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad).

Hadrat 'Ubaid Kindi (God be merciful to him) reports : I heard Hadrat 'Ali (God be pleased with him) observing : "Adopt a tender and moderate attitude towards your friend ; he might turn your enemy tomorrow. Likewise, follow a tender and moderate course in your conduct towards the enemy ; he might become your friend sometime later." (Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad)

11. Be loyal and devoted to your friends. The best form of devotion to your friend is that you should increasingly try to elevate his morals. You should be more concerned with his salvation in the eternal world than his advancement in the material world. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "Religion wholly consists in seeking the welfare of others". The real test of a well-wisher is that one should wish for his friend the same thing that one wishes for his own self, for a man can never be his own ill-wisher.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed :

"I swear by Him Who hath power over my life, no man can be truly pious unless he wishes for his brother the same thing that he wishes for himself".

Laying down six obligations which each Muslim owes to the other, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "And the believer should act as a well-wisher of his brother both in his presence and absence". Furthermore, the Holy Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed :

“Without doubt God has ordained the ordeal of fire for that man and He has forbidden his entry into Paradise who forfeits the right of a brother Muslim after having sworn to fulfil his obligation”. Someone from among the illustrious companions (God be pleased with them) submitted : “What if that obligation relates to a very minor thing ”? The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed : “Yes, even if he owes an ordinary branch of the ‘Pelu’ tree to another Muslim”.

12. Share the grief and sorrow of your friends. Likewise, participate actively in their joyous occasions. The purpose of your sharing their grief should be to alleviate their suffering and the aim of your participation in their festivities ought to be to enhance their joy. Every friend rightly expects from his sincere associates that they will stand by him in times of trial and will never desert him in the hour of need. Similarly, he anticipates that his friends will add to his felicity by increasing the grace of his festive parties with their presence and active participation.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed :

“The Muslim fraternity is like a mansion. Even as each brick supports and cements the other brick, so does a Muslim act as a supporter and a source of strength for the other Muslim”. So saying the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) interlocked the fingers of his both hands and thus explained the mutual link and close connexion that ought to subsist among the Muslim community”.
(*Bukhārī, Muslim*)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined : “In their sense of mutual love and affection and perception of common distress, you will find Muslims as one body ; if one organ of this body is afflicted,

the whole body is affected by fever and sleeplessness”.

(*Bukhārī, Muslim*)

13. Meet your friends in a cheerful, amicable, joyous and sincere manner. Greet them warmly and observe proper etiquettes in receiving them. Avoid showing an indifforent, cold and unconcerned behaviour. These evils create a rift in the hearts. Say words of praise and thanks and joy and satisfaction during meetings with your friends. Abstain from talk which reveals sorrow, grief and low spirits. Behave in such a manner during meetings with your friends that they should be thrilled with feelings of joy and liveliness. Do not greet them with such a gloomy face that they may feel crestfallen and may come to regard your fellowship as intolerable nuisance.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed :

“Do not look upon any pious deed as insignificant, may it be greeting your brother with a cheerful heart”.

(*Muslim*)

On another occasion, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : “Your smile on seeing a brother is also an act of sacrifice on your part”.

(*Tirmidhi*)

Tenderness, politeness and civility generate feelings of affection and love in the heart and it is on the basis of these virtues that a good society can be formed.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observes :

“I tell you the distinguishing marks of a person for whom the fire of Hell has been made unlawful and who is a forbidden person for the Hell Fire to consume : He is a man who bears a sweet temper, tender heart and is soft-spoken”.

(*Tirmidhi*)

The illustrious companions (God be pleased with them) relate that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah

be upon him) used to be attentive with his whole posture towards the person with whom he was talking and listened to the talk in rapt attention. Once the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sitting in the mosque. A man paid a call and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) shifted his posture and shrank a little. The man submitted: "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! There is ample room here". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed:

"A Muslim owes it to his brother that on seeing him, he should move for him a little." (*Baihaqi*)

Describing the virtues of the believers, the Holy Qur'an affirms:

أَذَلَّةٌ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ .

Adhillatin 'alal mo'minin.

"They are always very gentle to the believers".

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has elucidated the same fact in the following words:

"The believers are forbearing and soft-hearted like a camel who is tied with a nose band; the camel is drawn to whichever direction his nose-band is tugged and if he is made to sit on a stone, he complies". (*Tirmidhi*)

14. Whenever you differ among yourselves on any matter resolve it at once. Always take the initiative to seek forgiveness and to admit your fault.

Hadrat Abud-Darda (God be pleased with him) reports: "Once there was an exchange of hot words between Hadrat Abu Bakr and Hadrat 'Umar (God be pleased with them). Hadrat Abu Bakr (God be pleased with him) felt it hard and went to the Holy Prophet

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in a very sad and sorry mood and submitted: "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! A difference arose between 'Umar and myself whereupon I flew into rage and we exchanged some bitter words. Later, I felt greatly ashamed of myself and solicited 'Umar (God be pleased with him) to forgive me. But, O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! 'Umar was not reconciled and declined to forgive me. I am feeling very much upset and uneasy so have I come to you. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: 'God will grant you forgiveness and salvation'. Meanwhile Hadrat 'Umar (God be pleased with him) also realised his fault and rushed to Hadrat Abu Bakr's (God be pleased with him) house. He was informed that Abu Bakr (God be pleased with him) has gone to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Whereupon 'Umar (God be pleased with him) also hurried to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Signs of anger and displeasure appeared on the countenance of the Holy Prophet (p. b. u. h.) on seeing Hadrat Umar (A. b. p. h.) Noting the displeasure against Hadrat Umar, Hadrat Abu Bakr (God be pleased with him) felt deeply perturbed. He fell on his knees and submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in great humility "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! 'Umar (God be pleased with him) is not at fault. All blame rests on me. I committed the fault It was I who spoke harshly to him". Thereupon the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "God sent me as His Prophet among you and when in the early days you refuted me, it was Abu Bakr who affirmed his faith in me and stood by me at the cost of his life and property. Would you now aggrieve my companion" ?

Do not lose time in making peace. The longer the

delay in resolving quarrels, the deeper grow the roots of contention, and the wider grows the gulf of separation between the hearts. The following precept of Hadrat 'Isa (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) contained in the Bible is intensely heartwarming :

“So if you are engaged in offering sacrifice at the altar and you suddenly recall to mind that your brother has some complaint against you, leave your offering at the altar and return at once to your brother to make peace with him. Then go back to the altar and make your offering”.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed :

“The deeds of the people are presented to God on every Monday and Thursday and every believer is granted pardon except the one who nurses a grudge against any of his believing brothers. God ordains : “Leave them so that they may resolve their quarrel”.

Who knows whether the next moment will bring death or life ! Who knows whether he will witness the next Monday or Thursday ! Why and on what hope do you delay in purifying your heart and settling the complaints of your friends ? Is any sensible person who believes in the Day of Judgement ready to present himself with an impure, dark and gruesome heart before the Almighty God ?

Beware also that if your friend admits his fault and requests pardon, you should accept his excuse and forgive him from the core of your heart.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed.

“The Muslim who declines to accept the confession of his fault and a request for forgiveness from his brother Muslim is held guilty of a sin as grave as the sin of cruelty and oppression committed by an Octroi man who extorts an illegal cess”.

15. Restrain your tongue even if friends talk or behave in a manner which is offensive to your temper or taste. Do not utter harsh or offensive speech in retaliation. Instead let the matter pass with tact and gentle conduct.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

Hadrat Mūsa (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) submitted to God : My Lord ! Which one is the dearest to you among your creatures" ? God affirmed : "That one who hath the power to take revenge, yet forgives". (*Mishkāt*)

In addition to this, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

"The heaviest thing put in the balance of a believer on the Day of Judgement will be his politeness. God looks upon that person with intense wrath who utters indecent and foul speech".

Hadrat 'Abdullah ibn Mubarak (God be merciful to him) has defined the virtue of politeness in three ways :

1. A person should meet others with a bright, smiling face.

2. A man should spend his wealth on the destitute and needy persons.

3. A person should not cause harm to any one.

Hadrat 'Āisha (God be pleased with her) reports : "The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "The worst man in the eyes of God on the Day of Judgement will be the one whom the people avoid on account of his indecent and foul speech".

(*Bukhari, Muslim*)

16. Do not shirk your duty to reform your friends and train them in righteousness. Do not let vanity and pride take root in the character of your friends which is the greatest hurdle in their reformation and moral uplift Always try to

persuade your friends to realise their omissions and errors and develop moral courage to confess their faults. They should always be mindful of the fact that failure to realise one's shortcomings and insistence upon one's faultlessness mars one's spiritual development.

As a matter of fact it is very easy to show off false humility, to call oneself as insignificant and to display submissiveness in style and manners, but it is extremely difficult to sustain an injury to your feelings, to listen to and admit your shortcomings with a cool mind and to tolerate the criticism directed by your friends against your personal faults. Yet true friends are those who keep an enlightened eye on the conduct of their friends and are always alert and alive to the task of protecting each other from the evils of vanity and pride by sincere counsel and practical example.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirms :

Three things are fatal :

1. The passion which is allowed to prevail upon one's good sense.
 2. The greed and lust which is allowed to become the guiding principle of one's life.
 3. And vanity——the most dangerous of the three illa'.
- (*Baihaqi, Mishkat*)

Criticism and accountability are lancets which purge the moral existence of man from all undesirable elements. They augment moral strength and infuse new life into the individual and the society. To take offence, to get irritated and to consider oneself as above the criticism and accountability of friends is detrimental to one's moral being as well as to evade healthy and constructive criticism of one's friends to check and protect them from moral degradation. Do not feel uneasy if you find hideous faults and shortcomings in your friends and take wise measures to

eliminate those blemishes on the characters of your friends. Similarly, give a chance with genuine humility and large-heartedness to your friends that they should expose to you your own foibles and faults. When your friends discharge this unpleasant duty towards you, do not be vainglorious, but welcome their criticism with large-heartedness, cheerfully and with a grateful heart. Express your gratitude to them for their sincerity and kindness. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has described this exemplary friendship in a most eloquent allegory.

“Each one of you serves as a mirror to his brother. Hence if you see any fault in your brother, eliminate it”.

(Tirmidhi)

There are five illuminating points in this allegory which can make your friendship exemplary in genuine terms :

- (1) The mirror reflects the spots and stains on your person when you stand before it with the intention of locating these spots and stains. When you stand aside, the mirror ceases to reflect these blemishes. Similarly, you should expose the foibles of your friend only if he willingly presents himself before you for criticism and chastisement with an open-mind. At the same time, make it sure that his mind is receptive to your criticism and that his heart is eager to accept suggestions for the correction of his faults. In the absence of these conditions, you should keep silent and put off the matter wisely for a later occasion. In the absence of your friend especially you should exercise the utmost care not to utter a single word pointing to any shortcoming of your friend, for this would be counted as back-biting and backbiting divides the hearts rather than uniting them.
- (2) The mirror reflects very honestly all such spots or stains which are really present on the face ; it neither hides their number nor makes an addition to them. Furthermore, the

mirror reflects only those deformities which are outward and apparent ; it does not expose the hidden blemishes, neither probes inward, nor presents an illusory picture of your demerits. Likewise, you should also present a genuine and true picture of the inadequacies and faults of your friends. Moved by sentiments of undue politeness and flattery you should neither suppress the exposure of a few foibles of your friends nor exaggerate their dimensions or add to their number in the heat of your passionate oratory and declamation. Moreover, point out only those faults of your friends which are exposed in the normal conduct of life. Do not display curiosity or an eagerness to spy into the secrets of others. To expose the secret faults of your friends is no moral service, in fact it is a perilous and immoral act on your part.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) once ascended the pulpit and warned the congregation in a very high tone of his holy voice :

“Do not pry into the vices of Muslims. God exposes the hidden vices of a person who seeks to expose the faults of his brother Muslims ; and when God decides to expose the faults of someone, He inevitably reduces the man to disgrace, even if such a man hides himself in the inner recesses of his home”. (Tirmidhi)

(3) The mirror discharges its duty unaffected by any sort of motives. Any one who faces the mirror, the mirror shows him his true image without any reservations. The mirror nurses no grudge or vendetta against anyone, nor wreaks vengeance on anybody. You should also chastise your friends unaffected by personal motives, feelings of vendetta, grudge, pique, or dishonesty. Your only motive in criticising your friend should be to enable him to reform himself, as a man adorns himself by eliminating spots and stains from his person by locating them through their reflection in the mirror.

(4) No one feels annoyed at seeing his true image in

the mirror, nor commits the blunder of breaking up the mirror in a fit of rage. Instead most people on looking into the mirror begin to adorn themselves by removing the apparent defects on their persons and in fact realizing the valuable services of the mirror in this regard are thankful to it in their hearts. They are fully conscious of the fact that the mirror has proved extremely helpful to them in the task of embellishing their persons. They believe that the mirror has done its natural duty remarkably and they put it away carefully for use at another time. Similarly when someone presents your true picture before you in his own words, do not retaliate in annoyance. Instead express your gratitude to him for his sincere performance of the obligation of friendship. Feel grateful to him in your heart also, apart from offering him thanks in words and set about reforming yourself at once. Realizing the value and greatness of your friend with an open mind and with a sense of extreme gratitude, request your friend to continue to show you the favour of his valuable suggestions.

- (5) The final point is that "every Muslim serves as a mirror unto his brother Muslim". A brother is an emblem of sincerity and love for his brother. A brother is loyal, devoted, sympathetic, a well-wisher and a helper in grief to his brother. He feels restless on seeing his brother in trouble and is overjoyed at his happiness. Hence the criticism of a brother and a friend is motivated by feelings of extreme sincerity, devotion, sympathy and love. It will be characterised by a desire for the welfare and extreme concern for the best interests of his friend. Every word of this friendly criticism will reflect the spirit of reformation. Such a form of criticism may be rightly expected to unite the hearts and correct the wrongs.

17. Exchange gifts in order to express your feelings of sincerity and love for your friends and to deepen the relationship of love and affection. Mutual exchange of gifts unites

the hearts and cements the bonds of love. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed :

“Exchange gifts with each other. This will generate mutual feelings of love and eliminate feelings of animosity and estrangement from your hearts”. *(Mishkāt)*.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself often used to send gifts to his illustrious Companions (God be pleased with them). The Prophet's Companions (God be pleased with them) also frequently exchanged presents and gifts among themselves. In the matter of exchanging gifts always keep within your means. Whatever the status of the receiver, do not think that your gift should necessarily be a costly one. Give according to your means and whatever is easily available. The real worth of your gift depends on your sincerity and the nature and depth of feelings with which you have presented the gift. It is the feelings of sincerity and deep passions of love and devotion which unite the hearts and the cost or value of the gift is insignificant in this regard. Do not regard the gift of your friend as insignificant, however cheap in cost it may be. Instead put a high value on the feelings of love and sincerity reflected by the gift of your friend.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“Even if someone offers me the leg of a goat as a gift, I shall accept it and if someone invites me to a dinner consisting of a cooked leg of goat, I shall certainly join the feast”. *(Tirmidhi)*

You must answer a gift with a gift. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to observe this rule strictly. The Holy Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) favourite gift was perfume. You should also consider the present of a perfume as a propitiatory gift. In the present-day circumstances, the presen-

tation of a book can also be regarded as a propitious gift. In this connection, you should hold common feasts at times. Invite your friends to dinner at home. When friends invite you to functions at their homes, make it a point to join their parties. Mutual entertainment promotes feelings of love and affection, and bonds of fraternity are further cemented. However, on these occasions instead of observing excessive formalities and laying out lavish quantities of food and drink, you should put more emphasis on displaying and augmenting the feelings of love and sincerity.

18. Look after your friends. Stand by them in their hour of need, even at the cost of your own life and property. Aṣbahani relates in a tradition : "A person came to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (God be pleased with him) and asked : Which one is the most favourite of God among the people"? Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (God be pleased with him) answered : "The most favourite person of God among the people is he who affords the greatest benefit to his fellow men. The deed which wins the greatest favour of God is that you should make a Muslim happy in such manner that you should alleviate his suffering or hardship or make a provision of food to satisfy his hunger. I would go out with a brother Muslim in order to help him in his need rather than sit in the mosque of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and perform *I'tikāf*. God shall fill the heart of that man with His favour on Doomsday who controlled his rage at a time when he could give vent to his fury, if he so wished. And the person who accompanied his brother in order to help satisfy his need and actually provided for his need shall be rewarded with the favour of God on Doomsday when the other people will be staggering, this person will walk with a firm gait".

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed : "Any man who provides for the need of his brother, Allah shall always keep fulfilling the needs of that man. And any person who alleviates some

hardship of a Muslim, Allah on Doomsday shall remove one of his hardships out of the many hardships of that day".

(*Bukhārī, Muslim*)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also affirmed: "Allah continues to help a man as long as he continues to help his brother." (*Tirmidhi*)

Hadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās (Allah be pleased with him) has reported that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "The reward and blessing for the act of providing for the need of a brother Muslim exceeds the reward and blessing for performing an I'tikaf for a period of ten years." (*Tabrani*)

Hadrat Anas (Allah be pleased with him) states that the Holy Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "A Muslim who conveys a message of felicity and happiness to a brother Muslim and thus affords him happiness, Allah shall, on Doomsday, make this messenger happy." (*Tabarāni*)

19. Be a trustworthy confident. If a friend, relying on your good faith, confides his secret in you, you should safeguard his secret. Do not betray the confidence of your friend. Make your heart an iron vault for the safe keeping of secrets, so that friends may take counsel with you without hesitation and also in order that you may proffer good advice to your friends and extend your full co-operation to them.

Hadrat 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him) narrates: "When Hafsa (Allah be pleased with her) was widowed, I called on 'Uthman (Allah be pleased with him) and said to him: "If you are agreeable I should give Hafsa in marriage to you." 'Uthman (Allah be pleased with him) answered: "I shall think over the matter". I waited for his message for many nights. Later 'Uthman (Allah be pleased with him) met me and said: "I have no intention of marrying at the moment". I then went to see Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) and proposed: "If you wish you may take Hafsa

(Allah be pleased with her) as your wife". Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) kept silent and made no answer. I was offended at the silence of Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him). I was more deeply offended with him than even at the response of 'Uthman (Allah be pleased with him). Many days passed and one day the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent me a proposal to marry Hafsa (God be pleased with her). I accepted the proposal and gave Hafsa (Allah be pleased with her) in marriage to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Later one day Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) met me and said: "You talked to me concerning Hafsa (Allah be pleased with her) and I kept silent. My response might have caused you some pain." I replied: "Yes, I did feel sore at your silence". Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) thereupon told me: "I knew that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself intended to send a proposal for marriage with Hafsa (Allah be pleased with her). The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had confided this secret to me and I did not intend to reveal it. If the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had not expressed his intention concerning Hafsa (Allah be pleased with her), I would certainly have accepted your proposal."

(*Bukhārī*)

Ḥadīrat Anas (Allah be pleased with him) relates: "One day I was playing with boys of my age when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) arrived and blessed us with 'salām' (peace be on you). The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told me his need and sent me on some errand. The errand took rather a long while. When it was over and I reached home late my mother enquired: "Where have you been for so long?" I answered: "The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had sent me on an errand". She asked: "What for?" I said: "It is a secret matter". There-

upon my mother advised me: "Look, do not reveal the secret of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to anyone". (Muslim)

20. Your moral conduct towards the people should be characterised by a cosmopolitan, vast, comprehensive, and tolerant outlook, so that people of every taste and temper, thought and ideal may feel an uncommon sense of attraction towards you. Keeping in view the particular taste, viewpoint and temperament of every one, behave towards each person so wisely that no one's feelings are hurt. Do not adopt the unwise attitude of measuring everyone according to your own particular standard of propriety, nor make an absurd and unsuccessful attempt to mould every one according to your own taste and temperament. The variety of tastes and temperaments is a beauty of Nature. Do not deform the beauty of Nature for the sake of acquiring artificial beauty. Keep your relations according to the nature of acquaintance and the temperament of your friends, give them respect and importance accordingly and keep them attached in bonds of friendship with you by means of your own liberal behaviour and good character.

An all-round genius as the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was, men of all tastes and temperaments found consolation and contentment in his august company. Nobody felt any uneasiness due to the magnanimous toleration and extraordinary charitable nature of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The august company of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) included embodiments of toleration and affection like Abu Bakr (God be pleased with him) and men of iron nature and courage like 'Umar Farooq (God be pleased with him), pacifists who trembled at the prospect of war like Hassān b. Thābit (God be pleased with him) as well as the gallant victor of Khybar Ḥadrāt 'Ali (God be pleased with him). There was Abu Dhar Ghifari (God be pleased with him) a saintly,

gloomy figure as well as 'Abdul Rahman b. 'Auf (God be pleased with him), sumptuously rich and elegant in person. It was by virtue of the cosmopolitan outlook, excellent conduct, deep love for humanity and the highest degree of statesmanship of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that men of divergent personalities were extremely devoted to the person of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself treated everyone of them with such deep consideration that every one thought himself the most favourite friend of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Again, it was owing to this cosmopolitan moral viewpoint, statesmanship, wisdom and unique selflessness that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) formed that matchless group of illustrious Companions (God be pleased with them), who despite their variegated natures and temperaments, were welded together in a unique combination characterised by uncommon unity, co-operation and enviably deep mutual love and affection. The mankind as a whole may rightly consider this era as the essence and substance of its long existence so far.

Your friendships, in fact, can only be successful and long-lasting when your collective attitudes and behaviour reflect rationality, liberalism, patience and tolerance, forbearance and magnanimity, forgiveness and selflessness, mutual understanding and humility, submissiveness, mutual accommodation of each other's sentiments and due consideration of each other's interests in every day life. You may judge from the following few references from the life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) how considerate, magnanimous, liberal, forbearing and tolerant was the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) towards the natural needs, feelings and frailties of human beings:

* "I come to offer prayer and wish to prolong the prayers. But I hear some infant crying on the woman's

side and I shorten my prayers, for I cannot afford to put the mother of the child to inconvenience by prolonging the prayers". *(Bukhārī)*

* Hadrat Mālik bin al Huwarith states : "Some of us young men of the same age group paid a visit to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in order to learn religion from him. We stayed with the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for twenty days. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was very kind and tender in his dealings. At the end of our twenty days' stay, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) felt that we were anxious to return home. The Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired from us: "Tell me about the people you have left behind at home". We related to him (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) the affairs of our households in detail. Whereupon the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded us: "Go back to your wives and children. While living among them teach them everything you have learnt here and urge them to observe piety. Tell them the proper timings for offering prayers. When the time for prayer comes, one of you should call the people for prayers by saying Adhan and he who excels in knowledge and good morals among all of you, should act as leader in the prayer". *(Bukhārī Muslim)*

* Hadrat Mu'āwiya b. Hakam Sulami (Allah be pleased with him) relates one of his own experiences as follows :

"I was saying prayers behind the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when a man sneezed. Forgetting that I was saying my prayers I spontaneously replied *يا رحمة الله* *Yarhamakallah* whereupon the people stared in rebuke at me. I said to them : "May God protect you, why do you stare at me?" I felt, however, that the people wanted me to observe silence, so I kept mum. When the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be

upon him) had finished the prayers—May my father and mother be sacrificed for him, for never had I seen nor saw afterwards anyone who was a better teacher and guide than the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)—he did not reproach me, neither beat me, nor rebuked me. He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) only observed: “This is worship and it is not proper to talk in the prayer. Prayer is meant to announce the purity of God, to acknowledge His Greatness and to recite the Qur’ān.”

(*Muslim*)

21. Be very much particular in prayers. Pray for your friends and request them to remember you in their prayers. Pray for your friends in their presence as well as in their absence. Think of your friends and pray for them by name in their absence. Hadrat ‘Umar (Allah be pleased with him) reports: “I requested leave of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to perform ‘Umrah. Granting the leave, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: “O My brother, do not forget us in your prayers’. Hadrat ‘Umar (God be pleased with him) says: “I felt so happy on hearing this observation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that I would not have felt happier had I been offered the whole world”.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed: “When a Muslim says a prayer for his brother Muslim in absentia, Allah accepts his prayer and appoints one of his angels on the Muslim who is offering the prayer so that when this Muslim prays for his brother Muslim the angel says: “Amen, you shall receive from Allah for yourself too what you are asking for your brother.”

(*Muslim*)

Beseech Allah in your sincere prayers: “Allah, clear our hearts of all grudge, vendetta, enmity and misunderstanding and tie us with bonds of sincerity and love. Make our

relationships pleasant by means of mutual cooperation and love". Say this prayer of the Holy Qur'an also :

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ

فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ .

«الحشر - ١٠»

*Rabbanaghfir lanā wali ikhwaninalladhina sabaqūnā
billmani wala taj'al fī qulūbinā ghillallilladhina āmanū
rabbanā innaka raūfurrahīm.*

"Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who were before us in the faith, and place not in our hearts any rancour towards those who believe. Our Lord; Thou art full of pity, Merciful."

(59 : 10)

Etiquettes for The Host

1. Express your joy and love on the arrival of a guest. Greet him with a cheerful heart. Welcome him with open arms and show him every mark of respect and honour. Do not display stinginess, indifference, cold attitude or resentment.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed :

“The people who believe in God and the Day of Judgement should show hospitality to their guests”.
(*Bukhāri, Muslim*)

Hospitality includes all those matters which are essential for showing due respect and honour to the guest and to make provisions for his comfort, peace, happiness and fulfilment of his needs. Showing respect to your guest means treating your guest with politeness and in good cheer ; to entertain him with pleasant conversation, to make provisions for his rest and relaxation ; to introduce him to your other respectable friends ; to look after his needs, to arrange provisions of food and drink for him with a liberal and generous mind and to give personal service and attention to all the requirements of your friend.

“Whenever respectable guests paid a visit to him, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to attend to their hospitality himself”.

“Whenever the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) served meals to his guest he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to prompt the guest

repeatedly to partake more of the food. When the guest had taken to his fill and expressed inability to eat more, it was then that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ceased urging him to take more.

2. When a guest arrives, say Salam (peace be on you) to him and pray for him. Then enquire about his health.

The Holy Qur'an affirms :

هَلْ آتَاكَ حَدِيثُ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ إِذْ دَخَلُوا

عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا . قَالَ سَلَامٌ . «الذاريات ٢٤-٢٥»

Hal atāka hadithu daiḥi Ibrahīma-l-mukramina idh dakhalū 'alaihi faqālū salāmā. Qāla salām.

“Hath the story of Abraham's honoured guests reached thee (O Muhammad) when they came in unto him and said: “Salām” Ḥaḍrat Ibrahim answered salām’. (51 : 24-25)

- 3 Show generous hospitality to your guests and offer them the best that is readily available. On arrival of his guests, Ḥaḍrat Ibrahim (peace be on him) at once got busy in making arrangements for their dinner. He (peace be upon him) had a fat calf in his home, which he slaughtered and got it roasted for his guests.

The Holy Qur'an affirms :

فَرَاغَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ فَجَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ سَمِينٍ فَقَرَّبَهُ إِلَيْهِمْ .

«الذاريات ٢٦-٢٧»

Farāgha ilā ahlihi fajā'abi-'ijlin samīnin faqarrabahū ilaihim. (51 : 26-27)

“Then he went apart unto his housefolk and brought a fatted calf roasted for the guests ; and presented it before them”.

فراغ الى اهله *Farāgha ilā ahlihi* also bears the meaning that Hadrat Ibrahim (peace be upon him) went inside his home to make arrangements for the feast without informing any one lest the guests should feel informal or forbid preparation of food for them for fear of causing inconvenience to the host. In that case, it would not be possible for the host to entertain his guests.

Hadrat Abu Sharih, in his report of the manner in which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has urged the Muslims to show hospitality to their guests, states as follows :

“I saw with my two eyes and heard with mine two ears when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was delivering this counsel : “The people who believe in God and the Day of Judgment should show hospitality to their guests. The first night and first day of his stay is the prized day and night for you”.

(*Bukhari/Muslim*)

To attribute ‘In’am’ (reward) to the first night and first day of the guest’s stay implies that as the munificent feels spiritual contentment on giving away (reward with deep sentiments of joy and love, a similar behaviour should be displayed by the host towards the guest on the first night and first day of his stay with him. Likewise as the beneficiary receives the (reward) with joy and happiness deeming it as his rightful due and appreciates the munificence of his benefactor, a similar attitude should be adopted by the guest towards his host during the first night and first day of his stay with him. The guest should not stand on formality and ought to accept the offerings of the host with sentiments of joy and close fellowship considering the host’s hospitality towards him as his rightful due.

4. As soon as the guest arrives, think first of his natural human needs. Make discreet enquiries as to whether he wishes to use the toilet or bathroom. Arrange a bath for him, if it is required. Even though it may be a late hour

for meals, ask your guest if he wants to eat or drink in such a discreet manner that he should not decline as a matter of formality. Show your guest his bed room where he is to stay.

5. Do not pester your guest with your constant company. Similarly do not keep him awake late in the night talking or discussing matters. Allow him sufficient time to rest so that he may not feel inconvenient. When the guests paid a visit to him, Hadrat Ibrahim (peace be upon him) left them alone for a while and went inside his home to prepare a feast for the guests.
6. Do feel pleasure when the guests are dining with you. Do not show any signs of stinginess, annoyance or weariness. The guest is not a burden, but a source of blessing, grace and Divine favour. Whomsoever God sends to you as a guest, He sends provisions for the guest also. The guest eats with you whatever was decreed for him ; he does not eat your share of the divine bounty. The visit of a guest adds to your honour and dignity.
7. Protect the honour and dignity of your guest and consider his honour and dignity as vital as your own. In case any one poses a threat to the honour of your guest, you should consider it a challenge to your own honour and conscience.

The Holy Qur'an affirms that when the people of the habitation assaulted the guests of Hadrat Lūt (peace be upon him) with evil intentions, Hadrat Lūt (peace be upon him) rose up in their defence and declared : "These people are my guests. Do not disgrace me by treating them offensively. I hold their disgrace as an offence against my own person".

قَالَ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ ضَيْفِي فَلَا تَفْضَحُونِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا

تَخْزُونِ . «الحج ٦٨-٦٩»

Qāla inna hāolāi daiḥī fala tafdahūni wattaqullaha wa la tukhzūn.

“He said : Lo ! they are my guests. Affront me not ! And fear Allah and shame me not”. (22 : 68-9)

8. Observe all the etiquettes of hospitality with deep enthusiasm and eagerness for three days. The guest has a right over you to entertain him for three days and a believer should always be extremely generous in discharging their obligations. On the first day the guest should be shown special hospitality. Hence make sumptuous arrangements for the entertainment of your guest. On the subsequent two days it does not matter if that level of sumptuous entertainment cannot be maintained. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed :

وَالضِّيَافَةُ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ فَمَا بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ لَهُ صَدَقَةٌ .

«بخاری ، مسلم»

Wad-ḍiyafatu thalāthata ayyāmin famā ba'da dhālika fa hu wa lahu sadaqatun. (Bukharī, Muslim).

“And hospitality is ordained for three days. Later whatever entertainment the host offers to his guest is a charity on his part”.

9. Consider rendering service to the guest as your moral duty. Do not consign your guest to the care of your servants and children. Instead devote yourself personally to the service of your guest. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to look after the entertainment of the guests personally. When Ḥaḍrat Imām Shāfi (God be merciful to him) paid a visit to Imām Mālik (God be merciful to him), he was received with every mark of honour and respect due to a guest and was lodged in his bed room to sleep for the night. At dawn Imām Shāfi (God be merciful to him) heard a knock on the door and a voice said in affectionate tones : “May God show you

His Mercy ! Arise, the hour of prayer has come". Imām Shāf'ī (Allah be merciful to him) at once got up and found Imām Mālik (Allah be merciful to him) standing on the door with a vessel full of water in his hand. At this, Imām Shāf'ī (Allah be merciful to him) felt some embarrassment, noticing which Imām Mālik (Allah be merciful to him) remarked in deep affection "Never mind, brother, it is obligatory to look after the guests".

10. Having lodged the guest, tell him the location of the toilet ; provide him with a vessel of water ; point out the direction of the Qiblah, and supply him with a prayer-mat. The servant of Imām Mālik (Allah be merciful to him), having lodged Imam Shaf'i (Allah be merciful to him) in a room submitted to him : "Ḥaḍrat ! This is the direction of the Qiblah ; the vessel of water is placed here and the toilet is located this way".
11. At dinner time wash your hands first and reach the table before your guests wash their hands. When Imām Mālik (God be merciful to him) observed this etiquette, Imām Shaf'i (God be merciful to him) asked him the significance of this gesture. Thereupon Imām Mālik (God be merciful to him) observed, "Before starting the meal the host should wash his hands first and reach the dining place before his guests in order to greet them at the meal. At the end of the meal, however, it is the guests whose hands should be washed first and the host should wash his hands last of all lest some more guests should drop in before the host gets up from the dining place."
12. The quantity of food and the number of plates should be somewhat in excess of the actual number of guests. It is possible that someone might turn up during the meal. In that case, the host will have to get up and take the extra trouble of making further arrangements. If the provisions and plates are already there the new guest will be saved from embarrassment and will rather feel happy and honoured.

13. Show selflessness and sacrifice in the case of a guest. Provide comfort to him at the cost of your own convenience.

One day a person came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and submitted: "O Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! I am in a terrible agony of hunger". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent word to one of his holy wives (Allah be pleased with them): "Send whatever food is available". The answer he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) received was: "In the name of Allah Who has sent you as His Apostle, there is nothing except water available here". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) thereupon sent the same message to a second wife and received the same reply. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) made enquiries from each of his wives, but answer was invariably the same. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then turned towards his companions and observed; "Who among you will accept this man as his guest for tonight". A companion from among the Ansār (Allah be pleased with him) submitted: "O Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you), I accept this man as my guest".

The Ansāri (Allah be pleased with him) thereupon took the guest to his house and told his wife: "I have brought a guest from the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with me. Show him some hospitality". The wife answered: "I have just enough food for children and no more". The illustrious companion (God be pleased with him) said: "Put the children to sleep by diverting their attention to some thing else and when you serve the meal before the guest, extinguish the lamp on some pretext and sit down beside the guest so that he may feel we are sharing the meal with him". In this manner, the guest ate to his fill, but the hosts passed the night on an empty stomach. Next morning when this illustrious

Companion (Allah be pleased with him) reached the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on beholding him observed : The goodness both of you displayed towards your guest has won you the immense pleasure of God". *(Bukhāri, Muslim)*

14. Even if your guest has treated you with bad manners and given you a cold shoulder on some occasion in the past, behave towards him with generosity, liberality and magnanimity.

Hadrat Abul-Ahwas Jashmi (God be pleased with him) relates about his father that once he submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) : "If I come across someone and he does not perform his duty of hospitality and entertainment towards me and later if he happens to meet me, is it obligatory upon me to show him hospitality ? Or should I act towards him in the same impolite and indifferent manner ? The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "No, you should perform your obligation of hospitality towards him in any case". *(Mishkāt)*

15. Make a request to your guest to offer a prayer invoking the favour and grace of God on you, especially when the guest is a man of piety, a devotee of religion and a person of excellent faith. Hadrat 'Abdullah b. Busr (Allah be pleased with him) reports : "The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) once stayed as a guest with my father. We presented to him a dish of 'Harisa'. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ate some of it. Afterwards we offered some dates. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ate the dates and taking the kernels between the two forefingers of his hand, cast them away. Finally we presented a drink. He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) took some draughts of it and passed it on to the next person sitting on his right. When the Holy Prophet (peace

and blessings of Allah be upon him) got up to leave, my father took hold of the bridle of his horse and submitted : "O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! Pray for us". Thereupon the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed for him.

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَهُمْ فِي مَا رَزَقْتَهُمْ ، وَاعْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَارْحَمْهُمْ .

«ترمذی»

Allahumma bārik lahum fīmā razaqtahum . waghfir lahum warhamhum. (Tirmidhi).

"O God ! Bless the provisions you have vouchsafed to them with Thy increased bounty, grant them salvation and show them Thy Mercy".

Etiquettes for Guest

1. When you pay a visit to someone as a guest, do take some gifts for the host or for his children according to your means. Keep in mind the taste and liking of your host while choosing gifts for him. Exchange of presents and gifts augments sentiments of love and promotes intimate relationship. The gift creates a soft corner in the heart of the receiver for the donor.
2. Do not stay for more than three days as a guest with any one, save under special circumstances or when the host insists on your staying with him for a longer period. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirms :

“It is not permissible for a guest to stay so long with the host as to cause him trouble”. (Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad)

‘Sahih Muslim’ reports : “It is not permissible for a Muslim to stay so long with his brother as to make him a sinner”. The people submitted : “O Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you ! How will a Muslim make his brother a sinner in this manner ”? By staying so long with his brother that his brother may be exhausted of all means of entertaining him”.
3. Do not always be a guest of others. Invite others also to be your guests and entertain them liberally.
4. When you go to stay as a guest with somebody, take necessary baggage and bedding etc. according to the season along with you. In winter, especially, never forget to take the bedding with you, otherwise the host will be put to extreme hardship. It is highly improper that the guest shall in any way become an unbearable burden for the host.

5. Keep in mind the engagements and duties of your host. Take care that your host's occupation, duties and engagements are not in any way disturbed by your presence as a guest with him.
6. Do not make all sorts of demands on your host. Be content with whatever provisions he makes for your comfort and entertainment and thank him for this. Do not put him in any extraordinary trouble.
7. If your host's women are not your close or blood relation, avoid entering into conversation with them without reason. Do not eavesdrop on the mutual conversation of your host's women. Behave yourself in such a manner that your conversation or conduct does not become a nuisance for them. Do not violate the privacy and the limitations of Purdah in any case.
8. If for some reason you do not wish to eat with your host, or you are observing a fast, excuse yourself politely and say a prayer invoking the Grace and Blessings of Allah upon your host.

When Hadrat Ibrahim (peace be upon him) presented a sumptuous meal to his venerable guests and the guests would not partake of it, Hadrat Ibrahim (peace be upon him) said to them: "Gentlemen, why don't you eat?" In a bid to put Hadrat Ibrahim at ease the angels submitted: "Please do not take it ill. As a matter of fact, we cannot eat. We have come only to convey the glad tidings of the birth of a talented son to you".

9. When you attend a feast, say a prayer at the end of the meal invoking Allah to bless the host with extensive means, grace, favour, salvation and His Mercy. Hadrat Abu Athhim b. Tahan (Allah be pleased with him) once invited the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his illustrious Companions (Allah be pleased with them) to a feast. When the meal was over, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "Reward your brother". The illustrious Companions (God be pleased with them) submitted:

“How can we reward him, O Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ?” The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :
 “When a man pays a visit to his brother and eats and drinks there, he can reward his brother by praying for God’s favour and blessings upon his brother”.

(*Abū Dawūd*)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) once visited the house of Ḥaḍrat Sa’d b, ‘Ubadah (Allah be pleased with him). Ḥaḍrat Sa’d (God be pleased with him) presented to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) bread and olive oil. The Prophet of Allah (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) took the meal and then prayed for him :

أَفْطَرَ عِنْدَكُمْ الصَّائِمُونَ وَآكَلَ طَعَامَكُمْ الْإِبْرَارُ وَصَلَّتْ

عَلَيْكُمْ الْمَلَائِكَةُ . «ابوداؤد»

Aftara 'indakum-us-sā' imūna wa akala ta'āmakum-ul-abrāru wa sallat 'alaikum-ul-malā'ikah. (Abu Dawud)

“May the fasting people break their fasts with your provisions ! May the pious partake of your meals and may the angels pray for Allah’s Mercy and forgiveness for you”.

Etiquettes of Sittings

1. Try to keep company with persons of good character.
2. Join in the conversation that is going on among those present in the company. To exclude yourself from the conversation and to sit in company with a frowning face betrays a haughty attitude. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to take an active part in the conversation among his illustrious companions (Allah be pleased with them). Do not adopt a gloomy attitude or a posture of depression while sitting in a company. Wear a smile on your face and sit in the company in a fresh and joyous mood.
3. Try that the remembrance of Allah and the life in the Hereafter should form part of discussion in each of your meetings. When you feel that the interest of the participants is lagging in conversation on religious matters, change your topic to worldly issues. Later when a suitable opportunity arises make a discreet effort to bring the talk round to religious topics again.
4. When you go to a meeting take a seat wherever you find room. Do not make a bid to move ahead by pushing through or jumping over the heads or shoulders of the people. Such conduct causes inconvenience to those who came early and took their seats first and the man who indulges in such impolite behaviour reflects a sense of self-importance and haughtiness.
5. In a meeting, do not try to dislodge a person from his seat in order to occupy it yourself. This is a very bad habit. Such conduct provokes hatred and ill-will in the hearts of

others and betrays a sense of self-assertion and a haughty attitude towards others.

6. In a meeting where people are sitting around in a circle, do not sit in the centre of the circle. Such a behaviour is not only ridiculous, but extremely improper. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has cursed such defaulters.
7. Do not try to grab the seat of a person who leaves his seat for a while. Keep his seat reserved until he returns. However, if it is known that the person will not return, you are free to take the seat previously occupied by him.
8. Do not separate two persons sitting together in some gathering without seeking their permission. They might be sitting together because of intimacy, love or for some other reason and separation may hurt their feelings.
9. Avoid sitting at a place of distinction in a gathering. If you pay a visit to somebody's house, don't try to take a seat of distinction, save in case the host himself insists on your taking such a seat. Always sit in the meeting in a respectful manner. Do not spread your feet or stretch your legs.
10. Do not make a bid to always sit near the person presiding the meeting. Sit wherever you find room, and leave space for those who arrive after you to find a place to sit conveniently. In case a greater number of people arrive to attend the meeting, you should try to adjust yourself in a smaller space and generously leave room for the new comers to find a seat.
11. Do not stand before or around someone, even to show respect as it is against Islamic etiquette.
12. No two persons should talk to each other in confidence in a gathering or sitting. This annoys others and creates a feeling that they do not deserve to be taken into confidence. It may also create a misunderstanding among others that the two persons are perhaps engaged in back-biting against others present over there.

13. Seek the permission of the chairman before you say anything in a meeting. While you speak or take part in question and answers, do not assume such role as if you are presiding over the meeting. It may be taken as an attempt to impose yourself upon others as well as an insult to the chairman of the meeting.
14. Only one man should speak at a time. Each one should be heard with full attention. Eagerness to express himself first in a meeting may create chaos and pandemonium.
15. The matters discussed in confidence in the meeting must not be spread everywhere. The participants are under obligation to guard the secrets of the meeting.
16. Do not broach another issue until the meeting concludes discussion about the matter under consideration. Do not interrupt a speaker in order to start speaking yourself. In case, it is imperative for you to speak up at once, you should do so with the permission of the speaker.
17. In the course of the proceedings, the Chairman of the meeting should pay equal attention to all members. He should address the meeting turning towards right and left so that each side receives the benefit of attention. The Chairman should allow the participants a right to express their views.
18. Say this prayer before dispersing the meeting. The meeting should not end without offering this prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ اقْسِمْ لَنَا مِنْ خَشْيَتِكَ مَا تَحُولُ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ

مَعْصِيَتِكَ وَ مِنْ طَاعَتِكَ مَا تُبَلِّغُنَا بِهِ جَنَّتِكَ ، وَ مِنْ

الْيَقِينِ مَا تَهْوُنُ بِهِ عَلَيْنَا مِضَارَ الدُّنْيَا . اللَّهُمَّ مَتِّعْنَا

بِاسْمَاعِنَا وَ أَبْصَارِنَا وَ قُوَّتِنَا مَا أَحْبَبْتَ وَأَجْعَلْهُ الْوَارِثَ

مِنَّا ، وَاجْعَلْ ثَأْرَنَا عَلَى مَنْ ظَلَمْنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى مَنْ
 عَادَانَا وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مُصِيبَتَنَا فِي دِينِنَا وَلَا تَجْعَلِ الدُّنْيَا
 أَكْبَرَ هَمِّنَا ، وَلَا مَبْلَغَ عِلْمِنَا وَلَا تَسْلُطْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ لَا
 يَرْحَمُنَا . «ترمذی»

*Allahumma qsim lanā min khashyatika mā tahulu
 bainanā wa baina ma'siyatika wa min ta'atika ma
 tuballighunā bihi jannataka. Wa min-al-yaqini mā
 tahūnu bihi 'alainā madar-rud-dunyā. Allahumma
 matti'na bi-asmā'inā wa quwwatinā ma ahyitanā waj-
 'al-hul-waritha minnā. Waj'al thaaranā 'alā man
 zalamanā wansurnā 'alā man 'ādanā wa lā taj'al
 musibatānā fī dīnina wa lā taj'al-id-dunyā akbara
 hummina wa lā mablagha 'ilminā wala tusallit
 'alainā manlā yarhamunā. (Tirmizi)*

"God, grant us Thy Fear and Mercy which may stand
 between us and disobedience to Thee. Vouchsafe to
 us that devotion which may entitle us to Thy Paradise.
 Give us such deep Faith which may render all worldly
 losses as worthless for us. God, grant us the favour of
 utilising our sense of hearing, sight and physical strength
 to our advantage and continue this favour even after we
 are no more. Take our revenge from him who oppresses
 us. Grant us victory over him who shows enmity towards
 us. Do not put us to trial concerning religion. Do not make
 worldly goods the chief objects of our lives. Do not make
 this world the limit of our knowledge and wisdom, nor
 entrust us under the charge of a person who shows no
 mercy to us."

Etiquettes of Greetings

1. Say 'Assalamo-'Alaikum' on meeting a Muslim brother in order to express your feeling of attachment and felicity.

The Holy Qur'an affirms :

وَ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ
والانعام - ٥٤

'Wa idha ja'akallahina yu'minuna biāyatīnā faqul salāmun 'alaikum. (6 : 54)

"And when those who believe in our revelations come unto thee say : Peace be unto you".

This verse which is addressed to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) indirectly teaches a moral etiquette to the entire Ummah i.e. whenever two Muslims meet each other, they should exchange feelings of love and felicity with each other, and the best means of doing this is that they should pray for the salvation and well-being of each other. One should say 'Assalāmo-'Alaikum'; the other should respond with 'Wa 'Alaikumus salām'. Offering the salām is a means of maintaining and augmenting love and affection.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed :

"You cannot enter Paradise until you acquire piety and you cannot attain piety unless you learn to love each other. Let me tell you a device. If you use it, you will

learn to love each other. Make the practice of offering salām to each other common among you". (*Mishkāt*)

2. Always say 'salām' after the Islamic fashion. In personal conversation or in correspondence, you must use these words of greeting which have been prescribed by the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah. Do not avoid the usage of this Islamic etiquette of greeting, nor use substitute words or expressions prescribed by modern society. This Islamic mode of greeting is not only very simple, meaningful, and impressive but also a comprehensive prayer for salvation and peace. The significance of your offering a salām to your Muslim brother is very vast. 'Assalāmo-'Alaikum' implies 'May Allah bless you with all kinds of peace and salvation'; 'May Allah protect your life and property'; 'May Allah protect your hearth and home; May He keep your family and relations in safety'; 'May Allah safeguard your faith and belief'; 'May you live in peace in this world and in the world Hereafter'; 'May God vouchsafe to you graces of which I know and graces of which I have no knowledge'; I bear deep sentiments of good-will, love and sincerity, safety and peace for you. Hence do not have fear on my account. You will never come to harm from any deed of mine'. By adding 'Alif' and 'Lām' to the word 'salām' and saying 'Assalāmo-'Alaikum', you offer all the good prayers for the addressee. Just imagine what better words than 'Assalāmo-'Alaikum' can be used for expressing heartfelt felicity, sincerity, love, goodwill and devotion to the person whom you meet, provided these words are uttered with full awareness of their significance. When you greet your brother with the words 'Assalāmo-'Alaikum', you in fact invoke the blessings of Allah to protect your brother; you invoke the blessings of Him Who is the Fountain of all good and Whose Being is synonymous with peace and salvation. 'Assalām' is one of the attributes of Allah and a person can attain peace and salvation only at the goodwill of the Almighty and whomsoever He denies salvation is deprived of it in both worlds.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed :

“Assalām is one of the attributes of Allah. It has been sent unto the world for the benefit of the people. Hence make the use of Assalām common among you”.

(*Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad*)

Ḥaḍrat Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) has reported that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : “When Allah created Ḥaḍrat Adam (peace be upon him), He ordained that Ādam (peace be upon him) should approach a group of angels and offer them ‘salam’. Allah also counselled Ādam (peace be upon him) to listen carefully the answer given by the angels and to remember it, because the same prayer would be prescribed for Adam (peace be upon him) and his progeny. Hence Ḥaḍrat Adam (peace be upon him) approached the angels and said : “Assalāmo-‘Alaikum’. The angels in reply said : ‘Assalāmo-‘Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah’. In other words, the angels in their answer added the words ‘Rahmatullah’ to ‘Assalāmo-‘Alaikum’. (*Bukhārī, Muslim*)

The Holy Qur’an affirms that when the angels come to extract the souls of the believers they say ‘Salamu-‘Alaik’ on their arrival :

كَذَٰلِكَ يَجْزِي اللَّهُ الْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّاهُم الْمَلَائِكَةُ

طَيِّبِينَ يَقُولُونَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ

تَعْمَلُونَ . «النحل ٣١ ، ٣٢»

Kadhālika yajzillāhul-muttaqīnal-ladhīna tatawaffāhul-malā'ikatu tayyibīna yaqūlūna salāmun 'alaikum udkhul-ul-jannata bimā kuntum t'amalūn. (16 : 31-32)

Thus Allah repayeth those who ward off (evil).

“Those whom the angels cause to die (when they are)

good. They say : Peace be unto you ! Enter the garden because of what ye used to do”.

When these God-fearing people will arrive at the gates of Paradise, the sentinels of Paradise will accord them a magnificent welcome with the same words :

وَسِيْقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاؤُهَا
وَفُتِحَتِ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ
طِبِّتُمْ فَأَدْخَلُوهَا خَالِدِينَ . والزمر - ٧٣

Wa siqalladhīnattaqau rabbahum ilal jannati zumarā hattā idha jā'ūha wa futihat abwābuhā wa qāla lahum khazanatuhā salāmun 'alaikum tibtum fadkhaluhā khālidīn. (39 : 73)

“And those who keep their duty to their Lord are driven unto the gardens in troops till when they reach and the gates thereof are opened and the warders thereof say unto them : Peace be unto you ! You are good so enter you (the garden) to dwell therein forever”.

And when they shall have entered Paradise, the angels will enter from all the Gates of Paradise and say ‘Assalamo-‘Alaikum’ to them.

وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ . سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ
بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ .

Wal malā'ikatu yadkhalūna 'alaihim min kulli bābin salāmun 'alaikum bimā sabartum fani'ma 'uqbaddār.

“And the angels shall arrive to offer them welcome from each Gate of Paradise and say to them : سلامٌ عليكم *Salāmun-'alaikum*. This is the recompense for your patience and steadfast conduct. Hence how excellent is this eternal home”.

The people of Paradise will also greet each other with the same words :

دَعْوُهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَتَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ .

Da'wāhum fihā subhanaka allahumma wa tahiyyatuhum fihā salām.

“And therein their tongues shall pronounce. “O God ! Thou art Pure and Supreme” and they shall pray for each other in these words : “Salam” be on you”.

Even God shall send them greetings of ‘Salām’ and ‘Blessings’.

إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمِ فِي شُغْلٍ فَاكِهُونَ . هُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِي ظِلِّ عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ مُتَكئونَ لَهُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَ لَهُمْ مَا يَدْعُونَ . سَلَامٌ قَوْلًا مِنْ رَبِّ رَحِيمٍ . (يس ٥٥-٥٨)

Inna as-hābal jannatil-yauma fī shughulin fākihūna hum wa azwājuhum fī zilālin ‘alal arā’iki muttaki’ūna lahum fihā fākiha-tun walahum ma yadda’ūn. Salāmun qaulan min rabbirrahīm. (36 : 55-58)

“Lo ! those who merit paradise this day are happily employed, they and their wives in pleasant shade on thrones reclining ! Theirs the fruit and theirs that they ask ; the word from a Merciful lord is peace !

In reality, there shall be greetings of ‘Salām’ for the believers from all sides in Paradise.

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْتِيهِمَا إِلَّا قِيلًا سَلَامًا سَلَامًا .

Lā yasma ‘ūna fiha laghwan wa lā ta’tihiman illa qīlan salāman salāmā.

“They shall not hear improper absurdities there, nor (talk) of sin. There shall only be greetings of ‘Salām’, ‘Salām’, on all sides”.

In view of these clear injunctions and evidence of the Holy Qur’an and Sunnah, it is not lawful for a believer to forsake the manner prescribed by Allah and His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) under any circumstance and adopt other modes of expressing love and felicity.

3. Say Salām to every Muslim, whether you have a prior acquaintance or connexion with him or not. The condition that he is your Muslim brother suffices for establishing a relationship or making an acquaintance and a Muslim must cherish sentiments of love, sincerity, goodwill and loyalty for his brother Muslim. A person submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) : “What is the most commendable deed in Islam”? The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : “To feed the poor and to offer Salām to every Muslim, whether you have a prior acquaintance with him or not”.
- (Bukhārī, Muslim)

4. On entering your house, say ‘Salām’ to members of your family. The Holy Qur’an affirms :

فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ بُيُوتًا فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةً مِّنْ عِنْدِ

اللَّهِ مُبَارَكَةً طَيِّبَةً . (النور ٦١)

Fa idhā dakhaltum buyūtan fasallimū ‘alā anfusikum tahiyyatan min ‘indillahi mubārakatan tayyibatān.
(24 : 61).

“But when ye enter houses salute one another with a greeting from Allah blessed and sweet”.

Hadrat Anas (God be pleased with him) reports that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon

him) had advised him : "Dear son ! On entering your house, you should first say 'Salām' to members of your family. This is an act of goodness and blessings for you and your family". (Trimidhi).

Similarly, when you call at somebody's house, say 'Slām' before entering the house. Do not go into the house without saying 'Salām' first.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى

تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا . «النور ٢٧»

Yā ayyuhalladhīna āmanū lā tadkhulū buyūtan ghaira buyūtikum hatta tasta 'nisū wa tusallimu' alā ahlihā
(24 : 27).

"O ye who believe ! Enter not houses other than your own without first announcing your presence and invoking peace upon the folk thereof".

When the angels called on Ḥadrat Ibrahim (peace be upon him) as his venerable guests, they offered 'Salām' and in response Ḥadrat Ibrahim (peace be upon him) also said 'Salām' to them.

5. Say 'Salām' to small children also. This is the best means of teaching the children the manner of offering 'Salām' as well as an observance of the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). When Ḥadrat Anas (God be pleased with him) passed near the children, he said 'Salām' to them and observed that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to do the same". (Bukhāri, Muslim).

Ḥadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (God be pleased with him) used to write 'Slām' in his letters to children also. (Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad)

6. Women can offer 'Salām' to men ; likewise men can offer 'Salām' to women. Ḥadrat Amā Anṣāria (God be pleased

with her) states : "I was sitting among my lady friends when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed by us. He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) offered 'Salam' to us. (Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad

Umm Hani (God be pleased with her) states : "I came to the presence of Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was taking a bath at that time. When I offered 'Salām' to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired about me. I submitted : Umm Hānī. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said : "Most Welcome." (Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad)

- 7 Accustom yourself to say 'Salām' as often as possible and never miss the opportunity of saying 'Salām'—Say 'Salām' to each other as often as possible. The act of offering 'Salām' promotes love and in recompense for this act, God grants protection from all pain or loss.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed :

"Let me tell you a device, which will promote love and friendship among you. Say Salām to each other as often as possible". (Muslim)

In addition, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also observed : "Make the practice of offering 'Salam' common among you. God shall grant you salvation in recompense".

Hadrat Anas (God be pleased with him) reports that the illustrious Companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to say 'Salam' to each other very often. So common and widespread was the practice that if at times a Companion went out of sight behind a tree and appeared in view again, he offered 'Salām' again. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed :

"Any person who meets a Muslim brother should say 'Salām' to him. Later if one of them goes out of sight behind a tree, wall or a stone and reappears, he should offer 'Salām' once again on seeing his brother".

(*Riyād us-Sālihīn*).

Hadrat Tufail (God be pleased with him) reports: "I used to call on Hadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him) often and also accompanied him on his trips to the bazar. When both of us went to the bazar it was the common practice of Hadrat 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (God be pleased with him) to say 'Salam' to every passer-by, may he be a junk-man, a shopkeeper or a poor or destitute person. In fact he invariably offered 'Salām' to every person who-ever he may be".

One day when I called on him, he said: "Let us go to the bazar". I submitted: Hadrat (God be pleased with you) what will you do in the bazar? You never stop to make any purchases, neither enquire about any goods; nor strike a bargain; nor attend any company in the bazar. Come, sir, let us sit here and talk". Hadrat Tufail (Allah be pleased with him) observed: "O Abu Baṭān (fat-bellied)! I go to the bazar merely to offer 'Salām'. Whoever happens to meet me I say 'Salām' to him". (*Muwatta Imam Malīk*).

8. Beware that each Muslim has a right over you to offer him 'Salām'. Discharge this obligation towards a brother Muslim open-heartedly and never miss an opportunity to say 'Salām' to another Muslim.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed: "Each Muslim owes an obligation to another Muslim to offer him 'Salām' whenever they happen to meet". (*Muslim*)

Hadrat Abu Hurrāira (God be pleased with him) states: "The most niggardly person is he who lets go an opportunity to say 'Salām'". (*Al'Adab-ul-Mufrad*)

9. Always be the first to say 'Salām'. If, God forbid, you are not on good terms with someone, even then you should

take the initiative in offering 'Salām' and making up the quarrel.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

"He who takes the initiative in offering 'Salām' is the nearest to God".
(*Abu Dāwūd*)

Furthermore, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed : "It is not lawful for any Muslim to sever all connexion with his brother Muslim for a period of more than three days to such extent that if they happen to come across each other, one should turn towards one side and the other should change his course towards the other side. Between these two, he is the superior who is the first to say 'Salam' to the other".

(*Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad*)

Someone submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) : "When two persons happen to meet each other, who should say 'Salam' first?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "He who is better than the other in the eyes of God".
(*Tirmidhi*).

Hadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (God be pleased with him) was so much particular in being the first to offer 'Salām' that no one ever succeeded in beating him in this respect.

10. Do offer the 'Salām' by word of mouth and say Assalāmo-'Alaikum in a distinct voice so that the addressee may hear it clearly. There is nothing wrong with making a sign with your hand or nodding your head if need be along with saying the 'Salām'. For example if the person to whom you wish to offer 'Salām' is out of the reach of your voice, or he is unable to hear you because of deafness, you must make a gesture of 'Salām' along with uttering Assalāmo-'Alaikum.

Hadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (God be pleased with

him) has observed : "When you offer 'Salām' to someone, make sure that he hears it, for 'Salām' is the purest and the most blissful prayer vouchsafed by God to man".

(*Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad*).

Hadrat Asma' daughter, of Yazīd (God be pleased with her) has reported : "One day the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed near the mosque where a group of women were seated. While passing by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) offered 'Salām' to the women with a gesture of his holy hand".

It is evident that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) made a gesture of the hand along with uttering the words Assalamo-'Alaikum. The Tradition recorded in the Abu Dawud also confirms this point. Hadrat Asma (God be pleased with her) states that when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed by us, he offered us 'Salam'." It is proper, therefore, to make a gesture of the hand or nod the head if need be, but the words of 'Salam' must be uttered all the same.

11. Be particular in offering 'Salām' to your elders. If you are walking along and some people are sitting on the way, you should be the first to offer them 'Salām'. When you are part of a small group and your small group comes across a larger number of people, the smaller group must take the initiative in saying the 'Salām'. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed :

"The younger should be the first to say 'Salām' to the elder ; the passer-by should be the first to offer 'Salām' to those who are sitting ; likewise a smaller group of people should take the initiative in saying 'Salām' to the larger group."

(*Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad*)

12. If you are mounted, you must be the first to say 'Salam' to the pedestriians and to those who are sitting on the way.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“The mounted should take the initiative in offering the ‘Salām’ to the pedestrians ; the pedestrians should be the first to offer ‘Salām’ to those who are sitting on the way ; and a smaller group of people should say ‘Salām’ to the larger group first”. *(Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad)*.

13. When you call at somebody’s house and enter his sitting room or pass by a crowd or on arrival at a meeting, offer ‘Salam’. Similarly, say ‘Salām’ at the time of taking leave.

“The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed :

“You should offer ‘Salam’ on arrival at a meeting and say ‘Salam’ again on leaving the meeting and remember that the recompense for the first ‘Salam’ is in no way more than the recompense for the second ‘Salam’. (The implication is that you should not underrate the importance of offering ‘Salam’ on taking leave or consider saying of ‘Salām’ on arrival enough to cover the offering of ‘Salām’ at the time of leaving.)” *(Tirmidhi)*

14. On arrival at a meeting, offer ‘Salam’ to the meeting as a whole ; do not offer ‘Salam’ to a particular person by name. One day Hadrat ‘Abdullah (God be pleased with him) was seated in the mosque when a supplicant arrived and offered him ‘Salam’ addressing him by name. Hadrat Abdullah observed : “God affirmed Truth and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) fully discharged his duty of communicating the Divine Message”. Afterwards Hadrat ‘Abdullah (God be pleased with him) went inside his home. The people waited, wondering what his words meant, At last, when he returned, Hadrat Tariq (God be pleased with him) enquired : “Sir we could not grasp the sense and substance of your utterance”. Hadrat ‘Abdullah (God be pleased with him) answered : “The

Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed that when the Doomsday will approach near, the people will adopt the custom of saying 'Salām' to particular persons by name on arrival at meetings".

(*Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad*).

15. If an opportunity arises to convey 'Salam' to an elder, a near relative or friend through somebody else or by means of a letter written by someone else, you must take this opportunity to communicate your 'Salam'.

Hadrat 'Āisha (Allah be pleased with her) states: "The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed to me, 'Āisha, Gabriel says 'Salam' to you'. I answered :

وَعَلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامُ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ.

«بخاری و مسلم»

Wa'alaikumussalamu wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu.

(*Bukhari, Muslim*)

16. If you arrive at some place where some people are asleep, say 'Salām' in such a low voice that the wakeful may hear it, yet those who are asleep may not be disturbed by your voice.

Hadrat Miqdad (Allah be pleased with him) reports : "We used to keep some milk for the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). When the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came home late at night, he used to say 'Salām' in such a manner that those who were asleep might not be disturbed by the sound and the wakeful might hear it. So the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came and said 'Salām' as usual.

(*Muslim*)

17. Make a cheerful and happy response to the 'Salām'. You owe this obligation to your Muslim brother who offers you

* 'Salam'. You should never miss an opportunity to respond to the offer of 'Salam'.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed :

“A Muslim has five rights over another Muslim :

- * To make a response to the Salam.
- * To visit him if he is lying ill.
- * To join in the funeral procession.
- * To accept the invitation.
- * To respond to a sneeze”.

Furthermore the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined: “Avoid sitting on the road sides”. The people submitted: “O Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you): It is an unavoidable necessity for us to sit on the roadside.” The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: “If it is unavoidable for you to sit on the roadside, then you must discharge certain obligations concerning the roadside.” The people submitted: “What are those obligations concerning the roadside ? O Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)”? The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: “To keep your eyes cast down, not to cause inconvenience, to respond to the 'Salām', to preach piety and to forbid people to indulge in wicked deeds.”

18. In response to 'Salām', do not just confine yourself to saying 'Wa 'Alaikumus salām', but utter the words
 ورحمته الله وبركاته *Wa rahmatullahi! Wa barakatuhu*

The Holy Qur'an affirms :

وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنِ مِمَّا أُورِدُوا .

*Wa idhā huyyittum bitahiyyatīn fahayyu bi-ahsana minha
au rudduhā* (4 : 86)

“And when ye are greeted with a prayer greet ye with a better prayer than it or repeat it.”

The implication is that you should never miss the opportunity of responding to the ‘Salam’. Say a better prayer in response by adding more words to the ‘Salam’, or at least utter the same words. In any case a response to ‘Salam’ must be made. Hadrat ‘Imran b. Haseen (Allah be pleased with him) relates: “The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was seated when a man came and said *السلام عليكم Assalāmo-‘Alaikum*. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) responded to the ‘Salām’ and observed: ‘Ten’ (in other words the man had earned ten virtues). Then a second man arrived and said, *السلام عليكم ورحمته الله Assalamo-‘Alaikum Wa Rehmatullah*. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) responded to the ‘Salām’ and observed: ‘Twenty’ (in other words the man had earned twenty virtues). Later a third man came to the presence and said: *السلام عليكم ورحمته الله وبركاته Assalamo-‘Alaikum Wa Rehmatullah Wa Barakatuhu*. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) responded to him and observed ‘Thirty’ (in other words that man had earned thirty virtues). (Tirmidhi)

Hadrat ‘Umar (Allah be pleased with him) has reported: “Once I was riding behind Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) and Abu Bakr (God be pleased with him) said: *السلام عليكم Assalamo ‘Alaikum* to every one whom we passed by and every one responded with the words *عليكم السلام ورحمته الله Wa ‘Alaikum Assalam Wa Rehmatullah*. And when Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) said: *Assalamo ‘Alaikum Wa Rehmatullah*, the people responded with the words: *Wa ‘Alaikum Assalam Wa Rehmatullahi Wa Barakatuhu*. Thereupon Abu Bakr (God be pleased

with him) observed: Today the people have surpassed us in excellence to a great extent. *(Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad)*

19. On meeting some one say 'Assalamo 'Alaikum' first. Do not start conversation straightaway. Start conversation only after offering the 'Salām'.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has enjoined:

"Do not respond if somebody starts talking before saying the 'Salām'."

20. Avoid saying 'Salām' under the following conditions :

- (1) When people are engaged in reading, listening to or teaching the Holy Qur'an and Hadith.
- (2) When some one is either delivering a sermon or is listening to it.
- (3) When some one is announcing 'Adhān' or 'Takbīr'.
- (4) When a religious topic is being discussed in a meeting or some one is telling what Allah has ordained to us.
- (5) When the teacher is engaged in giving a lesson.
- (6) When somebody is relieving himself of excretions.

Moreover, under the following conditions, you should not only avoid saying 'Salam' but also express your unconcern and spiritual agony in a discreet manner:

- (1) When somebody is engaged in licentiousness and evil acts or merry-making such as is forbidden by Shariah and is thus guilty of contempt of religion.
- (2) When someone is defaming religion by uttering abuses, mean and senseless talk, fabricated lies and nonsense or is indulging in obscene jokes.
- (3) When someone is propagating views and philosophies which are repugnant to religion and is trying to proselytise people or inciting them to anti religious activities and immoral and unethical manners.

(4) When some one is desecrating religious beliefs and manners and is indicating his inner wickedness and hypocrisy by making fun of the principles and injunctions of the Shariah.

21. Do not take the initiative in offering 'Salām' to the Jews or Christians. The Holy Qur'an affirms the fact that the Jews are the worst nation as regards their disbelief, denial of truth, tyranny and savagery, falsehood and deception. God showered countless bounties upon this nation, yet they always displayed ingratitude to Him and persisted in their foul practices. It is the same nation which assassinated the venerable Prophets (peace be upon them) sent by God. Hence the believer should eschew all such conduct which shows even the slightest trace of respect or esteem for the Jews. On the other hand, the believers should adopt such conduct towards the Jews that they should be repeatedly reminded of the fact that recompense for offering the most hideous opposition to Truth is always disgrace and humiliation.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed:

"Do not take the initiative in saying 'Salam' to the Jews and Christians. When you meet them on the way, force them to move over to the edge of the road."

(Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad)

The implication is that you should walk with such dignity and in a stately manner that the Jews and Christians should move over to the edge leaving the road open for you.

22. However, say 'Salam' on arrival at a mixed meeting of the Muslims and polytheists. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) once passed near a meeting in which Muslims and polytheists were all taking part. On that occasion the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had said: 'Salam' to the whole meeting."

(Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad)

23. In case an occasion arises to greet a non-Muslim with some words of respect, do not say Assalamo-'Alaikum. Use words like--'Adāb Arz', 'Taslimāt' (respect or honour to you) etc. Do not make a gesture of your hand or nod your head or make any other sign which is repugnant to the tenets and spirit of Islam.

The letter which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had addressed to Heracles contained the following words of greetings:

سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ مَنْ اتَّبَعَ الْهُدَىٰ .

Salāmun'alā manittaba'a alhudā

"Salam be on him who follows Guidance (of the Lord").

24. Do shake hands after saying the 'Salam' in order to express feelings of love, felicity and reverence. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself used to shake hands with people and his illustrious Companions (Allah be pleased with them) also used to shake hands whenever they met each other. In fact, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had enjoined upon his Companions (God be pleased with them) to adopt the custom of shaking hands with each other, and had explained the merits and importance of this etiquette in many different ways.

Hadrat Qatāda (Allah be pleased with him) enquired from Hadrat Anas (Allah be pleased with him): "Was the custom of shaking hands current among the illustrious Companions (Allah be pleased with them)?" Hadrat Anas (Allah be pleased with him) replied: "Yes, it was."

(*Bukhari*)

Hadrat Salama b. Dardan (Allah be merciful to him) states: "I saw that Hadrat Malik b. Anas (Allah be merciful to him) was shaking hands with people. He asked me

'Who are you?' I answered: "I am the slave of Banī Laith". Thereupon he passed his hand three times over my head and observed: "May Allah bless you with goodness and bounty."

On one occasion when some visitors from Yemen arrived, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed to his illustrious Companions (God be pleased with them): "The people of Yemen have come to you and they deserve handshakes more than other visitors,"
(*Abu Dawud*)

Hadrat Huzaifa b. Yaman (Allah be pleased with him) reports: "The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: When two believers meet each other and after exchanging 'Salam' shake hands with each other they are shorn of their sins as dry leaves fall off from the trees".
(*Tabrani*)

Hadrat 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud relates: "The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed: "To shake hands is to complete your Salām."

25. When a friend, near relative or elder returns from a journey, embrace him in greeting. On reaching Medinah Hadrat Zaid b. Haritha (Allah be pleased with him) went to the Holy Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) house and knocked at the door. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) dragging his covering sheet behind him reached the door and embraced him and kissed his forehead."
(*Tirmidhi*)

Hadrat Anas (Allah be pleased with him) states: "When the illustrious companions (Allah be pleased with them) happened to meet each other, they shook hands and when any of them returned from the journey he was greeted with an embrace."
(*Tabrani*)

Etiquettes of Visiting the Patient

1. You must enquire after the health of the patients. To visit a patient is not only a social requirement or a means of promoting mutual cooperation and sympathy, but it is also a right of a Muslim over another and an essential pre-requisite to devotion to Allah. He who is devoted to Allah cannot remain unconcerned with the creation of God. To evade the obligation of offering sympathy, consolation and assistance to the sick is tantamount to forsaking the remembrance of Allah.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed :

“On the Day of Judgment Allah shall ordain : ‘O son of Adam ! You did not visit me when I was ailing’ ? The man will submit : ‘O Creator ! You are Lord of the whole universe. How could I dare enquire after your welfare’ ! Allah shall ordain : ‘Such and such person from among My creatures fell ill and you did not enquire after his health. If you had gone to enquire after his welfare, you would have found Me there. (In other words you would have earned My Favour and Blessing)’”.

(Muslim)

In addition, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“A Muslim has six rights over another Muslim”. The people submitted : “O Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! What are those rights” ? The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed :

1. Say 'Salam' to your brother Muslim whenever you meet him.
2. Accept the invitation of your brother Muslim whenever he invites you.
3. Offer proper advice with all sincerity to your brother Muslim whenever he seeks your good advice.
4. When your Muslim brother sneezes and says 'Al-Hamd-o-Lillah', respond with saying 'Yar hamokallah'.
5. Visit your brother Muslim whenever he falls ill and enquire about his health.
6. When a Muslim brother dies, join in his funeral procession".

(Muslim)

Furthermore, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed :

"He who enquires after the health of an ailing Muslim brother will find a dwelling place on the highest level of Paradise".

(Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad)

Hadrat Abu Huraira (God be pleased with him) has reported that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

"When a person goes to enquire after the health of a Muslim brother or just pays a call on him, a caller from the Heaven pronounces, "you have done well ; your walking is propitious ; you have earned a dwelling place in Paradise".

(Tirmidhi)

2. Sit towards the head of the patient, pass your hand over his head or body and utter words of sympathy and consolation, so that the patient may start thinking about the reward and recompense awaiting him in the eternal world ; and he may abstain from uttering any remarks showing impatience, or feelings of anguish and complaint.

Hadrat 'Aisha bint Sa'ad (Allah be pleased with them) reports that her father related : "Once while in Mecca I fell gravely ill. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of

Allah be upon him) came to enquire after my health. I submitted : "O Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! I am leaving behind a great deal of wealth and I have only one daughter. Should I will away two-third of my wealth and leave one-third for my daughter" ? The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "No". I submitted : "Should I then will away half of my property and leave half portion for my daughter" ? The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : 'No'. Thereupon I submitted : "O Holy Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! Should I then will away one-third of my wealth" ? The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "Yes, will away one third of your wealth and this is enough". Afterwards, the Holy Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) placed his hand on my forehead and passed it over my face and belly and then said the following prayer :

"O Allah, bless Sa'ad with health and complete his Hijrat". Since then whenever I recall to mind that moment I feel the soothing sensation of the holy hand of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to the depth of my innerself". *(Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad)*

Hadrat Zaid b. Arqam (Allah be pleased with him) relates : "Once my eyes became sore. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) visited me to enquire after my health and said : "Zaid, what do you do when you are suffering from sore eyes". I submitted : "I endure this illness with patience". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : If you observe patience and endurance while you are afflicted with sore eyes, God shall admit you into Paradise as a reward for this".

Hadrat Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) states : "Whenever the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) visited a patient to enquire after his health'

the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to sit at the head of the ailing person and repeated the following prayer seven times :

.
 اسأل الله العظيم رب العرش العظيم ان يشفيك .

As'alullah-al-'azima rabb-al arsh-il' . azimi an yashfiyaka'

“I beseech Allah Almighty Who is the Lord of Exalted Heavens to grant you health” !

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : “The patient will certainly be restored to health if this prayer is offered seven times, except in case the hour of his death has come”. (*Mishkat*)

Hadrat Jabir (Allāh be pleased with him) reports that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) paid a visit to an old lady Umm as-Saib (God be pleased with her) to enquire after her health. Umm as-Saib (Allah be pleased with her) was shivering with intense fever. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired : “How are you feeling” ? The lady submitted : “May God curse this fever which is oppressing me”. On hearing this, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : “Don't curse the fever. It purges the pious of sins just as the furnace smelts the iron and purifies it of rust”.
(Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad)

3. When you visit a patient, enquire about his condition and pray for his recovery. Whenever the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) visited a patient he first enquired about his health and then used to observe :
 لا بأس طهوره ان شاء الله،
Lā ba'sa tuhūrun in shā allahu.
 “There is no need to worry. By the Will of God, this illness will disappear and will prove a means of purging you of all sins”. Afterwards, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to pass his right hand

over the region of pain and discomfort and say this prayer :

اللَّهُمَّ اذْهَبِ الْبَاسَ رَبَّ النَّاسِ اشفِ وَاَنْتَ الشَّافِي لَا
شِفَاءَ اِلَّا شِفَاؤُكَ شِفَاءً لَا يُغَادِرُ سَقَمًا . (بخاری ، مسلم)

*Allahumma adhibil-ba'sa rabb-an-nāsi ishfihi wa
antash-shāfi lā shifa'a illa shifa'uka shifa'an lā
yughādiru saqama. (Bukhari, Muslim).*

“God ! Remove this pain. O Lord of mankind, grant health to this person. You are the Healer. There is none from whom we expect recovery from illness save You alone—Grant such recovery that this disease may be completely uprooted”.

4. Do not sit beside the patient for long, nor make noise near him. However, if the sick person is your intimate friend or a near relation and himself insists on your sitting beside him for a longer time, you should comply with his wishes.

Hadrat ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abbas (God be pleased with him) states : “It is part of the Sunnah not to sit for long beside a patient, nor to make noise near him”.

5. Do ask the relations of the patient about his condition and express your sympathy. Offer them all possible assistance or co-operation. For example, fetch the doctor, or convey a message about the condition of the patient, or fetch medicines etc. or if required, extend financial help also.

Hadrat Ibrahim b. Abi Habla (God be merciful to him) relates : “Once my wife fell ill. In those days I used to pay frequent visits to Hadrat Umm al-Darda (God be pleased with her). Whenever I called on her, she used to enquire : “Say, how is your wife ?” I answered : “She is still indisposed”. Thereafter, she used to send for food. I sat down and dined at her home and then

came back. One day, when I called on her and she enquired about my wife's health, I replied: "By the grace and favour of God, she has nearly recovered from her illness. Hadrat Umm al-Darda (God be pleased with her) thereupon observed: "When you used to say that your wife was unwell I used to arrange a meal for you. Now that she has gained her health, I need not arrange a meal for you".

6. Do visit a non-Muslim patient to enquire after his condition. Whenever you get an opportunity invite his attention towards Islam in a discreet manner as illness makes a man more inclined towards God and he gets more receptive to the truth,

Hadrat Anas (God be pleased with him) reports: "A Jewish boy used to attend on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Once he fell ill. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) visited him to enquire after his health. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sat at the head of the boy and conveyed to him the message of Islam. The boy looked to his father, who was standing nearby, as if to seek his opinion. The father said to the boy: "My son, submit to what Abul-Qasim says". So the boy accepted Islam. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came out of his house saying: "Thanks God Who saved the boy from Hell-Fire". (Bukhari)

7. When you visit the house of a patient to enquire after his health, avoid looking about in the house. Sit in a manner that the inmates of the house, particularly the women are not within your sight.

Once Hadrat 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud (God be pleased with him) went to the house of an ailing person to enquire after his health. He was accompanied by some others also. One of his companions started gazing a lady of the house. When Hadrat 'Abdullah (God be pleased with him) perceived it, he observed to his companion: "It would have been better for you to gouge out your eyes".

8. Do not go to enquire after the health of those who openly indulge in sinful acts and flout the Commands of God unashamedly and obstinately.

Hadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Amr (God be pleased with him) observes : "When the drunkards fall ill, do not go to enquire after their health".

9. When you go to enquire after the health of a patient, request him to pray for you also. It is recorded in Ibn Majah : "When you visit a patient to enquire after his health, request him to pray for you. The prayer of a patient is as much effective as the prayer offered by angels". (The implication is that the angels offer prayers only at the Command of God and hence their prayers are always granted).

Etiquettes of Meeting each other

1. Whomsoever you meet, greet him with a smiling face. Express your sentiments of felicity and take initiative in offering Salam. It will invoke great blessings of God on you.
2. Use no words of greeting other than those enjoined by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) i.e., 'Assalamo-'Alaikum'. Shake hands if possible and enquire after his health as well as the welfare of his family. The greetings 'Assalamo-'Alaikum' taught by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are comprehensive in their connotations and cover all the blessings of this material life as well as our spiritual life and religion. These words signify complete peace and salvation. While shaking hands with somebody, keep it in your mind that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) never withdrew his hand first, but waited for the other one to release his hand.
3. Put on a clean dress when you go to call on someone ; do not go out in dirty dress nor wear expensive garments while going to visit someone in order to impress him with your costly dress.
4. When you intend to visit someone, make an appointment with him first. Never visit anybody at inconvenient hours. Such a visit is not only an interference in others engagements but also degrades you in their eyes.
5. When someone calls on you, greet him with an affectionate smile. Offer him a seat in a respectful manner and entertain him according to the occasion.

6. When you call on someone, confine yourself to talking about useful matters. Do not waste time in useless conversation, otherwise the people will dislike and avoid you.
7. When you call at somebody's house, stand outside the gate and ask for permission to enter. When permitted to enter, say 'Assalamo-'Alaikum' and enter the house. If you get no response after pronouncing 'Assalamo-'Alaikum' three times, don't mind it and return cheerfully.
8. While visiting somebody, do not forget to carry some suitable gifts with you. Exchange of gifts deepens feeling of mutual love and affection.
9. If a needy person calls on you, try to fulfil his need to the extent of your means. If he requests you to recommend his case to someone, do it. However, if you cannot comply with his request, you should decline in a polite manner. Do not keep him in hopeful illusions.
10. If you call on someone to seek his assistance in need, tell him your requirement in a courteous manner. If he fulfils your need, thank him. But if he declines, never mind, say 'Salam' to him and return cheerfully.
11. Do not always expect others to call on you. You should also pay visits to others off and on. It is the most pleasant thing to develop social relations and to serve others in need. Keep it in your mind that brothers in faith always develop relations for good ends.
12. If you notice a little straw or any other thing clinging to the face, beard or clothes of the person whom you happen to meet, remove it with your own hands. If the other person does the same for you, thank him and pray for him:

مَسَحَ اللهُ عَنْكَ مَا تَكْرَهُ

Massahallahu 'anka mā takrah.

"May God remove all such things from you as are displeasing to you".

13. When you visit someone at night, be mindful of his comfort. Do not sit with him for long. If you come to know that he has gone to bed return cheerfully without feeling resentment.
14. When a group of people call on someone, the man who is talking should represent all his companions. Never try to press your importance or give prominence to your own self ignoring the presence of your other companions.

Etiquettes of Conversation

1. Always speak the truth. Never hesitate speaking the truth even at the greatest risk.
2. Speak only when you must, and always talk with a purpose. Too much talk and useless conversation betrays lack of seriousness. You are accountable before God for every word you utter. The angel of God records.

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

Mā yalfizu min qawlin illā ladaihi raqibun 'atid.

"A supervisor remains vigilant to preserve on record every speech that is uttered by his tongue".

3. Always speak politely. Wear a smile on your face and a sweet tone in your speech. Always speak in a moderate voice. Do not keep your voice so low as to be inaudible to the addressee, nor raise it so loud that the addressee might be over-awed by your voice. The Holy Qur'an affirms :

إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ . «لَقَمْن - ١٩»

Inna ankaral aswāti lasautul hamir. (31 : 19)

Lo ! the harshest of all the voices is the voice of the ass".

4. Do not spoil your tongue with dirty talk. Do not speak ill of others. Never indulge in backbiting. Do not

complain against others. Never indulge in mimicking others to ridicule them. Do not make false promises. Never laugh at others, nor boast of your own superiority or indulge in self-praise. Never get unreasonable and rash in conversation. Do not pass remarks on others or satirize them. Do not call someone by a disgraceful name. Avoid swearing frequently.

5. Always say what is just and fair regardless of any loss to yourself, your friend or relative.

وَ إِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ .

Wa idhā qultum f'adilū wa lau kana dhā qurbā.

“And when you say something, speak what is just even if you are talking about your relative”.

6. Be soft-spoken, reasonable and sympathetic in your conversation. Do not utter sharp, harsh and teasing remarks.
7. When women happen to talk with men, they should speak in a clear, straight and rough manner. They ought not speak in delicate, sweet tone lest the listener should entertain any foul expectation.
8. If the impudent wish to entangle you in dialogue or altercation offer them 'Salam' politely and leave them. Those who indulge in loose talk and absurd conversation are the worst lot of the Ummah.
9. Keep in view the mental level and outlook of the man you are talking to so as to make him understand. If the addressee cannot hear or is unable to catch your meaning, repeat what you have said before without any resentment.
10. Always be brief and to the point in your talk. It is unfair to prolong discussion without rhyme or reason.
11. When you wish to explain the tenets of Islam want to speak on the teachings of Islam be simple and clear and speak in a passionate and heart-warming style. To seek

reputation through oratory, to try to impress people with flowery language, to seek popularity among people, to adopt a proud and haughty mien, or to deliver speeches only for the sake of fun or recreation—all these are the worst habits that corrupt the man to the core of his heart.

12. Never indulge in flattery, nor ingratiate with anybody. Always mind your honour and respect and avoid any thing below your dignity.
13. Do not interrupt and interfere in others conversation without their permission, nor intercept others conversation in order to say something yourself. If, however, you must speak, do so with the permission of other.
14. Speak slowly in a proper and dignified manner. Do not speak in a hurried manner nor indulge in fun and jokes all the time as it degrades you in the eyes of others.
15. If somebody puts a question to you, listen carefully to him and make an answer after careful thought. It is simply foolish to answer the questions without due consideration. If the questions are being put to somebody else, do not be so officious as to give answers yourself.
16. When someone is narrating something, do not say 'we know already'. May be he reveals something new and impresses you by his sincerity and piety.
17. When you talk to someone, give due regard to his age, status and his relationship to you. Do not talk with your parents, teachers and elders in a manner in which you would talk to your friends. Likewise, when you are talking to youngsters, speak with affection and elderly dignity.
18. While engaged in conversation, do not point out towards any one lest he should conceive any misunderstanding or suspicion. Abstain from eavesdropping on others.
19. Listen more and talk less. Do not reveal your secrets to others. Once you disclose a secret to someone, never expect it to remain a secret any more.

Etiquettes of Correspondence

1. Always begin your letter with the words.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismillah irrahmānirrahim.

In the name of Allāh the Beneficent, the Merciful
If you wish to use an abbreviation, you may write.

بِسْمِهِ تَعَالَى

BiIsmihi Ta'aala.

In the name of Allah, the Exalted

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed: "Any undertaking, which does not commence with utterance of the attribute of God 'Bismillah' remains incomplete and unbleased". Some people write the numerals 786 in place of the words. This practice should however be avoided, because it is the words that carry blessings not the number.

2. Do write your own address in each letter. Never omit your address under the impression that the addressee already knows your address. Your address may not be necessarily preserved by the addressee nor can you be sure that the addressee remembers your address.
3. Write your address on the right hand side leaving a little space in-between the margin and the lines of the address. Write your address clearly and take care that it is correct and the spellings of each word are also correct.
4. You must indicate the date below your address.

5. After indicating the date, write a brief 'salutation' to the addressee. Keep your 'salutation' brief and simple, such as may communicate feelings of sincerity and close relationship. Avoid words of salutation, which smack of artificiality and convey a formal sense. Alongwith the salutation or on the next line after it write 'Salam Masnoon' or 'Assalamo-Alaikun' Do not write words like 'Ādāb' or 'Taslimāt'.
6. If you are sending a letter to a non-Muslim, write words like 'Ādāb' or 'Taslimāt' instead of 'Assalamo-'Alaikum' or 'Salam Masnoon'.
7. After the salutation, write down your message or purpose which you wish to convey to the addressee. Close your letter with a suitable compliment which indicates your relationship to the addressee such as yours obediently, yours sincerely, yours truly etc.
8. Your letter must be legible, clear and simple, so that it may be easily read and understood, and may impress the addressee.
9. Use fluent and polite language in your letter.
10. Be brief, but never miss necessary details to make your point clear.
11. Throughout the letter, from the salutation to the complimentary close, pay due regard to the status of the addressee,
12. Start with a new paragraph for every new point.
13. Adopt a serious style in correspondence and avoid frivolity.
14. Avoid writing letter in hot temper. Never write anything offensive. Always adopt a courteous style in letters.
15. Do not discuss secret matters in general correspondence.
16. Put a dot at the end of each sentence.
17. Do not read a letter addressed to someone else without his permission. This is a grave violation of trust. However, the elders and guardians should, as a matter of duty, go through the letters written or received by their children so

that they may correct and guide them. Islam does not give free licence to the teenagers to indulge in activities that do not conform with the norms and ethics of Islamic society. Before marriage, boys and girls, having no blood relations, are not allowed to mix freely or to write private letters to each other. Hence it is the responsibility of the parents to keep an eye on the letters written to or by their children till they are married.

18. Keep up a regular correspondence with your relatives and friends conveying to them your welfare.
19. When someone falls ill, or, God forbid, is involved in an accident, or some other calamity, do send a letter of concern and sympathy to him.
20. On occasions of ceremony, festivity or any happy development, do send letters of congratulation and joy.
21. Always use blue or black ink for the purpose of writing letters. Do not use a pencil or red ink for correspondence.
22. When some one gives you a letter for the purpose of posting it, never forget to post it without delay. Negligence and delay in such matters speaks of irresponsibility.
23. Send a return card or stamp to those with whom you are not familiar.
24. If you wish to cancel a portion of what you have written already, just cut it with a faint line.
25. While writing a letter, keep in view the interest of the addressee as well, and do not concentrate on the matters of your own choice and interest. You should not only communicate news of the peace and welfare of your own family but enquire about the peace and welfare of the family of the addressee and do not make too many demands even in letters. A man who makes too many demands degrades himself.

Etiquettes of Business

1. Conduct your business diligently and with interest. Earn your living by the sweat of your own brow and do not live as a parasite on others. On one occasion, a man from the tribe of Ansar came to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and begged for assistance. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired: "Do you have anything at home?" The Companion (God be pleased with him) submitted: "O Holy Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! We have two things only—a canvas which we use as bedding as well as a covering sheet and a bowl for drinking water". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded: "Bring those two things to me".

The Companion (God be pleased with him) at once brought both the things to him. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) auctioned them for two dirhams and handing over the money to the Companion, observed: "Go, buy some food for one dirham and leave it with your family, and buy an axe for the other dirham".

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) fixed a handle to the axe with his own auspicious hands and observed to the Companion (God be pleased with him): "Go to the jungle daily, cut some wood and sell it in the bazar. Come back after fifteen days and report your condition to me". At the end of a fortnight when the Companion (God be pleased with him) returned, he had accumulated a sum of ten

dirhams. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was overjoyed and observed: "This hard-earned income is better for thee than begging from others which might leave a stigma of begging on thy face on the Day of Judgement".

2. Carry on your business in right earnest and earn as much as you can so that you may be free from dependence on others. Once the people submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "O Holy Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! Which is the best form of earning ?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "Earning with your own hands and income from the business which is free from dishonesty and fraud". Hadrat Abu Qalaba (God be merciful to him) to observe: "Conduct your business in right earnest in the bazar. This is the way to remain attached to religion and free from all dependence upon others".
3. Promote your business by truthful means. Strictly avoid swearing falsely in the name of God. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed: "On the Day of Judgement God shall neither address, nor look at, nor admit that man to Paradise after purging him of sins who endeavours to expand his business by swearing falsely in the name of God". (*Muslim*). Moreover, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "Avoid swearing falsely in order to sell your goods. Apparently it looks like promoting your business but in fact it lets your business down and damages the goodwill of your business". (*Muslim*)
4. Be honest and trustworthy in business dealings. Do not turn your lawful earnings into unlawful income by supplying defective goods or by indulging in profiteering. The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed: "A truthful and honest trader will be a

companion of the Prophets, the righteous and the martyrs on the Day of Judgement". (Tirmidhi)

5. Try to supply the best quality of goods to the customers. If a customer seeks your counsel, give him the best possible advice.
6. Take your customers into confidence so that they may trust you as their well-wisher who will never deceive them. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed: "He who lived on lawful earnings, observed my Sunnah and did not cause mischief to the people will be admitted to Paradise". The people submitted: "O Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! There is a great number of such people at the present time". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "Such people will exist even after me". (Tirmidhi)
7. Be punctual. Arrive at your place of business in time and remain there steady. The Holy Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed: "Set out in search of livelihood and lawful earnings early in the morning, for work in the morning is auspicious and brings prosperity".
8. Work hard and demand hard and sincere work from your employees. Discharge your obligations towards your employees with selflessness and generosity and in a liberal and polite manner. Avoid scowling at them frequently or adopting an attitude of suspicion towards them in every matter. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "God never blesses a nation with piety where the weak do not get their right".
9. Be polite and liberal to your customers. Never be harsh to those who ask for loan from you neither disappoint them, nor press them unduly hard for return of your loan. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed:

"May God bless the person who observes politeness and courtesy in business dealings and in demanding his money back."
(*Bukhārī*)

Moreover, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

"Any person who craves for the protection of God against the affliction and oppression of the Day of Judgement should allow enough time to the hard-pressed debtor or relieve him of the burden of debt altogether".
(*Muslim*)

10. Avoid concealing the defect of the goods and making false representations to the customer. You should openly declare the defects or inferior quality of your goods to the customer. Once the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed by a heap of grain. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) put his hand into the heap and felt that his fingers had caught some dampness. The Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired from the grain dealer, "What is this ?" The dealer submitted : "O Holy Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! Some rain poured over this heap". Thereupon the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "Why did you not put the wet grain on top of the heap so that people may readily notice it. The man who deceives people has nothing to do with me".
11. Do not hoard foodstuffs anticipating a rise in prices. Strictly avoid causing distress to the people by such a vicious act. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "The hoarder is a sinner". On another occasion, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "How wicked is the hoarder ! When God makes goods cheap, the hoarder is afflicted with sorrow, and when the prices go up, he rejoices".
(*Mishkat*)

12. Give the customer full value of his money. Be honest in weights and measures. Stick to one standard of give and take. Addressing the dealers on weights and measures, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) warned :

“You have been charged with two duties while the people before you have perished only because they failed to fulfil these duties :

The Holy Qur'an affirms :

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ

وَإِذَا كَالُوا لَهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوا لَهُمْ يَخْسِرُونَ إِلَّا يُظُنُّ أُولَئِكَ أَنَّهُمْ

مَبْعُوثُونَ لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Wailullil mutaffifinal-ladhina idhaktalū 'alan-nasi yastaufūna wa idhā kalūhum awazanūhum yūkhsirun' alā yazunnu ū'lāika annahum mab'ūthūna liyaumin azīm. Yauma yaqumunnāsu li-rabbil'ālamīn.

“Woe unto the defrauders ; those when they take the measure from others they demand it full, but if they measure unto them or weigh for them they give less. Do such (men) not consider that they will be raised again unto an awful Day, the day when (all) mankind stand before the Lord of the worlds ?” (83 : 1-6)

13. Do compensate for lapses of business ethics and give away in cash and kind as much as you can in the name of God without fail. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined upon the traders :

“O traders and businessmen ! There is every chance of exaggeration and lie in selling your commodities.

Hence compensate (your faults) by spending as much as you can (to help the poor and needy) (Abu Dawud)

14. And never lose sight of that business which will secure you from the fearful tortures in the life hereafter and pay you in terms of eternal prosperity, peace and pleasure. The

Holy Qur'an affirms :

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِنْ

عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ تُوْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ

اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ

تَعْلَمُونَ . «الصف ١٠-١١»

Yā ayyuhalladhina āmanū hal adullukum 'ala tijaratin tunjikum min 'adhābin alīm. Tu'minūna billāhi wa rasulihī wa tujāhidūna fī sabīlillāhi bi-amwālikum wa anfusikum dhalikum khairullakum in kuntum ta'lamūn.

(61 : 10-11)

“O ye who believe ! shall I show you a Commerce that will save you from a painful doom ; ye should believe in Allah and His Messenger and should strive for the cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives. That is better for you, if ye did but know”.