

**Spreading the Revival in the Hearts of the Living**

**Revival of Religious Knowledge**

**By**

**Imam Muhammad Abi Hamed El-Ghazaly**

**PART II**

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To those who said, “Our Lord, make our hearts conscious of You and purify them, You are the best of those who purify the hearts. You are their Guardian and You are their Lord.”

To those who said, “By our Creator, we will not favor you over the evidence that we have received. You can do to us whatever you want; you can control our lives only in this world.”

To those who followed the straight path to connect with God.

## Contents

The Quarter on the Etiquette of Daily Practices.....	21
Book 1: The Etiquette of Eating.....	22
The Etiquette of Eating Alone.....	23
Before Eating.....	23
During Eating.....	24
Drinking.....	24
After Eating.....	25
Etiquette of Eating in a Group.....	25
Etiquette of Eating with Others.....	25
Etiquette of Using a Portable Basin.....	26
Etiquette of Visiting.....	26
Etiquette to be followed by the Visitor.....	26
Etiquette to be Followed by the Host.....	27
Etiquette of Hospitality.....	28
The Etiquette of the Invitation.....	28
The Etiquette of Accepting an Invitation.....	28
The Etiquette of Conducting a Visit.....	29
The Etiquette of Serving the Food.....	30
Etiquette of Leaving.....	30
General Rules and Health Recommendations.....	30
Book 2: The Etiquette of Marriage.....	33
The Benefits of Marriage.....	34
Procreation.....	34
Protection against the temptation of Satan.....	35
Companionship.....	36
Getting help with Housekeeping.....	36
Taking Care of the Family.....	36
The Perils of Marriage.....	36
The Traits that Should be Sought in a Bride.....	36
The Etiquette of Married Life.....	37
Duties of the Husband.....	37

The Etiquette of Having Children.....	40
Etiquette of Divorce.....	41
The Rights of the Husband.....	42
<b>Book 3: The Etiquette of Earning a Living.....</b>	<b>43</b>
Benefits of Earning a Living.....	44
Excellence in Dealings.....	44
Consideration of the Hereafter.....	46
in Business Dealings.....	46
<b>Book 4: The Etiquette of the Lawful and the Unlawful.....</b>	<b>49</b>
The Virtues of the Lawful and the Evils of the Unlawful.....	50
Introduction.....	50
The Categories of the Lawful and its means of Earnings.....	50
Unlawful Edible Things.....	50
Unlawful means of Earnings.....	50
Levels of the Lawful and the Unlawful.....	51
The types of doubtful things and how they differ from the lawful and the Unlawful.....	51
Sources of Doubt.....	52
Conducting Investigations, Queries, and Acceptance.....	57
The First Source of Doubt: The Condition of the Owner.....	57
The Second Source of Doubt: The Condition of the Money.....	59
How to Repent from Financial Sins.....	60
How to Identify the Unlawful Money?.....	60
How to Spend the Unlawful Wealth?.....	60
Annuities and Awards given by Rulers,.....	62
What is lawful and what is unlawful?.....	62
Types of Rulers' Income.....	62
The Amount to be accepted and the Qualification of the Receiver.....	63
The Lawful and Unlawful in dealing.....	64
with the Wrongdoing Rulers.....	64
<b>Book 5: Etiquette of Cordiality, Brotherhood, and Companionship.....</b>	<b>67</b>
The Virtue of Cordiality and Brotherhood, its Conditions and Degrees.....	68
The Virtue of Cordiality and Brotherhood.....	68

Definition of Brotherhood in God and how it differs from Brotherhood in the Worldly Life.....	69
Hating for the Sake of God.....	71
Degrees of Hate for the Sake of God.....	72
People who belief in a corrupt doctrine may be divided into three categories.....	72
People who are disobedient in their practices can be divided into three categories.....	73
The Attributes of the Person worthy of Companionship.....	73
Rights of Brothers and Companions.....	74
Financial Rights.....	74
The Right for Help with Chores.....	75
The Right for Non-Verbal Support.....	75
The Right for Verbal Support.....	76
The Right for Forgiveness.....	76
The Right for Supplications and Prayers.....	77
The Right for Loyalty and Sincerity.....	77
The Right for Ease when Dealing with Him.....	77
Summary and Conclusion.....	78
Rights of your Fellow Muslim, your kin, and your Neighbour.....	79
The Rights of your Fellow Muslim.....	79
The Rights of your Neighbour.....	81
The Rights of Kin.....	82
The Rights of the Parents and the Children.....	82
The Rights of the Slave.....	83
<b>Book 6: Etiquette of Living in Seclusion.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>The Arguments for and Against Seclusion.....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>The Advantages and Disadvantages of Living in Seclusion.....</b>	<b>85</b>
Advantages of Seclusion.....	85
Advantages of Interacting with People.....	87
Etiquette of Seclusion.....	88
<b>Book 7: Etiquette of Travel.....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Benefits of Travel.....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Types of Travel.....</b>	<b>90</b>

Etiquette of Travel.....	90
Hidden Travel Etiquette.....	92
Travel Exemptions.....	92
<b>Book 8: Etiquette of Listening to Music and.....</b>	<b>94</b>
Ecstasy.....	94
Different Views of the Scholars Regarding.....	95
the Permissibility of Listening to Music and Singing.....	95
Views of the Scholars.....	95
Evidence that Listening is Permissible.....	95
<b>Book 9: Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil.....</b>	<b>97</b>
The Obligation and Virtue of Enjoining Good.....	98
and Forbidding Evil.....	98
Protocol and Conditions of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil.....	99
The Oversight Official.....	99
Criterion 1: Age of Majority.....	99
Criterion 2: Islam.....	99
Criterion 3: Justice.....	99
Criterion 4: Authority.....	100
Criterion 5: Ability.....	100
What can be Enforced?.....	101
1. Condition 1.....	101
2. Condition 2.....	101
3. Condition 3.....	101
4. Condition 4.....	101
The Perpetrator.....	102
The Levels and Etiquette of the Enforcement.....	102
1. Level 1:.....	102
2. Level 2:.....	102
3. Level 3.....	103
4. Level 4.....	103
5. Level 5.....	103

6. Level 6:	103
7. Level 7:	103
8. Level 8:	103
The Qualifications of the Oversight official:	103
<b>Book 10: Etiquette of Living and the Character of the Prophets:</b>	<b>105</b>
How did God Educate the Chosen Beloved Muhammad (PBUH) using the Quran:	106
An outline of the Prophet's (PBUH) Good Characters According to the Scholars:	107
More on the Prophet's (PBUH) Good Character:	109
His Eloquence and Jokes:	110
His Ability to Forgive:	110
His Courage:	111
His Physical Appearance:	111

# Biography of Imam Al-Ghazaly

## Name, Family, and Early Childhood

### 1. Name and Lineage

He is the vastly knowledgeable Sheikh and Imam, the sign of Islam and the miracle of his time: Zain El-A'bedeen Abo Hamed bin Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Ahmed El-Tousi Al-Shafi'e, Al-Ghazaly. He was a very bright man and has written many books.<sup>1</sup> Some made the connection between his name and the city in which he was born, Ghazalah with soft Zain. This connection is linguistically correct. But others connected his name to the word, "Al-Ghazzaly," with strong Zain, which refers to his father's profession. This is also linguistically correct.

### 2. Birth and Early Childhood

He was born the year 450 (H) in the town of Tous.<sup>2</sup> His father was a righteous, poor man. He earned his living by weaving wool and selling it in his store. In his leisure time, his father used to attend learning circles conducted by scholars of the town. He provided his services to the scholars; he was generous with them, and he used to learn from them. His father used to pray God to give him a son who would grow up to become a scholar. God gave him two sons, Abo Hamed and his brother Ahmed.<sup>3</sup> However, he did not have the chance to live long enough to see that God has accepted his prayer. He died when Abo Hamed was yet a teenager. However, his mother lived to witness the rise of her son to the highest level of academic prominence at the time.<sup>4</sup>

His father, before his death, had entrusted his two boys to a righteous Sufi friend of his. He gave his friend whatever little money he had and said to him, "*I feel sorry that I missed getting an education. I wish that my boys would get the education I missed. Please take whatever little money I have and teach them as much as you can.*" When the money was exhausted and the Sufi was no longer able to support the two boys. He sat them down and said, "*You know that I spent all the money that your father left on your education and I have no means to support you. I advise you to join a school. You will be able to support yourselves using the scholarship you will get from the school.*" They did as the Sufi told them to do and that led them to success and happiness. Al-Ghazaly used to tell this story and say, "We sought learning for the sake of something other than seeking God's favor but our effort refused to be spent seeking anything except God's favor."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Biographies of Celebraties (18:322, 323)

<sup>2</sup> A town in Khorasan , north east Iran. Its modern name is Shahr

<sup>3</sup> Biographies of Prominent People (1:207) and Sophism between Al-Ghazaly and Ibn Taymeiah (46).

<sup>4</sup> The Ranks of the Shafieates (6: 193-194) edited

<sup>5</sup> Imam Al-Ghazaly, by Saleh El-Shami (19)

### 3. His Struggle in Seeking Knowledge

His first teacher in Tous was Yousof A-Nassag. He also studied in his youth Fiqh under his teacher Ahmed bin Muhammad El-Razkani<sup>6</sup> He then travelled to the city of Gargan where he studied under Abi Nasr Al-Isma'ili. The first stage in the learning process was to write down everything he learnt from his teacher. On his trip back to his town Tous, he was attacked by robbers who took the bag in which he carried his study notes. He pleaded with the robbers to give him his bag back, arguing that it was of no value to them. The robbers gave him his bag back. One of robbers commented laughingly at him, "*What kind of knowledge you claim you have that would be lost if you lose the written notes?*" This comment made him decide to commit all his study notes to memory, for fear of losing his written notes again. It took him three years to accomplish this feat.

### 4. Following the Imam of the Two Holy Mosques

Al-Ghazaly then went to Nissapoor, the capital of the Slujacks. Nissapoor was the second city of knowledge after Baghdad. He studied under the Imam of the two holy mosques. The Imam was a well-respected scholar. Al-Ghazaly worked hard at learning the Foundation of Fiqh (Usul Al-Fiqh), the fiqh of his school of thought (Mazhab) and how to refute the arguments of people who belonged to other schools of thought. These were the common Islamic sciences at that time. The Imam was impressed by his achievement, he called Al-Ghazaly, "*A flooding Sea.*"<sup>7</sup>

Al-Ghazaly excelled over all four hundred of his colleagues and was therefore, appointed an assistant to the teacher.<sup>8</sup> It was said that he authored a book entitled, "*Al-Mankhool,*" (The Sieved). When Abo Al-Ma'aly read it, he said, "*You buried me alive. Could not you have waited for me to die before publishing your book? Your book made mine obsolete.*"<sup>9</sup>

### 5. His Appointment as a Teacher in the Regular School of Baghdad

The Imam of the two holy mosques died when Al-Ghazaly was twenty-eight years. By that time Al-Ghazaly was a well-known scholar in his own right. Al-Ghazaly went to have an audience with Minister Nizam Al-Mulk who sponsored an assembly for the scholars. Al-Ghazaly attended the assembly and engaged in debates with the other scholars in a way that impressed the Minister. The Minister then appointed Al-Ghazaly as a teacher in the Regular School of Baghdad. This was an appointment that many scholars dreamt of. Al-Ghazaly arrived in Baghdad in the year 484 (H) to start his career as a teacher at the age of thirty-four. It was a rare occurrence that someone becomes a teacher at this school at this young age. He was respected for his eloquence and loved for his decent manners.<sup>10</sup>

Abdel-Ghafer Al-Farsi, one of his contemporaries, said, "*He was very much respected and he outranked the dignitaries and the princes in the house of the Caliphate.*"<sup>11</sup> He had

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<sup>6</sup> El-Razkani comes from a small town near near Tous.

<sup>7</sup> The Ranks of the Shafieates (6:195); Sophism between Al-Ghazaly and Ibn Taymeiah (47).

<sup>8</sup> Men of Thought and Call (1:172)

<sup>9</sup> **Biographies of the Celebrities (19:335).**

<sup>10</sup> The Ranks of the Shafieates (4:106)

<sup>11</sup> Men of Thought and Call (1:173)

a large number of students. It was said that he had three hundred students.<sup>12</sup> He also started writing books on the Foundation of Fiqh, Fiqh, Theology and wisdom.<sup>13</sup>

## 6. Reasons for Al-Ghazaly's Excellence and Fame

Al-Ghazaly's excellence and fame could be traced back to several factors. These are

- His interest in learning from early age motivated by his inquisitive nature.
- He had an excellent memory.
- He was extremely bright.
- Being a teacher at the Regular School of Baghdad.
- These were some of the factors that contributed to his excellence and fame.<sup>14</sup>

## 7. The Drastic Change in Al-Ghazaly's Life

Al-Ghazaly became a successful renowned scholar. With success came power, influence, fame and money. However, he continued in pursuit of knowledge and in disseminating this knowledge. He authored books in various aspects of specialized sciences. Then came the drastic change which completely changed his attitude towards life.<sup>15</sup> Let us listen to him describing how this happened, "I started reading other scholars' works e.g. Food for the Hearts by Abi Taleb Al-Maccki (may Allah bless his soul), the work of Al-Hareth Al-Mohasiby, and different works authored by Al-Junaid. I became certain that these people were more interested in behaviour than in words. I realized that I have already gained what could be gained through reading and that what I need to gain could not be gained by reading. I needed something that would refine my taste and change my behavior. I also realized that happiness in the Hereafter can only be achieved by being conscious of God and controlling one's desires. This can only be realized by severing the ties which bind the heart to the worldly life, abandoning the transient pleasures of this life, yearning to the eternal bliss in the Hereafter, and working hard in seeking God. This requires abandoning the quest for wealth and power and freeing oneself from the requirements of relationships and occupations. I then considered my situation. I found myself deeply involved in relationships and highly busy with pursuing unimportant knowledge that does not improve my chances in the Hereafter. I considered my interest in teaching, and I found that it was not motivated by seeking God's favor but it was motivated by my interest in gaining power and fame. I realized that if I do not start thinking of changing my life, I would end up falling in the abyss of Fire. I gave this a great deal of thought, trying to make up my mind to leave Baghdad. I was torn between the pursuit of the Hereafter and the love of the worldly life. One day, my faith urges me to leave, reminding me that time is passing very quickly and that all the knowledge I gained and the deeds I did will not be of any benefit in the Hereafter because they were gained and done in hypocrisy. I listen and make up my mind to flee my present life. Another day, Satan tempts me to continue enjoying my present life telling me that I am only suffering a temporary stage of uncertainty which will soon dissipate; warning me that I will be miserable if I give up the wealth and power that guarantee a comfortable life. For six months, beginning with the month of Rajab, 488 (H), I was in a hesitant state

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<sup>12</sup> Salvation from Misguidance (85)

<sup>13</sup> Biographies of Celebrities (19:173)

<sup>14</sup> Sophism between Al-Ghazaly and Ibn Taymeiah (50).

<sup>15</sup> Imam Al-Ghazaly by Saleh El-Shamy (23)

of mind being pulled apart between the pleasures of the worldly life and the pursuit of the Hereafter. In that month, I reached a state of desperation. God held my tongue and I was unable to teach. I tried very hard to please the hearts that came to me seeking learning, but I could not say even one word to teach them. So, I had no one to turn to except God. I prayed God who responds to the desperate who calls upon Him. God accepted my prayers; He made it easy for me to abandon power, money, family, and friends.<sup>16</sup> Al-Ghazaly left Baghdad in the month of Zul Qui'dah, 488 (H). He performed Pilgrimage and went to Syria (Al-Sham), where he lived for ten years. He spent some of this time in Jerusalem. He lived most of these years in seclusion trying to purify his heart for the remembrance of God. He used to spend the whole day performing I'tikaf in Damascus Mosque.<sup>17</sup> His contemporary Abdel Ghafer described the change that Al-Ghazaly went through saying, *"He pursued an ascetic discipline drawing nearer to God and did not care about his prestige and status in the eyes of others. He focused on the use of the tools that increases his consciousness of God and enhances his provision in the Hereafter. He endeavored to control his desires, changing his behavior, and improving his traits. His bad characteristics and his passionate pursuance of power and wealth changed into good behavior, tranquility, abandonment of superficial formalities, interest in the Hereafter, and preparing for leaving this world to the eternal abode."*<sup>18</sup> He also started authoring his famous books like the *Ihya* and others which provide the evidence of his scholarly achievements."<sup>19</sup>

## 8. His Return to Teaching

At the end of the seclusion which continued for ten years he returned back to his city Tous, where he continued to live in seclusion. However, people in authority insisted that he would go back to teaching. He finally agreed and went in the month of Zul Quieda of the year 499 (H) to Nissapoor to teach at its regular school. He said, *"God has made it easy to move to Nissapoor to fulfill this mission in the month of Zul Quieda of the year 499 (H)."* The period which he spent in his seclusion was about eleven years.<sup>20</sup>

Al-Ghazaly explained that going back to teaching was a completely new experience that differed from what he used to do before. He came back to teaching with a new methodology, new intention, and new objective. He said, *"I know that even though I returned back to teaching but I did not really return back. Before, I used to teach aiming at making money and gaining power. This was the intent of my words and my deeds. But now, I do not seek money or influence because of my teaching. This is my intent and my objective, and God knows that about me. My intention is to improve myself and others. I believe with certainty that there is no power except the*

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<sup>16</sup> Salvation from Misguidance (139-143)

<sup>17</sup> Imam Al-Ghazaly by Saleh El-Shamy (25)

<sup>18</sup> Imam Al-Ghazaly by Saleh El-Shamy (26)

<sup>19</sup> Imam Al-Ghazaly by Saleh El-Shamy (26)

<sup>20</sup> Salvation from Misguidance (159)

*power of God, the Great. I did not move but it is He who moved me. I did not do, but it is He who made me do what I did. I ask Him to make me righteous first then to use me to make others righteous. I ask Him to guide me and then use me to guide others. I ask Him to enable me to discern the truth and make me follow it. I ask him to make me able to discern the falsehood and make me avoid it.*”<sup>21</sup>

He did not stay long in Nissapoor and returned back to his town Tous. He established a school for students and a dormitory for Sufis near his house. He spent his time reciting Quran, keeping the company of those whose hearts are conscious of God, and teaching. He died after a period during which he suffered because of plots that his enemies plotted against him. However, God saved him of the consequences of these plots.<sup>22</sup>

In his last days he continued to study the Prophetic Traditions (Hadeeth), keeping the company of those who narrate them, and reading the two authentic books of Hadeeth. Had he lived longer he would have excelled in the science of Hadeeth. This is a great blessing of God that he made him devote the last days of his life studying the Sunnah and the Hadeeth of the Prophet (pbuh). His children were all females. He was well off financially; he was offered money, but he did not accept it.<sup>23</sup>

Some people criticized him for making grammatical mistakes in his speech. He admitted these errors, corrected them and explained that he never delved deeply in the study of grammar. However, he was very eloquent in expressing himself.<sup>24</sup>

## **9. A List of the Books Authored by Al-Ghazaly Arranged Chronologically**

This is a list for the books which have been ascertained to be authored by Al-Ghazaly arranged in a chronological order.

- The First Phase: 465 (H) to 478 (H).

During this phase Al-Ghazaly's teacher, Abo Al-Ma; li Al-Gouyani was still alive.

- The Bag in the details of the School of Thought (*Al-Ta'liqah fi Firoo' Al-Madhab*)

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<sup>21</sup> Salvation from Misguidance (159-160)

<sup>22</sup> Biographies of Celebrities (19:325)

<sup>23</sup> Biographies of Celebrities (19:326)

<sup>24</sup> Biographies of Celebrities (19:326)

- The Sieved in the Principles of Jurisprudence (*Al-Mankhool fi Usual Al-Fiqh*)
- The Second Phase: 478 (H) to 488 (H)
  - The Comprehensive in the Details of the School of Thought (*Al-Baseet fi Firoo' Al-Madhab* -Ibn Khalqan said it was a unique book on Islam)
  - The Abridged (*Al-Waseet*, an abridged version of *Al-Baseet*)
  - The Brief (*Al-Wajeez*)
  - The Essence of the Shafie' Jurisprudence (*Al-Kholasah fi Al-Fiqh Al-Shafie'*)
  - The Embraced in the Science of Debate (*Al-Montahal fi I'lm Al-Jadal*; Debating and Disagreement)
  - The Downsides of Disagreement (*Maakhez Al-Khilaf*)
  - Correcting the Downsides -of the Disagreement (*Tahseen Al-Al-Maakhez*)
  - The Principles and the Objectives – in the Fundamentals of Fiqh Science (*Al-Mabadii and Al-Ghayat*)
  - Satisfying Thirst – in Logical Deduction (*Shifaa Al-Ghaleel*)
  - A Decree for Ibn Tashfeen -One of the Decrees of Al-Ghazaly (*Fatwa Libn Tashfeen*)
  - The Yazeedy Decree – a decree concerning Yazeed (*Al-Fatwa Al-Yazeediah*)
  - Objectives of the Philosophers – explanation of the principles of philosophy (*Maqasid Al-Phalasifeh*)
  - Incoherence of the Philosophers (*Tahafot Al-Phalasefah*)
  - The Standards of Science
  - The Standards of Logic
  - The Point of Considering Logic.
  - The Apparent – a response for those who believe in the hidden approach (*Al-Mustazehri*)
  - The Evidence of the Truth - Refuting the hidden approach (*Hojat Al-Haq*)
  - The Fragility of the Hidden Approach (*Quawasem Al-Batiniah*)
  - The Concise Creed (*Al-Iqtisad fi Al-I'tiqad*)
  - The Holy Message in Doctrine (*Al-Risalah Al-Quodsiah*)
  - The Logical Knowledge and the Divine Secrets (*Al-Ma'aref Al-A'qliah wa Al-Asrar Al-Ilahiah*)
- The Third Phase: 488 (H) to 499 (H)
  - Revival of the Religious Sciences (*Ihyaa –U'loom El-Deen*)
- The Fourth Phase: 499 (H) to 503 (H)
  - The Salvation from Misguidance (*Al-Munqiz min Al-Dalal*)
  - The Essence of Fundamentals of Fiqh Science (*Al-Mustasfi fi I'lm Al-Usool*)
- The Last Years: 503 (H) to 505 (H)

- The Way for the Worshippers in Ascetics, Ethics, and Rituals. (*Minhaj Al-‘Abedeen fi Al- Zuhd, Al-Akhlaq, and Al-‘Ibadat*)
- Preventing the Lay People from Speaking in Theology (*Ilgam Al-‘Awam ‘an ‘Ilm Al-Kalam*)

## In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy

### Introduction:

Praise be to God, the Originator, the Restorer, He does what He wills. He is the Owner of the Throne, the Magnificent. He is capable of inflicting severe punishment. He guides the chosen servants to the right way and the wise behavior. He bestows His bounty on these servants to protect their religion from the danger of the darkness of doubts and hesitation, having professed the Oneness of God. He guides His chosen servants to follow in the footsteps of His Messenger and his companions. God has flooded the hearts of servants with his subtle blessings and illuminated their hearts with light of religion. His mercy is one of the signs of His Majesty. He is one who bestows happiness and unhappiness; controls life and death; makes people laugh and cry; creates and demolishes; gives enriches and deprives; and creates the animal from a sperm drop. He is the Independent.

This life is only a passage to the eternal life in the Hereafter. However, people became overwhelmed with way to the extent they forgot the destination. They worked hard to earn that which will not last. They became like wild animals racing in a jungle. This earned them misery in this life and in the Hereafter. They fulfilled the premonition given in the Quran, *“And whoever turns away from My remembrance – indeed, he will have a life of great hardship, and We will bring him blind to the Assembly on the Day of Resurrection blind.”* (20:124) Performing rituals by the force of habit; indulging habitually in lust; filling one’s heart with acts of perdition and making it lacking in the acts for salvation, constitute worse form of turning away from the remembrance of God. Those who fall in this category fall in the trap of the devil. They busy themselves with the pleasures of this life and forget their religion. They will eventually regret it.

The way is long, life is short, and the means are in short supply. It is therefore important to revive our ways of performing the rituals so that it becomes our habit; and use it to illuminate our hearts and rid them of the ills that afflicted them. This would be the best provision for the Day of Resurrection. Imam Al-Ghazaly has written a unique book, in which he detailed what need to be detailed and summarized what needs to be summarized. The book addresses the hearts and aims at reviving the fundamentals of the religion which have been forgotten. He removed the superficialities to reach for and expose the essence of the religion.

Time repeats itself. The ills that were removed before came back and became widespread. The effect of the contributions of Al-Ghazaly was quickly lost. There is a great need today for bringing back the book of the Revival of Religious Sciences to the attention of people. Many scholars felt this need. Several books which summarized Al-Ghazaly’s book were written, of these we mention: *“The Way for the Seekers,”* by the scholar Jamaldeen El bin Al-Jozi; and *“A Summary of the Way for the Seekers,”* by Imam Ahmed bin Abdel Rahman bin Qudamah Al-Maqdisi. The authors of these books adopted their own styles in writing their books. Al-Ghazaly’s style and approach in writing his book may be as valuable to the reader as the contents

of his book. I therefore decided to summarize Al-Ghazaly's book in a way that preserves both the contents and the style.

### **Principles Used in Preparing this Book:**

1. I adopted the language and style of Imam Abi Hamed Al-Ghazaly as much as I can.
2. I adopted that same line of thought that he used in his book.
3. I removed all weak or fabricated prophetic traditions; many of it can be found in his book.
4. I removed all material that is related to the weak or fabricated traditions.
5. I removed the rules of jurisprudence because these rules belong to a book on jurisprudence not to a book on the spiritual enhancement.
6. I removed some of the historical events that were mentioned without any further analysis or comment that tie them to the subject of the book. These events were mentioned especially in the Tenth Book in the Quarter on the acts that lead to salvation.
7. I removed some of the analysis that I considered digression from the topic being discussed because they would confuse the reader. Recognizing that the book was written at a time when many scholars were interested in the study of theology and the common practice in their writing was to provide detailed analysis that can support their arguments when involved in debates, I believe that these were included in Imam Al-Ghazaly's book to provide an argument to support his work. I believe that removing these analyses will provide a more succinct and effective exposition for the reader.
8. I removed some of the exaggerations that relate to the inspiration and secret knowledge for which Al-Ghazaly was criticised by many scholars. Al-Ghazaly was influenced by the Sufi thought that claims that God allows some of His servants to be able to see the unseen. We believe that Al-Ghazaly did not copy the Sufi's point of view, but he did not refute it either. Our position on this is that God may bestow His blessing on a person so that this person may be able to imagine some of the unseen knowledge. This opinion is inspired by the Prophet's (pbuh) tradition, when he was asked about Excellence (Ihsan) and he said, "Ihsan is to worship God as if you see Him, because even if you are unable to see Him, He certainly sees you."
9. I used the same methodology that Imam Al-Hafez Al-I'raqi used in selecting the prophetic traditions to be included and used his explanations. The methodology in selecting the traditions is given in the foot notes.
10. This book has been arranged in four quarters following Imam Al-Ghazaly's book. Each quarter consists of ten books.

Finally, I offer my apology to Imam Al-Ghazaly and the other scholars who summarized the Revival of the Religious Sciences before me and ask humbly the permission to introduce this book. I may have made some changes that was required to correct some of the errors in their

books. I know that it is too much for me to ask to be included among these scholars. These scholars were like the sun whose light would obscure the light of any other star.

We love our Sheikh Imam Al-Ghazaly however, we love the truth more. I am sure that if they were still living at the current time, they would have felt the need to compose a new summary for the book. Although there are some errors in Al-Ghazaly's book it remains as a unique and magnificent book. It was said before that those who did not read the *Revival* could not be considered among the *living*. Sheikh Muhammad Khedr, one time the Sheikh of Al-Azhar said, "The book of the Revival has been written by a mortal, so it is normal to find some errors in it. However, the book's usefulness outweighs these errors. The students will gain a great deal of benefit that cannot be acquired through the study of another book." Dr. Al-Qaradawi said, "I wish a new summary of the Revival be composed in such a way that retains its spirit and warmth; preserves its educational and scholastic values; and removes the excesses, exaggerations, and weak traditions. Such a book would provide a great service to the seekers of Islamic knowledge." I wrote this book to fulfill this need.

The poorest servant of God

Eihab Badr

22/11/2007

## **A Preface to Revival of Religious Knowledge**

First, I praise God greatly and continuously. His Majesty deserves more praise than any mortal can offer. Second, I pray for and send peace greetings to the Master of all humans and all His other Messengers. Third, I seek God's consult about my intention to author a book on the revival of religious sciences. Fourth, I appoint myself to respond to your astonishment, you who came forward from among the ranks of those who reject and repudiate, to lay your blame and levy your criticism. My tongue has been loosened, and I was given the permission to speak and the medal of speech. I appoint myself to fight your determination to ignore the truth, support falsehood, and praise ignorance. I will fight your tendency to abuse those who incline slightly away from superficial formalities and try to act according to the knowledge looking forward to receive God's gift to purify their souls and mend their hearts; Those who want to mend their way before it is too late, so they would not be placed in the same category as those described by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who said, "A scholar who did not benefit from his knowledge will be among those who will suffer the worst torment on the Day of Judgment."<sup>25</sup>

I claim that you only insist on your arrogance because you have been infected with the disease that has infected many people. Those who fail to observe the peak of this problem; those who do not realize that they are facing a very serious problem; life will be very quickly over, death is imminent, and the Hereafter is upon us. The road to salvation is long and dangerous; and the provision is barely enough. It is obvious for those who can see and discern, that salvation can only be attained through learning and acting and devoting ourselves to God alone. However, going through the way leading to the reward in the Hereafter without a guide or a companion is treacherous.

Those who can act as guides on the way to the reward of the Hereafter are the scholars who are the heirs of the prophets. There are none of them at this time. Satan has seduced most of them. They became tyrants, very much busy with the worldly gain they can make. They saw the good evil and the evil good. Religious knowledge disappeared and the light that guides people was extinguished. They reduced the role of knowledge to the achievement of one of three objectives: to produce decrees that can be used by judges in settling disputes among people, to use it as a tool by scholars seeking notoriety to win debates against their colleagues, or to compose depthless rhyming sermons to admonish lay people. The knowledge that leads to the reward in the Hereafter which was pursued by the early righteous Muslims, and which was labelled in God's Book as understanding, wisdom, knowledge, light, and guidance has been forgotten.

Since this constitutes a major breach of the religious injunctions, I decided to write this book. Its main objectives are the revival of religious sciences, the rediscovery of methodologies devised by the early scholars, and the elaboration of the useful knowledge produced by the prophets and the early generations of the righteous scholars.

The book of Ihya consists of four collections of books, each collection is called a "Quarter." The first Quarter deals with the acts of worship. The second Quarter deals with day-to-day practices.

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<sup>25</sup> This is a weak tradition. It was narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA) and reported by Al-Tabarani in Al-Saghir and Al-Baihaqi in the Components of Faith.

The third Quarter deals with the acts which lead to perdition. The fourth Quarter deals with the acts that lead to salvation. Each quarter is comprised of several books. I started the Revival with the book of knowledge because of its importance and to define the knowledge that God commanded people to seek as an act of worshipping Him. The Messenger of God said, “*Seeking knowledge is an obligatory duty for each and every Muslim.*”<sup>26</sup> My objective is to discriminate between the useful and the useless knowledge. The Messenger of God has been quoted to have said, “I seek refuge in God from useless knowledge.”<sup>27</sup>

The Quarter dealing with the acts of worship is comprised of ten books. These are the books of knowledge, foundation of the doctrine, the secrets of purification, the secrets of prayers, the secrets of the poor-dues (Zakat), the secrets of fasting, the secrets of Pilgrimage, the etiquette of reciting Quran, the remembrance of God and the supplications, and the adoption of periodic spiritual devotions.

The Quarter dealing with day-to-day practices is comprised of ten books. These are the books of etiquette of eating, etiquette of marital relationships, etiquette of earning one’s living, the permissible and the prohibited, the etiquette of companionships and dealing with people, etiquette of seclusion, etiquette of travel, etiquette of listening and yearning, commanding virtuous deeds and prohibiting evil deeds, etiquette of living and prophetic ethics.

The Quarter dealing with the acts which lead to perdition is comprised of ten books. These are the books of explaining the wonders of the heart; spiritual exercises; the ills of the two lusts, the lust after food and the lust after sex; the ills of the tongue; the ills of anger, hate, and envy; disparaging the life of this world, disparaging wealth and stinginess, disparaging prestige and hypocrisy; disparaging arrogance and pomp; disparaging conceit.

The Quarter dealing with the acts that lead to salvation is comprised of ten books. These are the books of repentance; perseverance and gratitude; fear and hope; poverty and asceticism; belief in the oneness of God and putting one’s trust in God; loving God, yearning to God, enjoyment of the company of God, and contentment; intention, truthfulness, and sincerity; self-examination and accountability; reflection; remembrance of death.

The less known details of the rules which govern the rituals both the obligatory and the super obligatory are given in the Quarter on the acts of worship. Although such details are needed for active scholars, but they are usually neglected in books of jurisprudence.

The secrets of the daily transactions which are essential for people’s lives are mentioned in the Quarter on daily practices. This knowledge is needed for each religious person.

The Quarter which addresses the acts that lead to perdition details the evil human traits that have been disparaged by the Quran. I identify these traits, determine their roots, highlight their evil consequences, identify ways to recognize them, and prescribe the ways to get rid of them; based on verses from the Quran and traditions from the Sunnah.

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<sup>26</sup> This is a weak tradition. It was narrated by Anas (RA) and reported by Ibn Majah.

<sup>27</sup> This is a Hassan tradition. It was narrated by Jaber (RA) and reported by Ibn Majah

The Quarter dealing with the acts that lead to salvation details the traits and characteristics which bring the person nearer to God. I identify each trait, prescribe how it can be acquired, describe its benefit, show its signs, and highlight its virtues; based on logical and religious evidence.

Many people have written books that deal with these topics before. However, this book is more superior than the previously written books for five reasons. These are

- It provides a simplified and detailed exposition of the subject.
- It provides a well-organized exposition.
- It summarizes what has been detailed while retaining all the stated facts.
- It states which have been stated before but avoids needless repetitions.
- It deals with new topics that have not been dealt with before.

I have been motivated in arranging this book in four Quarters by two factors. The first and the fundamental motivator is my conviction that is the most appropriate arrangement; because knowledge leading to the reward in the Hereafter is comprised of two sciences: the science of dealings and behavior and the science of inspiration, secret, and subtle information. The objective of this book is to explain the science of dealings and behaviors and does not delve into the science of inspiration, secret and subtle information, even though the latter is the objective of the sincere seekers of the truth and the coveted knowledge of the extremely pious people. The science of dealings and behavior sets the rules for the outward behavior of people in their daily dealings and interactions and prepares them for approaching the science of inspiration and secret information. The Prophets (pbuh) expounded the rules of the science of dealings and behavior but only referred to the contents of the science of inspiration through signs and symbols believing that it is beyond people's understanding. The scholars being the heirs of the prophets had no recourse but to follow the example of the prophets.

The science of dealings and behavior can be divided into two parts: the apparent science and the hidden science. The apparent science deals with the physical actions of the senses and the hidden science deals with the feelings and emotions of the hearts. The apparent science can be further divided into two parts: a part that deals with the daily interactions between people, and another that deals with the rituals. The hidden science can also be divided further into two parts: a good part and a bad part.

The second factor which motivated me to arrange the book in this form is that I recognized a sincere interest, on the part of the seekers of knowledge, in learning the rules of jurisprudence. So I thought it is best to model my book into the form of a book on jurisprudence to attract the seekers of knowledge and to make the book more familiar to them. This approach is similar to the approach of those who modelled books on medicine along the same lines books on astronomy were written to attract people to read their books. I thought that my endeavor is more worthy of adopting this strategy, since my book aims at preserving the health of the hearts and the souls to enable them to reach the eternal life, while books on medicine are meant only to preserve the health of the physical body which will eventually decay.

In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy

## **The Quarter on the Etiquette of Daily Practices**

## **Book 1: The Etiquette of Eating**

## The Etiquette of Eating Alone

### Before Eating

1. A person should only eat legally permissible food that has been obtained through legally permissible means.
2. One should wash his hands before eating.
3. A person should eat sitting on the ground. The food should be placed on a cloth placed on the ground. This is a sign of humility, and this was the practice of the Messenger of God (PBUH). However, a person can eat sitting on a chair with the food placed on a table, provided that this practice makes life easier and it is not done out of arrogance.
4. One should sit straight.
5. The intention of a servant in eating should be to gain the strength necessary for the servant to devote himself to perform acts of obedience to God. Eating should not be used as a means to satisfy lust or to fulfil an enjoyment. Ibrahim ibn Shaiban said, “For the past eighty years, I never ate to satisfy my lust.” One should only eat enough to maintain the strength necessary for him to perform his duties. A full stomach prevents its owner from worshipping God. The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>28</sup>, *“The stomach is the worst vessel that a human being can fill. Few bites are sufficient to maintain the life of a human being. One should allocate one third of his stomach for food, one third for water, and one third for air. One should not eat unless one feels hungry and one should stop eating before he feels full.”*
6. One should be content with whatever sustenance God has bestowed on him. One should not aspire for more delicious food.
7. One should invite as many people as possible to join him in eating even if they were members of his family.

Note: It is preferable to pray before having dinner, if the person is not craving food and no harm would be done if the dinner was delayed. But, if delaying the dinner would affect the presence of the heart during the prayer, then it is preferable to eat first as long as time permits.

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<sup>28</sup> Narrated by Al-Meqdam ibn Maadi Yakreb and reported by Al-Tirmidhi

## **During Eating**

1. One should start eating by saying, “*In the name of God the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.*” It would be better to say this with each bite to mitigate the desire to be glutton which may distract him from the remembrance of God. He may say it loudly to remind the others.
2. One should use his right hand in eating.
3. One should start and finish with having salt.
4. One should have small bites and make sure to chew food thoroughly. One should not take a bite before the previous one has been swallowed.
5. One should not disparage any type of food.
6. One should eat that which is in front of him and never eats from the middle of the plate. Fruits are exempted from this rule.
7. One should not wipe one’s hand with the bread.
8. One should pick any fallen bite, wipe it, and eat it.
9. One should not attempt to cool the hot food by blowing over it.

## **Drinking**

1. One should handle the cup using the right hand.
  2. One should start drinking by saying, “*In the name of God the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.*”
  3. One should sip the water rather than gulping it.
  4. One should not drink standing up or reclining.
  5. One should be careful not to spill water while drinking.
  6. One should look into the cup before drinking.
  7. One should not burp or breathe into the cup.
  8. If the cup is being used by a group of people, then it should circulate in the right-hand direction.
  9. One should drink in three sips, each one should be preceded by saying, “*In the name of God the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy;*” and ends by saying, “*Praise be to God.*”
- a) At the end one should say the invocation, “Praise be to God who made this water sweet and delicious by His mercy and did not make it bitter and salty by our sins.”

## **After Eating**

1. One should stop eating before feeling full.
2. One should lick his fingers, wipe them with a towel, and wash them.
3. One should pick up the leftovers.
4. One should use a toothpick to clean his teeth.
5. One should wash his mouth.
6. One should wipe the plate clean, with no food or sauce remaining.
7. If he is certain that his food was permissible, he would say, *“Praise is to God. By His grace good deeds are achieved and blessings are bestowed. Our Lord, feed us good food and put us into good service.”* If he has doubt about the permissibility of the food he should say, *“Praise is to God who deserves praise at all times. Our Lord, do not make this food a means to earn Your wrath.”* One should recite surat Al-Ikhlash and surat Quraish.
8. One should not leave the table until the rest of the people had finished eating.
9. One should make a supplication for his host.
10. One should ask God’s forgiveness for unwittingly eating anything that may be prohibited.
11. One should wash his hands and mouth with soap and water.

## **Etiquette of Eating in a Group**

### **Etiquette of Eating with Others**

1. Older and honoured guests should be invited to start first. If one is invited to start, one should not unduly linger and delay those behind him from proceeding to eat.
2. One should engage in nice and righteous conversation.
3. One should be careful to not encroach on the share of others. When the others stop eating, one should invite them to continue eating. The invitation can only be repeated three times. One should not persist (using oaths) in asking others to eat. Al-Hassan ibn Ali (RA) said, *“An invitation to eat is not worth wasting an oath on.”*
4. One should not shy away from eating in order to force his companion to encourage him to eat, nor should he shy away from eating whatever he desires for fear of others’

opinions of him. It is good to be considerate and allow others to have their fair share of the food. However, if he feels that he should continue eating to encourage his companions to eat, then he should do so.

5. It is acceptable to wash one's hands in a portable basin. He should accept the basin if someone else offered it. Anas (RA) said, *"If you your brother did you a favour, then you should accept."* It has been narrated that Haroon Al-Rasheed (the Caliph) invited Abu Muawiyah to dinner. Abu Muawiyah was blind. After dinner, Al-Rasheed poured water for Abu Muawiyah to wash his hands. Someone asked Abu Muawiyah saying, *"Abu Muawiyah, do you know who poured water for you to wash your hands?"* He said, *"No, who was he?"* The person said, *"The Emir of the Believers."* Abu Muawiyah said, *"Emir of the believers, you made a gesture of respect for the scholars, may God honour you as you honoured the scholars."*
6. One should not closely observe people while they are eating.
7. One should refrain from anything that the others may consider distasteful.

### **Etiquette of Using a Portable Basin**

1. One should not spit in the portable basin.
2. One should offer it to the most respected among the people first.
3. One should accept the honour if one was offered first.
4. When one is finished, he should offer it to the next on his right.
5. A group could share one basin.
6. The person who is pouring the water should stand up.
7. The host should be the one who pours the water.

## **Etiquette of Visiting**

### **Etiquette to be followed by the Visitor**

1. One should not visit people unexpectedly at dinner time. However, if it happened that a person went to visit people and found them eating, then he should not eat unless they invite him.

2. If the guest sensed that he has been invited only because his host would feel uncomfortable otherwise, then he should not eat. But, if he sensed that the invitation is genuine then he should eat.
3. It is acceptable if one is hungry and went to visit one of his friends to get some food. A person can eat food at his friend's house while the friend is not home if he was certain that his friend would be happy and would welcome him if he were there. God said, *“There is no blame on the blind, nor on the lame, nor on the sick, nor on yourselves, for eating at your own homes, or at your fathers' homes, or your mothers' homes, or your brothers' homes, or your sisters' homes, or the homes of your paternal uncles, or the homes of your paternal aunts, or the homes of your maternal uncles, or the homes of your maternal aunts, or at the houses which you possess their keys, or at the house of a friend of yours; there is no blame on you, whether you eat in company or separately. But if you enter houses, salute each other - a greeting of blessing and purity as from God. Thus, does God make clear to you the verses that you may understand.”* (24: 61)
4. The guest should not dictate or suggest a particular kind of food. It may not be readily available, or it may overburden the host to acquire. If the guest is given the privilege to choose the kind of food he likes, then he should choose the food that is easier to prepare.

### **Etiquette to be Followed by the Host**

1. The host should act at ease in offering whatever food he has. If does not have food and has no money, he should not borrow money to feed his guest. The host should not overburden himself because that may make his friends reluctant to visit him. He should not offer his guests all he has and deprive his family of their share.
2. The host should give the guest the opportunity to choose the food that he likes best.
3. The host should be sincere in his invitation. He should not sound reluctant in offering the food to his guest.

# Etiquette of Hospitality

## The Etiquette of the Invitation

1. One should invite people who are God conscious not those who are transgressors. Feeding a God conscious person helps him to remain God conscious. Feeding a transgressor helps him to continue in his transgression.
2. It is preferred to invite the poor and not make the invitation exclusive to the rich.
3. Inviting family members should be a priority.
4. One should be fair in inviting his friends; preferring one over the other may create bad feelings.
5. The sole objective of hosting people should be to make them happy; hospitality should not be used as a means of showing off and boasting. This is in accordance with the Messenger's (PBUH) tradition.
6. One should not invite a person knowing that it will be difficult for that person to accept the invitation.

## The Etiquette of Accepting an Invitation

1. Accepting an invitation is an emphasized Sunnah. Some scholars are of the opinion that in some cases it is a duty.
2. One should not accept the invitation of the rich and reject the invitation of the poor; this is arrogance and arrogance has been declared impermissible. Al-Hassan ibn Ali (RA) once passed by a group of beggars. They were eating. They invited him to eat with them and he accepted their invitation. He said, "*God does not love the arrogant.*" He then extended an invitation to them saying, "*I accepted your invitation, you should then accept my invitation.*" They accepted his invitation. He prepared an excellent table for them, and he joined them at the table. A Sufi once said, "*Only accept the invitation of he who believes that when you eat his food, he is only returning a trust that has been entrusted to him back to you. He believes that when you eat his food you are doing him a favour by accepting the trust back.*"
3. One should not refuse an invitation on account of the far distance he has to travel to the host's house, if it is a reasonable distance.
4. One should not refuse an invitation because the host is a poor person or not prominent.

5. Voluntary fasting should not be an excuse to refuse the invitation. If the host would like him to break his fast, he should then oblige. In such case, one should seek God's reward for making his friend happy which would make up for the reward lost by breaking the fast. If he sensed that his friend's request is unreasonable, then he should make an excuse for not accepting the invitation.
6. One should refuse the invitation if he has doubts that the food or the setting was obtained through lawful means. Also, one should refuse the invitation if there are unlawful activities, unlawful decorations, or gossip and backbiting around the table. One should refuse the invitation if the host is a tyrant, a transgressor, a person who practices innovations in religious rituals, or if the intent of the invitation is to show off.
7. One should have the proper intentions
  - a. The intention that the food he will eat will help him in his endeavour towards the reward of the Hereafter, not that the food is intended to satisfy his lust.
  - b. The intention that accepting the invitation will make his friend happy.
  - c. The intention that accepting the invitation is an expression of honoring his friend.
  - d. The intention that by accepting the invitation he is avoiding any misunderstanding that may result from refusing the invitation. Some may think that he refused the invitation because he is arrogant or he despises the host.

### **The Etiquette of Conducting a Visit**

1. One should not choose the best place to sit.
2. One should neither be early nor late in arrival.
3. One should take the place assigned to him by his host and should not crowd the place for others.
4. One should not sit in a place that faces the women's chambers.
5. One should not look impatient for the food.
6. One should chat with whoever sits next to him.
7. One should try nicely to change unlawful activities, unlawful decorations, or gossip and backbiting if he was able to do so, otherwise he should declare his objection and leave.
8. The host should point out the direction of the Qibla for those who will stay overnight.

## **The Etiquette of Serving the Food**

1. The host should serve the food as soon as possible, “*And certainly did Our messengers come to Abraham with glad tidings; they said, ‘Peace,’ and he did not delay in bringing a roasted calf.*” (11: 69)
2. The host should start by serving the fruits first; it is healthier. The Quran says, “*And fruit of what they select, and meat of fowl, from whatever they desire.*” (56: 20-21)  
This should be accompanied by cold water for drinking and lukewarm water for washing the hands.
3. Following the fruits, the host should serve the most delicious types of food first.
4. Food should not be removed until everyone had their fill. The host should continue eating if there is someone around the table eating.
5. Enough of the food should be served. The share of his family should be taken out before the rest is served to the guests.

## **Etiquette of Leaving**

1. The host should accompany his guest to the outer door. This is Sunnah; the Messenger (PBUH) said<sup>29</sup>, “*Whoever believes in God and the Last should honour his guest.*”
2. It is good manners and a sign of humility that the guest leaves feeling content even if the hosting fell short of what he had expected.
3. The guest should seek his host’s approval before he leaves. If a person is staying overnight, he should not stay more than three nights.

## **General Rules and Health Recommendations**

1. Eating in public places is decided by the society norms.
2. Ali (RA) said, “*Whoever started his dinner with salt, God will cure him of seventy ills.*”
3. A medical advice was given to Al-Hajjaj to keep him healthy included eating well-cooked food; chewing food well; having a nap after lunch and having a walk after dinner.
4. It is recommended to bring food to the family of a deceased person.

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<sup>29</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

5. One should not eat the food offered by a tyrant. If one was forced to eat at a tyrant's table, he should only eat a little and he should avoid the delicious types of food.
6. It has been narrated that Fathi Al-Mawsely went to visit Bisher Al-Hafi. Bisher gave his servant one dirham and asked him to buy good food for Fathi. The servant bought a nice loaf of bread, good dates, and milk because the Prophet (PBUH) specifically prayed for milk saying<sup>30</sup>, *“Our Lord, bless our milk and increase it for us.”* He gave the food to Fathi, who ate and then took the leftovers and left. Bisher asked his companions, *“Do you know why I instructed my servant to buy good food? Because the good food is rewarded with sincere gratitude. Do you know why he did not invite me to eat with him? Because it is not for a guest to invite the host to eat. Do you know why he took the leftovers and left? Because he sincerely put his trust in God, taking the leftovers would not cause him any harm.”*
7. Al-Shafie said, *“There are four ways for handling food: a person who hates food handles the food with one finger, a person who is arrogant handles the food with two fingers, a person who follows the Sunnah handles the food with three fingers, and a person who is glutton handles the food with four or five fingers.”*
8. There are four things that give the body strength: Eating meat, smelling perfume, washing up regularly even without having intercourse, and wearing linen clothes.
9. There are four things that weaken the body: Frequent intercourse, overwhelming sadness, drinking water first thing in the morning, and eating acidic food.
10. There are four things which strengthen the sight: Sitting facing the Qibla, applying an eye-salve before going to bed, observing the natural greenery, and wearing clean clothes.
11. There are four things that weaken the sight: Looking at dirt, watching a crucified person, watching the intimate parts of a woman, and sitting with one's back towards the Qibla.
12. There are four things that heighten the libido: Eating fowl meat, eating big Atri fruits, eating pistachio, and eating watercress.
13. There are four sleeping postures:
  - a. Sleeping on the back, contemplating the creation of heavens and earth; this is the posture for the prophets.
  - b. Sleeping on the right side; this is the posture of the scholars.

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<sup>30</sup> Narrated by Ibn Abbas and reported by Ahmed, Ibn Majah, and Al-Tirmidhi

- c.* Sleeping on the left side; this is the posture of kings.
  - d.* Sleeping on the stomach; this is the posture of Satan.
- 14. There four things that nurture the intellect:
  - a.* Speaking only when it is required.
  - b.* Using Siwak (cleaning he teeth).
  - c.* Keeping the company of the righteous.
  - d.* Keeping the company of the scholars.
- 15. There four things that are part of the acts of worship
  - a.* Always being ritually clean.
  - b.* Prostrating often.
  - c.* Staying in the Mosque.
  - d.* Reciting the Quran often.

## **Book 2: The Etiquette of Marriage**

# The Benefits of Marriage

## Procreation

The sexual desire was created as a motivating incentive for the humankind to procreate. Procreation is an act that brings the servant closer to God for four reasons:

1. It is an expression of loving God by maintaining the continuation of the human race. This is the subtlest reason. That is why it is beyond the understanding of the masses. However, those who were given insight know that this is the most important reason behind procreation. Take the example of a landowner who gives his servant a piece of fertile land, the plough to till the land, and the seeds to be planted. The servant is capable of preparing the land and sowing the seeds, however, the servant is lazy. He waits until the seeds become rotten and the plough becomes inoperable. Does not the servant deserve the wrath of his master?

God created the male and the female, gave each of them the body parts necessary for procreation, and implanted in their initial natural disposition the desire to be attracted to each other. This in itself is a clear message, albeit an implicit one, to the human beings leading them to the function that they were created to undertake. But the message was also delivered in an explicit form. The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>31</sup>, “*Marry and procreate, I would like to pride myself in your numbers on the Day of Judgment.*”

It is thus clear that those who practice celibacy are turning away from procreating, wasting the seeds, defeating the purpose of the body parts that God gave them, shunning their own initial natural disposition, and they are ignoring the divine wisdom which can be gleaned from the divine language to which the body parts testify. This language is not written in alphabetical letters but it is written in a divine handwriting that can be understood by those who have insight and can understand the hidden details of the divine wisdom.

This is the rationale behind the prohibition of infanticide. Some consider the practice of the withdrawal method a kind of infanticide. One can then conclude that marriage is a way to accomplish what God loves people to accomplish. Those who turn away from marriage are thus turning away from one of the means to please God.

Procreation is a means for the survival of the human race. God loves for the human race to survive. That is why God commanded and exhorted people to feed the needy. God considers the money that one spends in feeding the needy a debt, which He will repay in multitude, “*Who would lend God a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over?*” (2: 245)

2. It is an expression of loving the Messenger of God (PBUH) by increasing the number of people in his nation: The Messenger of God (PBUH) has made it clear that he would like his followers to follow his Sunnah in getting married.
3. It is a means for obtaining God’s blessings through the invocation of a righteous child.
4. It is a reason to ask for God’s forgiveness if the child dies before the parent.

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<sup>31</sup> Narrated by Said ibn Abi Hilal and reported by Al-Bayhaqi

## **Protection against the temptation of Satan**

Marriage helps people to lower their gaze and to protect their private parts from indulging in unlawful activities. I believe that there is a rationale behind the creation of sexual desire in people. Satisfying the sexual desire provides the greatest enjoyment for humans but it is only a temporary enjoyment. However, this temporary enjoyment provides a taste of the everlasting enjoyment that people will be able to enjoy in paradise. A brief preview of the enjoyment to come is a great incentive for people to perform the deeds that leads to paradise. So, reflect on the wisdom, the mercy, and the divine will which combined two instruments under one act. One instrument serves the objective of the worldly life and the other serves the objective of the Hereafter. The first instrument guarantees the survival and continuance of the human race and the second instrument leads to the performance of deeds, which leads to the happiness in the Hereafter.

Marriage is an important protection against the oppression of sexual passion. If God consciousness is not successful in controlling sexual passion, it will lead to sins and lewd behaviour. God consciousness may be effective in controlling the senses and preventing them from committing indecent acts. However, it may not be successful in preventing the heart from entertaining indecent thoughts about sexual acts. Such thoughts may continuously attack the heart and they may invade the heart during the prayer. God knows the thoughts of the heart. The heart communicates with God like a tongue communicates with people. The heart plays a key role in leading the devotee to the road of the Hereafter. Fasting does not control these thoughts from encroaching on the hearts for most people, unless it causes the person to become so weak and renders him unable to entertain these thoughts. Ibn Abbas (RA) said, *“The devotion of a devotee is incomplete until he gets married.”*

It has been narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) saw a woman, so he went to his wife Zainab (RA) and mated with her. He (PBUH) said<sup>32</sup>, *“Satan tries to accompany women (to make them more appealing for men to desire), so whoever sees a woman that he desires should go home and mate with his wife.”*

It has been narrated that a young man approached Ibn Abbas (RA) saying, *“I want to ask you a confidential question.”* Ibn Abbas (RA) said, *“I am like your father, so tell me what you need to know.”* The young man said, *“I am not married, sometimes I become overcome by my sexual desire, so I masturbate.”* Ibn Abbas (RA) turned away from him showing his disgust. He (RA) said, *“Masturbation is better than adultery, but it is better for you to get married to a slave girl.”* This is an indication that the unmarried person is torn between three evil choices: the least evil choice is to marry a slave girl, this would lead to the enslavement of their offspring; worse than that is masturbation; and the most abominable of the three is to commit adultery. Ibn Abbas (RA) never declared that masturbation is unconditionally allowable; it is a lesser evil. This is similar to the fact that it is a lesser evil for an individual to eat the flesh of a dead animal than to perish.

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<sup>32</sup> Narrated by Jaber ibn Abdullah and reported by Al-Tirmidhi

## **Companionship**

Spending time enjoying intimacy with one's wife comforts one's soul and heart, thus enabling the heart to continue performing the acts of worship, *“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and Mercy.” (30: 21)*

## **Getting help with Housekeeping**

Getting help with the chores of housekeeping frees the heart from the burden of performing housekeeping duties. It allows the heart to be devoted to performing the rituals of worship.

## **Taking Care of the Family**

Taking care of the family is a difficult task that needs discipline and training. Marriage gives the opportunity of the training required for maintaining a family. This involves providing for the family from allowable means, providing guidance and advice, raising children, and tolerating their mistakes.

## **The Perils of Marriage**

1. The most dangerous peril is the need for more income to support the family. This may open doors for unlawful means of earning money.
2. The failure to treat one's family nicely and be patient with them. This is less dangerous than the first one, however it is important because the man is a leader of his family and each leader is responsible for those under his leadership.
3. The neglect of religious duties on account of taking care of the family. Being busy earning one's living and ensuring a good life for his family consumes the time and energy of the servant and leaves no time to pursue the road to the Hereafter.

## **The Traits that Should be Sought in a Bride**

A person getting married should seek the following traits in his bride. These traits are necessary for the marriage to continue and to achieve its objectives:

1. She should be righteous.
2. She should have good characters.
3. She should be beautiful.
4. She should not exaggerate in the amount of dowry.
5. She should be able to bear children.
6. She should be a virgin.
7. She should be coming from a good family. A good family is a righteous family.
8. She should not be closely related to the groom.

On the other hand, the family of the bride should also investigate the character and the traits of the groom. He should be righteous, having good characters, able to perform his duties as a husband, and of the same social status as the bride.

A man said to Al-Hassan (RA), “Several men proposed to marry my daughter, which one should I choose?” Al-Hassan (RA) said, “*Choose the person who is most God conscious. Such a person, if he loved your daughter, will treat her honourably and even if he hated her, he will not mistreat her.*”

## **The Etiquette of Married Life**

### **Duties of the Husband**

1. It is recommended that the husband should prepare a wedding meal. It has been narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) once noticed that Abdel-Rahman ibn ‘Awf (RA) was wearing clothes that has the yellow color of Saffron (this was a sign of celebration). The Prophet (PBUH) asked him about it, he told the Prophet (PBUH) that he got married to a woman and he gave her a piece of gold as a dowry. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>33</sup>, “*May God bless you; prepare a wedding meal, even if you would only use one sheep.*” It is recommended to congratulate the groom saying, “*May God bless you and make your union the best.*”
2. The husband should treat his wife honorably. He should endure her shortcomings and tolerate her mistakes. The last three recommendations that the Messenger of God (PBUH) made before he died were about prayers, slaves, and women. He (PBUH) kept saying<sup>34</sup>, “*Prayer, prayer; treat the slaves kindly and do not overburden them; and be conscious of God in treating women, they are under your protection. God entrusted them to you and by His name you were entitled to have intimate relationships with them*”<sup>35</sup>. You should know that treating women kindly does not only mean that you do not harm them, but it also means that you endure their shortcomings and tolerate their anger and rage.
3. The husband should humour his wife and be playful with her. The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>36</sup>, “*The believers who have perfect faith are the ones who have the best of characters and treat their wives kindly.*”
4. The husband should adopt a well-balanced attitude in treating his wife kindly and in being playful with her. He should not spoil her, nor should he allow her to treat him with disrespect. He should be firm with her if she attempted an indecent act. The Messenger of God<sup>37</sup> (PBUH) has warned the believers of three catastrophes, one of them is an evil wife.

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<sup>33</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>34</sup> Narrated by Um Salamah and reported by Ibn Majah

<sup>35</sup> The command regarding women came in the Farewell speech.

<sup>36</sup> Narrated by Abi Hurairah and reported by Al-Tirmidhi

<sup>37</sup> Narrated by Abi-Hurairah and reported by Al-Bukhary

5. The husband should be moderate in his feelings of jealousy. He should not ignore preliminaries, which may lead to bad consequences however, he should not go to the extreme in mistrusting every move or attempting to spy. The Messenger of God<sup>38</sup> (PBUH) prohibited spying on women. It has been narrated that the Messenger (PBUH) said<sup>39</sup>, *“The night I went on Israa I saw a palace in paradise with young woman standing in its garden, I asked whose palace is this? It was said that it belongs to Umar. I wanted to look inside, but I remembered Umar’s jealousy, so I did not look.”* Umar (RA) wept and said, *“Would I be jealous of you, Messenger of God?”* Al-Hassan (RA) used to say, *“How come you let your women mingle with the disbelievers in the crowded markets? Shame on the men who do not feel jealous about their wives.”* Husbands should ask their wives to lower their gaze when they go to the market.
6. He should provide for his wife in a moderate way. The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>40</sup>, *“A person who spends one Dinar in the path of God, and one Dinar to free a slave, and a third to provide for his family will get the best reward for the Dinar which he used to provide for his family.”*
7. The husband should learn about the legal rules regarding women’s menstruation. He should also teach his wife the rules concerning the performance of rituals while she is menstruating.
8. The husband should treat his wives fairly, if he was married to more than one. He should not give one a preference over another. If he went on a trip and wanted to take one of them with him then he should throw a lot among them. If he neglected to visit one of them on her dedicated night, he should make it up to her. However, it is acceptable if one of them gave up her night voluntarily to another.
9. The ways to reconcile conflicts that arise between the two differ depending on the situation. If the conflict arose because something that the man did or said; or because there is a difference in opinion between the two, then a board of two people, one from her family and one from his family, should convene to mediate between the two. If they wish to mend their difference, then God will reconcile between them. But if the woman is the instigator, then the man has the right to discipline his wife. There are three levels for the disciplinary actions. They should be applied one after the other. When the lower-level action fails, he then can move to the next one. These actions are the man should advice and admonish his wife, if this does not work then he should stop having intimate relationship with her for a maximum of three days; if this does not work then he can punish her by striking her lightly. It is prohibited to strike a woman hard enough to cause bruises or broken bones; it is also prohibited to hit her on the face.
10. The husband should follow the etiquette of sexual intercourse. Before indulging in the act, he should recite the appropriate invocations. These are, *“In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.”* Then he should recite surat Al-Ikhlās, God is Great, there is no deity but God, and in the name of God the Exalted, the Great; followed by the invocation, *“My Lord,*

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<sup>38</sup> Narrated by Jaber and reported by Al-Tabarani

<sup>39</sup> Reported by Al-Bukhary and Muslim.

<sup>40</sup> Narrated by Abi Hurairah and reported by Muslim

*make the progeny that You willed to come out of my lions a righteous progeny.”* The Messenger (PBUH) said<sup>41</sup>, *“If you say before the sexual intercourse, ‘My Lord, protect me from Satan and protect the progeny that You will bestow on us,’ Then if you are blessed by a child, he/she will never be touched by Satan.”* When you are about to reach the climax you should say in your mind, *“Praise the Lord who created humans from water,”* be careful not to pronounce this with your tongue.

During the intercourse one should not face the Qiblah, one should be covered and speak softly. One should make the proper advances in preparation for the intercourse. One should avoid having intercourse on the first, the last and the middle of the month. Some scholars recommended intercourse either Thursday night or Friday.

11. One should not withdraw until his wife has reached her climax as well. Leaving her before she had reached her climax is hurtful. One should adapt to the needs of his wife, reaching a climax at the same time is much more pleasurable. One should have intercourse once every four nights. He should be judicious in assessing and satisfying her needs.

It is forbidden to perform intercourse while the wife is menstruating. The husband should wait until the menstruation period has finished and the wife has performed the ritual cleansing (Ghusl) before they perform the intercourse as dictated by the Quran. However, the husband is allowed to touch his wife’s body and enjoy it while she is menstruating without performing intercourse. There are no restrictions regarding how a man treats his wife while she is menstruating. They can eat together and sleep on the same bed. A man can perform intercourse twice in a row, but he has to wash his genitals before he starts the second one. If a man wants to eat or sleep after having an intercourse and without having the ritual wash (Ghusl) he should perform Wudu. One should not cut his hair or his fingernails before performing the ritual wash (Ghusl) because these body parts will remain unclean and will join his body on the Day of Resurrection in that state.

It is part of the etiquette to refrain from using the withdrawal method. One should have intercourse only in the place of tilling which is the womb (Azl), because there is no soul whose existence has been decreed by God except that it will be created<sup>42</sup>. The scholars differed regarding the permissibility of the practice of the method of withdrawal (Azl). Some are of the opinion that it is unconditionally allowable. Some are of the opinion that it is absolutely prohibited. Some are of the opinion that it is allowable provided the wife consents to its use. A fourth group is of the opinion that it is allowable when mating with a slave girl, but it is prohibited if the intercourse is with a free woman. Our opinion is that it is allowable, but it is not recommended because it involves abandoning a virtuous practice. If you say that withdrawal before ejaculation may not be disliked to avoid pregnancy but it may be disliked because of the intention behind it. The intention behind the practice of the method of withdrawal may be a bad because it is spoiled with the doubt of hidden association of partners with God. My answer is that there are five motives behind the practice of the method of withdrawal before ejaculation. These are

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<sup>41</sup> Narrated by Ibn Abbas and Reported by Al-Bukhari

<sup>42</sup> Narrated by Abi Said Al-Khudri and reported by Al-Bukhari

- a) It may be motivated by the desire to avoid having to free the slave girls if they give birth. This has not been prohibited.
- b) It may be motivated by the desire to preserve the woman's beauty to continue enjoying her and to protect her life against the dangers that may accompany the process of giving birth. This is also not prohibited.
- c) It may be motivated by the fear of extremely difficult financial conditions that may be caused by having many children. While it is virtuous to put one's trust in God and remember the verse, "*And there is no creature on earth but that upon God is its provision.*" (11: 6) However, it is judicious to consider the consequences and to prepare for all eventualities. This may be an attitude that falls short of being the most virtuous and it ignores the principle that one should put his trust in God, but it has not been prohibited either.
- d) It may be motivated by the fear of having female children as was practiced in the pre-Islamic Arabic traditions. This is a corrupt intention, and it is considered a sin.
- e) It may be motivated by the arrogance and the insistence of the wife not to bear children to avoid the trouble of giving birth and breastfeeding. This is also a bad intention that runs against the Sunnah.

If you said that the Messenger of God (PBUH) drew a parallel between the practice of withdrawal before ejaculation and infanticide, calling the practice of withdrawal before ejaculation the "hidden infanticide," then you should know that there are authentic narrations which decreed the practice of withdrawal before ejaculation an allowable practice. Describing the practice of withdrawal before ejaculation as hidden infanticide implies that it is disliked not forbidden. It has been narrated by Jaber (RA) and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim that some of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) practiced withdrawal before ejaculation while the Prophet (PBUH) was still alive.

### **The Etiquette of Having Children**

1. He should not be overjoyed for having a male baby and be saddened by having a female baby. The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>43</sup>, "*If a man has two daughters and treats them well as long as they remain with him, they will be the reason for him to enter Paradise.*"
2. He should recite the prayer's Athan in the ear of the baby. It has been narrated that the messenger of God (PBUH) chanted<sup>44</sup> the prayer's Athan in the ear of Al-Hassan (RA) when he was born. The baby should be circumcised on the seventh day.

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<sup>43</sup> Narrated by Ibn Abbas and reported by Ibn Majah

<sup>44</sup> Narrated by Abi Rafei and reported by Ahmed, Abu Dawoud, and Al-Tirmidhi

3. The baby should be given a nice name. It has been narrated that the Messenger of God said<sup>45</sup>, *“Name your children after me but do not use my epithet.”* The scholars said that this restriction was meant to be during the lifetime of the Prophet (PBUH) but now that restriction can be removed. Even the miscarried fetus should be given a name. It has been narrated that the Messenger said<sup>46</sup>, *“You will be called by your names and the names of your fathers, so choose for yourselves nice names.”*
4. The father should prepare a meal for the baby, using two sheep for the boy and one sheep for the girl.
5. He should rub a date on his tongue.

### **Etiquette of Divorce**

Divorce is permissible however; it is the most hated permissible thing in the sight of God. It is only permissible if it does involve causing harm through deception. However, divorcing a woman is hurtful to her. It is not permissible to harm a woman unless she had committed a crime. God said in the Quran, *“But if they obey you, do not seek a way against them.”* (4: 34)

There are four constraints that the husband should observe regarding divorce

1. The divorce should occur during the time the wife is in a state of ritual purity from menstruating, provided he they did not have sex since the time this state of purity started. If these conditions were not observed then the divorce would still be valid, but it is considered a sin (because it lengthens the period of waiting for the woman). A person who divorces his wife during menstruation; or during a state of purity from menstruation but after he had coitus with her, should take his wife back. Ibn Omar (RA) divorced his wife while she was menstruating. The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>47</sup> to Omar (RA), *“Tell him to take his wife back until she becomes ritually clean then menstruates another time then becomes ritually clean. After that if he still wants to divorce then he can.”* This is the waiting period that God commanded. He commanded her to delay the decision after two states of purity had elapsed for fear that he was taking her back with the intent to divorce her.
2. Only one divorce should be uttered at a time. One utterance will fulfil the condition for a divorce after the waiting period has elapsed. In the meantime, he wishes to take her back he can still do that. While if he uttered the divorce three times, it would be impossible for him to take her back without she marrying another man then divorces that man.
3. He should keep the proceedings amicable. He should not belittle her nor should he scold her. It may be good for him to give her a gift to make up for the harm he caused

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<sup>45</sup> Narrated by Jaber and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>46</sup> Narrated by Abi Al-Dardaa and reported by Abu Dawoud

<sup>47</sup> Narrated by Ibn Omar and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

her. God said in the Quran, “But give them a gift of compensation.” (2: 236) This is a duty whenever a dowry has not been specified in the original marriage.

4. He should not divulge any of her secrets during the marriage or the divorce. This is a great sin.

### **The Rights of the Husband**

The etiquette for the woman involves the following duties

1. To safeguard herself and his house.
2. To spare him the demand of unnecessary expenses.
3. To urge him not to earn his living using unlawful means.
4. To protect his possessions.
5. To obey him.
6. To beautify herself for him.
7. To treat his family kindly.
8. To manage his house.

Asmaa bint Abi Bakr (RA) summarized these duties in the following passage: When I married Al-Zubair, he had nothing except a horse and she camel. I used to feed his horse and take care of it. I used to grind the date-stones to feed his camel. I used to bring water for drinking, string beads, and knead the dough. I used to carry the date-stones for about two thirds of a league. Abu Bakr (RA) gave me a slave girl to help me. She took care of the horse; I felt as if I was a slave girl who had been freed. One day, I was walking carrying the date-stones and I met the Messenger of God (PBUH). He stopped and offered to give me a ride on his camel, but I was shy and I refused the offer. I came back to Al-Zubair and told him about what happened, he said, “It is more difficult for me to see you carrying the date-stones than to see you behind the Messenger of God (PBUH) on his camel.”

## **Book 3: The Etiquette of Earning a Living**

## Benefits of Earning a Living

God mentioned that it was out of His bounty that He created the day to enable us to earn our livelihood; He said, *“We have made the day for livelihood.”* (78: 11) He also said, *“And We have certainly established you upon the earth and made for you therein ways for livelihood. Little are you grateful.”* (7: 10) He also said, *“There is no blame upon you for seeking bounty from your Lord.”*(2: 198) It was narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>48</sup>, *“I commanded you to do everything that I know will bring you nearer to Paradise and I prohibited you to do anything that will bring you closer to Hellfire. The Holy Spirit inspired me that no soul will die before it had received the provision decreed for it, even if the provision was late in coming. So, be conscious of God and seek your provision with dignity. Do not think that using unlawful means may accelerate the attainment of provision, because what God has cannot be obtained through unlawful means.”*

So the Prophet (PBUH) did not prohibit seeking the means for earning livelihood, but he (PBUH) asked us to do that in a dignified way. Umar (RA) said, *“A person should not stay home and ask God to give him provision. You know that the sky does not rain gold and silver.”* Prophet’s (PBUH) said<sup>49</sup>, *“If you put your trust in God, He would have given you provision like He does with the birds; they go hungry and they come back satiated.”* The tradition indicated that the birds travel seeking their provision. The companions of the Messenger of God (PBUH) used to engage in trade and attend to their palm trees. They should be our role models.

## Excellence in Dealings

God commanded people to be fair and excellent in their conduct. Being fair in dealings is the only means for salvation. The practice of fair dealings is like capital for business. Being excellent in conduct is how success and happiness are achieved. Excellent conduct in trade is like profit for business. In conducting business in this life, no reasonable person would be content to get back only his capital as a return from a business deal; he needs to make a profit. Similarly, in the dealings of the Hereafter a religious person aspires to making a profit. Therefore, it is not enough to be fair and avoid committing injustice but one should also be excellent in conduct.

God said, *“And do good as God has done good to you.”* (28:77) He also said, *“Indeed God commands justice and good conduct and giving to the relatives; and forbids immorality, bad conduct, and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.”* (16: 90)

Excellence in conduct means that a person goes beyond the call of duty in his dealings. The call of duty requires only a person to be fair and just in his dealings. Excellence in conduct means that the person goes beyond this as a favour out of his goodness. Excellence in conduct is achieved by emulating one of the following six conducts:

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<sup>48</sup> Narrated by Ibn Massoud and reported by Ibn Majah and Al-Hakem

<sup>49</sup> Narrated by Umar and reported by Al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah

1. One should sell at a price that allows reasonable profit. The profit should be not more than what is acceptable to him if he were the buyer. Profit is permissible since the purpose of trade is to make profit. But one should refrain from exploiting the needs of people.
2. The buyer should accept being exploited to some extent by the needy or the weak. The extra money paid in these cases would be considered charity.
3. One should be easy in dealing with people who owe him money; either by extending the deadline for payment of the debt or by forgiving some of the debt.
4. One should treat those who lent him money nicely by paying his debt promptly or even earlier than the set time if he was able to. One should deliver the money to the lender and should not wait for the lender to ask for his money. He should tolerate the lender if he speaks to him harshly. In case a conflict arises between a lender and a debtor the excellent conduct for the mediator is to support the debtor because the debtor is usually in a weaker position; similarly, when a problem arises between a buyer who owes a seller money, it is usually the buyer who is in need. However, if the debtor transgresses then, one should help him.
5. One should help whoever asks for help especially if a person enters a business deal and found out that he could not go ahead with it. If he comes back asking for the deal to be revoked, one should accept his reasons for revoking the deal.
6. One should sell to the needy and the poor, allowing them to repay the price when they are able to., He should have the intention to forgive their debt if they are unable to pay it. Some righteous storeowners used to have two accounting books, the regular book and another book that keeps track of the poor and needy who were given a reprieve to pay whenever they can. They did not consider the business man who does this among the excellent, but excellence is achieved for those who give someone the groceries but never record the transaction in the book; and then say to the buyer, *“Pay the price of the things you received when you can, otherwise you do not owe us anything.”*

It has been said that one should not doubt the righteousness of a person who has been praised by his neighbours, his fellow travellers, and his clients. A man came to act as a witness in Umar’s (RA) court. Umar (RA) said to the witness, “I need someone to testify that you are a truthful man.” The man brought one of his acquaintances. Umar (RA) asked the man, who came to recommend the witness, if he was his next door neighbour, he said no; Umar (RA) asked if was his companion during a recent trip, the man said no; Umar (RA) asked the man if he had business transactions with the witness, the man said no; Umar (RA) said, “May be you saw him in the mosque praying,” the man said, “Yes.” Umar (RA) said, “Then you do not really know him.”

## **Consideration of the Hereafter in Business Dealings**

A businessperson should not be preoccupied by his business to the extent that he neglects the work needed for the Hereafter. Whoever does this have wasted his life and ended up with a losing deal. Whatever profit he makes in his lifetime will not make up for the loss that he will face in the Hereafter. Those are the ones who sold the Hereafter for the worldly life.

A businessperson's consideration of the Hereafter is achieved through seven means

1. In the start of the business, one should have the sincere intention that the business is a means for the individual to be self sufficient. His earnings should enable him to support his family, perform his religious duties, avoid unlawful dealings, and abstain from being greedy.

He should have the sincere intention to be a model for others, to love for others what he loves for himself, and to be fair and have excellent conduct. He should have the sincere intention to enjoin what is right and forbid what is evil in the sphere of activities of his business.

A person who makes the sincere intentions mentioned above is a person who is working for his Hereafter. Any financial profit that he makes at the end is considered a bonus because he has gained the success in the Hereafter.

2. He should have the sincere intention that the goal behind his engagement in business is to fulfill one of the collective duties. The absence of certain trades from the society deprives the Muslims from the benefits of having these trades and will be the cause that many people lose their means of livelihood. The life of the society will not flourish unless all members of the society collaborate. If all people become engaged in one trade only, the rest of the trades will vanish.

Some trades are strategic trades while others are complimentary, and still others may be superfluous. One should be more interested in engaging in a strategic trade. This will serve the purpose of the Muslim society better. It has been mentioned that selling food and burial shrouds is disliked because a person who sells food make his profit by selling food at a high price while a person who is selling burial shroud anticipates people's death. It is disliked working as a butcher because it is a trade that requires a hard-hearted person. It is disliked being a cleaner or a tanner because both trades involve dealing with unclean items. Ibn Sereen disliked being a broker. They also disliked trading in animals for food because the buyer hates killing the animal. They disliked working as bankers

because of the difficulty of avoiding dealing with interest. They did like trading in wheat. The following trades were the favourite trades among the righteous from the earlier generations:

- Beading
- Trade
- Transport
- Sewing
- Horse Shoeing
- Making shoes
- Iron works
- Manufacturing looms
- Preparing Fish and hunted animals

The early generations disliked being paid for religious duties like preparing the dead for burial, making Azan, teaching Quran, and teaching religious studies. It is lawful to be paid for performing such tasks. However, they preferred the reward in the Hereafter over the material reward of the life of this world.

3. His worldly business should not prevent him from running the business of the Hereafter. The business of the Hereafter is conducted in the Mosques, *“In houses which God has ordered to be raised and that His name be mentioned therein; exalting Him within them in the morning and the evening, men whom neither commerce nor sale distract from the remembrance of God and performance of prayer and giving of Zakat.”* (24: 36-37) One should then start early in the morning by visiting the Mosque and remain there performing his daily routine of invocation until the time for the start of the business day. During the day, whenever he hears the Azan, he should hurry to the Mosque to pray so that he would not miss the first Takbir with the congregation. Some of the scholars are of the opinion that missing the prayer in congregation is an act of disobedience.
4. He should continue remembering God during his day while he is in the market by praising God, uttering Takbir (God is great) and Tahlil (there is no deity but God.) Remembering God among the heedless is a great feat.
5. The businessperson must not be obsessed by his business, like those who will be the first to start the business and the last to finish; or those who travel by sea seeking to promote their business. It has been said that those who travel by sea seeking provision make their provision farther. He should only spend the time and effort which will enable him to get enough money to cover his needs.
6. One should not only avoid known unlawful means in earning one’s livelihood, but he should also avoid any doubtful means. One should be comfortable in his own conscious that he is pursuing only lawful means. He should avoid means which he is not comfortable with even if others gave him a Fatwa that they are lawful.

7. He should be cautious in reviewing all his business dealings because he will be held accountable for them on the Day of Judgement.

## **Book 4: The Etiquette of the Lawful and the Unlawful**

# The Virtues of the Lawful and the Evils of the Unlawful

## Introduction

A slave of Abu Bakr (RA) gave him milk which he drank. He then asked his slave how he got the milk. His slave said, *“I got this milk as reward for fortune-telling for some people.”* When Abu Bakr (RA) knew where the milk had come from, he forced himself to vomit and asked God’s forgiveness for the milk that had been already absorbed by his body<sup>50</sup>. When the Prophet (PBUH) was told about this, he said, *“Did you not know that Al-Siddiq only eats what is good?”* Omar (RA) once drank by mistake milk from a camel that has been given as part of the poor-dues (Zakat), he forced himself to vomit the milk. Sufian Al-Thawri said, *“The example of a person who spends in the way of God money that he earned from an unlawful activity is like a man who washes his dirty clothes using urine. Only water can be used to clean dirty clothes, similarly only lawful earnings can purify the sin.”* Sahl said, *“The senses of he who eats from unlawful earning disobey him whether he likes it or not or knew it or not. The senses of he who eats from lawful earning will obey him and will guide him to do good deeds.”*

## The Categories of the Lawful and its means of Earnings

You should know that edible things can be categorized as unlawful either because they are intrinsically unlawful or because they were earned using unlawful means.

### Unlawful Edible Things

Edible things can be classified into three groups:

1. Minerals: These are minerals extracted from the earth like salt or integral parts of the earth. They are lawful to eat as long as they do not cause harm to the body.
2. Plants: These are lawful to eat unless they cause intoxication or they are harmful to the human body.
3. Animals: Some animals are edible while others are not. These are detailed in the books of Jurisprudence.

### Unlawful means of Earnings

Money and property can be obtained with or without permission from its original owner. There are six ways that this can happen. These are

1. Exploitation of land which is not privately owned (such as extraction of metals, barren land reclamation, wood cutting, and obtaining water from rivers) is lawful if the property is not owned by an individual whose rights must be honoured.
2. War booty obtained by force from conquered lands are lawful to Muslims provided one fifth of the proceeds is given to the treasury and the remaining amount is divided fairly between the Muslims. Of course, existing treaties between Muslims and conquered people must be honoured.

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<sup>50</sup> Narrated by Aisha and reported by Al-Bukhary.

3. Money or property taken deservedly by force when a debtor refuses to pay back his debt on time. This is lawful if the debt time has expired, the debt has been clearly defined, and only the deserved debt is reclaimed. These conditions must be reviewed by a judge.
4. Money or property taken because of a transaction that involves exchange of property as long the transaction has been agreed upon by the two parties and the conditions of the transactions are honoured.
5. Money or property taken by consent without an exchange; if the conditions of the agreement are honoured. Such property or money should not be given with the intention of causing harm to anyone.
6. Inheritance is lawful, provided that the estate was obtained through lawful means.

### **Levels of the Lawful and the Unlawful**

All unlawful earnings are evil, but some are more evil than others. Lawful earnings are all good, but some are better than others. There are four ranks for the people who shun unlawful earnings:

1. The rank of fair people: Those who shun all earnings deemed unlawful by the scholars.
2. The rank of the righteous people: Those who avoid earnings when there is a probability of doubt that they may be unlawful even though the scholars' Fatwa based on the appearances deem these earnings lawful.
3. The rank of the God conscious: Those who avoid the earnings that are deemed lawful by the scholars' fatwa and there is no probability of a doubt that they may be unlawful on the basis that they may lead to an unlawful practice. This principle is summarized as, *“avoiding what is good for fear of the evil.”*
4. The rank of the saints: Those who only consider things to be lawful when they are obtained through lawful means, are not used in earning a sin, and are only intended to be used as means for pleasing God. The saints believe that anything which is not intended for the sake of God is unlawful.

Omar Ibn Al-Khattab (RA) said, “We used to avoid ninety percent of the lawful for fear of committing the unlawful.”

## **The types of doubtful things and how they differ from the lawful and the Unlawful**

The Prophet (PBUH) has been quoted to have said<sup>51</sup>, *“It is clear what is lawful and what is unlawful; between the two there is a gray area (which includes matters, some may be lawful and some may be unlawful). Many people are unable to distinguish between the lawful and the unlawful in this area. So, be cautious in dealing with matters in this area. It is better to be safe than sorry.”* This tradition refers to three categories

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<sup>51</sup> Narrated by Al-Nooman ibn Bashir and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

1. Things which are clearly lawful  
These are things which are free of any characteristics that makes them unlawful and were not obtained through unlawful or disliked means, e.g. rainwater that is collected as it comes down before it touches a privately owned land.
2. Things which are clearly unlawful  
These are things that have one or more of the characteristics that are deemed unlawful, e.g. the intoxication of alcohol, and the impurity of urine; or things that have been obtained by unlawful means, e.g. money gained from usury or fraud.
3. Things in which the ruling is contested  
These are things that can be either lawful or unlawful depending on the satisfaction of certain conditions.

### **Sources of Doubt**

There are four sources of the doubt in deciding whether a matter is lawful or unlawful. These are

*The First Source of Doubt:* A doubt that arises regarding the basis on which the decision whether the matter is lawful or unlawful was made. This has four cases:

1. A matter is deemed originally unlawful, then a new condition arises that may render the matter lawful. However, there is doubt regarding the validity of the condition that arose. In this case, the original state should be upheld, and the matter should be deemed unlawful. As an example; if a hunter strikes and wounds a prey, the prey falls in a river, and the hunter finds the prey dead. In this case, the hunter does not know whether the animal died because of the wound or because of drowning. For the prey to be lawful, it had to have died because of the wound that the hunter has inflicted. Since the cause of death is unknown then the original status should be upheld. Eating the meat of such a prey is unlawful and should be avoided. The principle here is that an unlawful matter continues to be unlawful unless proven beyond any doubt that something occurred that made it lawful.
2. A matter is deemed originally lawful then a doubt arises that it may be unlawful. This should be deemed lawful. As an example, if two men looked at a bird, one said, "*I will divorce my wife if this bird was a crow.*" The other said, "*I will divorce my wife if this bird was not a crow.*" However, they were unable to ascertain whether the bird was a crow or not. In this case, neither of the two men is required to divorce his wife to fulfil the oath. But if they elect to err on the conservative side, they should both divorce their wives. The principle here is that a doubtful condition does not change a certain state.
3. A matter is deemed originally unlawful, but its conditions changed such that it is thought that most probably it became lawful, then its state is doubtful. The matter is most probably lawful. However, such cases should be considered more carefully. As an example, if a hunter shoots a prey, the prey disappears, but later the hunter finds it dead and finds no bruises on it except the one caused by his arrow, then apparently the prey's

meat is lawful to eat. But, if bruises were found on the prey that indicates that its death may have been caused by something other than the hunter's arrow, then in this case it becomes unlawful. This is the same principle applied in the first case.

4. A matter is known to be originally lawful but there is a high probability that something happened which may have rendered it unlawful, then the matter is deemed unlawful. As an example, the water contained in a vessel cannot be used for drinking or washing up, if he discovered a sign that indicates that the water had been polluted.

*The Second Source of Doubt:* A doubt that arises from the mixing up of lawful and unlawful items. Three cases can be considered

1. If a limited, number of unlawful items is mixed up with a limited number of similar but lawful items. In this case, all items become unlawful. As an example, if a dead animal is mixed up with one or ten lawfully slaughtered animals.
2. If a limited number of unlawful items are mixed up with an unlimited number of similar but lawful items, then all items are lawful. As an example, if his sister was lost in a large city, he should not abstain from marrying a girl from this city for fear that she may turn out to be his sister.
3. If an unlimited number of unlawful items are mixed up with an unlimited number of items of similar but lawful items, then all items become lawful unless there is concrete evidence that a specific item has been obtained in an unlawful way. As an example, the money that is changing hands these days. It is known that some of it may have been obtained through usury. Such money is lawful to use unless there is clear evidence that money used in specific a transaction has been obtained unlawfully. It is very difficult to ascertain that all the money used in the market today has been earned lawfully. We also know that Omar (RA) washed up for prayer (performed wudu) using water from a vessel that was offered by a Christian woman; although he knew that she eats pork and drinks alcohol.

If the question was asked: What do we do if it is thought that most of the money being exchanged today has been obtained unlawfully and that an unlimited amount of lawful money is mixed up with an unlimited amount of unlawful money and there is no clear indication that a specific amount of money is unlawful? The answer is this money is lawful however; it is more pious not to take it. The principle we apply here is that things are originally lawful until proven otherwise. I would take this further and say, if unlawful transactions became prevalent and we know for sure that there is no longer any lawful transactions then we start anew and ignore the transactions that took place before this time. We state the thesis that an action which transgresses its limits becomes reversed. This means if everything became unlawful then everything becomes lawful. We provide the following argument to support the thesis stated above.

Suppose all transactions became unlawful, then the alternatives available are

1. Let the people die rather than buy food through unlawful transactions. This is an unacceptable course of action.

2. Let people eat barely enough to sustain their lives. This is unacceptable because it will eventually result in the end of human civilization.
3. Let people obtain enough to satisfy their needs in any way they can even if they steal or engage in fraudulent activities. This course of action is obviously unacceptable. In addition to the fact that estimating the needs is a subjective decision, the unlawful means used in obtaining the livelihood will spread corruption and injustice.
4. Let people start anew and follow the rules of jurisprudence from this point in time. This is the only feasible course of action according to fatwa.
5. Let people start anew and follow the rules of jurisprudence from this point in time, but they only engage in the transactions that are barely enough to maintain their lives. This is the course of action that should be followed by the righteous who are seeking the road to the Hereafter. This course of action is not suitable for the lay people.

*The Third Source of Doubt:* A doubt that arises from committing a sin while performing a lawful matter. The sin may be conducted concurrently; performing the matter may lead to a sin; a sin may precede the matter; or the sin may occur in the compensation for the matter. In this case, the sin is an act of disobedience that does not invalidate the contract or the reason for which the contract is deemed lawful.

Case 1: The lawful act and the sin may happen concurrently as in conducting business transactions while the call to Friday prayer is made, slaughtering an animal using a stolen knife, and collecting wood using a stolen axe. Abstaining from these sins is piety. As a matter of fact, these kinds of examples do not involve doubt because it is known that slaughtering an animal is lawful and it is also known that stealing a knife is a sin.

Case 2: The lawful act may precede the sin. Examples of this are selling grapes to a person who makes wine and selling a sword to a bandit. The lawfulness of these transactions has been contested by scholars; however, these are valid transactions and the money gained through such transactions is lawful but the seller is a sinner because he is helping others to commit a sin. Although the money gained is lawful, but it is very much disliked and avoiding these transactions is an important act of piety.

Case 3: The lawful act may follow the sin. There are three degrees for this kind of sin:

1. The First Degree: When the traces of the sinful act are still in existence at the time of performing the lawful act. As an example, an animal that ate stolen feed is slaughtered. Slaughtering the animal is a lawful act but feeding the animal using stolen feed is a sin. The sin may have been the cause for the survival of the animal. Avoiding such transactions is important, however it is not necessary.
2. The Middle Degree: Examples of this is using water from a river that has been dug by a tyrant or not eating grape coming from a tree that has been irrigated by water from a river dug by a tyrant.
3. The Third Degree: Examples of this are people who would not eat a lawful food if it was handled by a person who committed a sin (adultery or slander). This is an extreme behaviour and reflects an obsession of the person because handling the food is not affected by the sin of the handler.

You should know that the scholars who are not concerned with the hidden knowledge are not interested in these classifications. They only deal with matters that come under the first degree described above. This is the degree that can be applied to most people. The middle and third degrees deal mostly with people who are extremely committed to righteousness.

Case 4: The sin may be connected to the compensation paid in exchange of the lawful act. This has different categories:

*The Highest rank:* This is extremely undesirable. This happens when a person buys something on credit then pays its price using unlawful money. If the seller delivered the goods voluntarily before receiving the price, then it is lawful to eat these goods. The scholars' consensus is that he should not refrain from eating the goods before he pays the price. If the seller did not consent, but the buyer took the goods anyway, then the goods are unlawful whether he paid the price or not.

*The Middle rank:* This is when the compensation was neither usurped or obtained unlawfully; but it may lead to a sin e.g. if the compensation is in the form of grapes and the seller is known to be an alcoholic. This does render the goods unlawful, but it is disliked to a lesser degree than the degree the usurping money is disliked.

*The Lowest rank:* This is when a person takes an oath that he will not wear a dress that his mother had woven, then he takes what his mother had woven, sells it in the market and buys a dress using the money. This is not a disliked act. These people are possessed.

*The Fourth Source of Doubt:* A doubt that arises from conflicting evidence. The conflict may be caused by conflicting evidence, conflicting signs that inform the decision, or ambiguity of the criteria.

1. Conflicting Evidence: This occurs when there is a conflict between two verses of the Quran, traditions, or two verdicts arrived at using rational analogy regarding whether the matter is lawful or unlawful. In this case, one should apply the more probable verdict. If the two verdicts are equally probable, then reference must be made to the original verdict. If it is more likely that it is lawful then it may be considered lawful, however, one can shun it out of piety. The scholar who is giving fatwa and the followers should avoid contested evidence in favour of generally accepted ones. There are three degrees
  - a. First Degree: These are matters in which the evidence contradicting the original state is stronger. It is highly recommended that matters of this degree should be avoided. As an example, one should not eat of a prey that has been hunted by a hunting dog when the dog has eaten part of the prey, even though the Fatwa of the scholars allows eating the meat of this prey.
  - b. Second Degree: These are matters which a person avoids because of extreme obsession not to do something wrong. An example of this is avoiding eating the

fetus of a slaughtered animal although there is an authentic tradition which states that it is lawful.

- c. Third Degree: These are matters which were deemed lawful based on a tradition that has been narrated by a single narrator. A person may say people differed, some accepted a tradition narrated by a single narrator and some refused. So, I take the most cautious approach and reject a tradition narrated by a single narrator. The transmitters of the tradition could possibly make a mistake even though they are considered fair. They may also lie because they may have a hidden agenda. A person who is considered fair could possibly tell a lie. He may also have been subject to a misunderstanding. This type of caution has not been reported about the companions. They accepted the traditions narrated by a single narrator if they trusted his fairness.
2. Conflicting evidence that informs the decision: Assume that a rare item has been stolen. This item has been seen in the hand of a man who is known for his piety. Based on the rarity of the item one can judge that the pious man stole it. However, based on the reputation of the man in whose hand the item was found, one could judge that he must have obtained it through lawful means. Thus, we have a contradiction. This can also happen when two unreliable people give contradicting testimony. In this case, if one of the signs is more likely to be correct then this sign is accepted and the other is ignored but it is more cautious to abstain. However, if the two are equally likely then no verdict should be given. This will be considered further in the section on conducting investigations.
3. Ambiguity of the criteria: As an example, suppose a person established a trust to provide scholarships for students of jurisprudence; however, the selection criteria are ambiguous. The selection then becomes subjective. Another example is when a trust is established to provide financial support for the needy without clear definitions of the type of need. Such situations should be avoided.

These are the sources of doubt; some are more severe than the others. However, as the number of sources of doubt associated with a specific matter increase, the decision becomes more difficult to make. It is impossible to list all the situations that involve different combinations of sources of doubt. Therefore, one should refrain from doing something that is associated with these doubts, if it becomes difficult to differentiate between the lawful and the unlawful. Even when a scholar declares a matter allowable, one should refrain from it if one's heart is not comfortable with that decision; but if the scholar declared a matter unlawful then one should refrain from it. The heart we are referring to here is neither a sceptic heart, which rejects everything, nor a greedy and lax heart which readily accepts everything. We mean the heart of a guided scholar which can discern subtle situations. This is a rare heart to find. He who does not trust his heart to be of this type should seek the light from a heart that has this trait.

## Conducting Investigations, Queries, and Acceptance

You should know that you do not need to question the permissibility of accepting food or gifts every time someone offers you such thing. Nor do you need to question a person before you buy something from him. You may justify questioning a person who gives you food, a gift, or who is selling you some goods by saying, “I am not certain that these actions are permissible, so I have to investigate them before accepting them.” Similarly, you should not accept everything that you are not certain of its unlawfulness. Investigating the permissibility of these matters is sometimes an obligatory duty; other times it is prohibited; other times it is recommended; and other times it is disliked. This needs to be explained in detail. The bottom line is one should investigate situations when one has doubts regarding its permissibility. These doubts may arise regarding the condition of the money or the owner of the money.

### **The First Source of Doubt: The Condition of the Owner**

There are three conditions that need to be investigated: the owner is unknown to you, you have doubts regarding the person, or you know the person and you have evidence that raises some doubts about him.

#### 1. The First Case: An Unknown Owner

This is a person whose outward appearance does not show a sign that he a mischief maker or a wrongdoer; nor does it show a sign of being a righteous person. An example for the former would be a person wearing a soldier’s uniform; and an example of the latter would be a person wearing clothes of a Sufi, a businessperson, or a scholar. If you enter a town and see a person unknown to you and there is nothing in his appearance that associates him with the mischief makers or the pious people, we will consider the condition of this person to be unknown. We do not say that you should consider such a person suspicious because suspicion arises because of two opposing beliefs which are based on two opposing reasons. Many scholars do not understand the difference between what they do not know and what they are in doubt of. You should know that piety requires that you refrain from what you do not know.

Yusuf ibn Asbat said, “For the last thirty years, I refrained from anything that aroused any doubt in my heart regarding its permissibility.” Some people were discussing which deed would be most difficult. They said, “It is piety.” Hassan ibn abi Yusuf said, “Nothing is easier for me than piety. Whenever, I have doubt about the permissibility of anything I would refrain from it.” This is the prerequisite for piety.

Now, we deal with the decision regarding this person. We say that if such a person offers you food, or gave you a gift, then you should take it without further investigation. It suffices you that he offered you something and you know that he is a Muslim. You should not justify the need for further investigation by saying that corruption and wrongdoing have become prevalent. This is phobia and entails having bad suspicion about this person specifically; and certainly, some suspicion is a sin. If you investigate the person without his knowledge then that entails bad suspicion, invasion of privacy,

spying, and backbiting even if the investigation was not done explicitly. All these sins were mentioned in one verse, “*Believers, avoid suspicion as much (as possible) for suspicion in some cases is a sin; and spy not on each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, you would abhor it. But be conscious of God.*” (49: 12) It is piety not to eat without spying, but if you must eat then you eat but do not spy on the person offering the food and think good of him. This was the practice of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH). Whoever claimed to be more pious than them is lost, is introducing innovation in the religion, and he is not following in the footsteps of the Prophet (PBUH).

2. The Second Case: A person under suspicion because of the existence of a sign that supports the suspicion.

The sign that arouses suspicion in a person and renders accepting what he owns unlawful may be seen on his features, his clothes, or his behaviour; his features may resemble the features of those who are known for committing wrongdoings and highway robbery; his clothes may resemble the clothes of those who are known for tyranny and oppression; and his behaviour may resemble those who are commit unlawful acts and those who do not observe the rules of the lawful and unlawful related to earning their livelihood. These signs in themselves, in the absence of corroborating evidence, cannot be used as evidence for corruption and it is permissible to buy from him and accept his gifts and hospitality. However, to refrain is more pious. It may be said that the signs that are seen from the features, the clothes, or the behaviour are a source of suspicion. In this case one should abstain. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>52</sup>, “*Refrain from that which arouses your suspicion to another which does not.*” The importance of these signs differs from one sign to another. One should consult his heart in deciding the significance of each of these signs.

3. The Third Case: A person whose condition is known based on previous experience  
This is the case of a person known to you and your knowledge is based on previous experience. This is a person who is known for being a righteous and fair person; but it is probable that his inner self is different. This person should be taken at his face value; no investigation should be attempted; like the first case. The recommended practice is to buy from this person and accept his gifts and food without hesitation. Dealing with this person is less problematic than dealing with the person in the first case. Eating from the food of the person described in the first case may not be a deed of the righteous but it is permissible; but in eating the food of the person in this case, one is emulating the prophets and the pious. However, if it is known, based on experience that he is a soldier, a singer, or a person who deals in usury then investigating the person further is a must.

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<sup>52</sup> Narrated by Al-Hasan ibn Ali and reported by Al-Nassaie and Al-Tirmidhi

## **The Second Source of Doubt: The Condition of the Money**

An example of this is when lawful and unlawful goods are mixed. This situation arises when loads of goods that have been usurped are offered for sale in the market and people buy them. The people buying in this market are not required to investigate whether the goods are lawful or unlawful; unless it comes to be known that most of the goods are unlawful. If that is the case, they must investigate. If it is not the case, then investigating is not obligatory but one can do it out of piety.

### Issues

Issue 1: What would one do if he was invited to a meal, but he knew that the host has previously earned money from an unlawful source? He does not know whether the host has already spent all the money that he had earned from the unlawful source or not. Would one investigate? There is no sin in eating without any further investigation. However, he can investigate out of piety. If he came to know that the host did not spend all the money that he earned from an unlawful source and he still has some of it, then he can assume that the remaining money is little unless he knew otherwise.

Issue 2: In the previous question, we stated that it is more pious to question the host about the source of the money. However, if he knew that questioning the host would anger him, then he does not need to question him unless he was sure that most of the money of the host has been earned from an unlawful source. In this case, he should question him to make him feel ashamed.

Issue 3: If the host is a friend or a brother who will not be angered by being questioned, then he should not consider that his questioning is out of piety; because his questioning may reveal secrets which could lead to animosity. Piety dictates that secrets should not be uncovered and situations that lead to animosity should be avoided.

Issue 4: One may say what is the benefit to be gained by questioning a person who earned some of his money from an unlawful source? Such a person may lie. The answer is that this person could still tell the truth even though he is willing to sin. If it is known that the person will not tell the truth, then one can ask someone else who may know the source of the money.

Issue 5: The testimony of two witnesses could be dropped if the two gave contradictory testimonies, whether the two witnesses were considered just or transgressors. However, one can use extra evidence to evaluate the two contradictory testimonies and ascertain which one is more believable than the other.

Issue 6: One might argue that the Messenger of God (PBUH) questioned the source of milk that was brought to him. He was told that it was sheep's milk. He then asked where did sheep it come from? When he was told he kept silent. The question is, is it obligatory to ask about the source of money? And if it is obligatory, how far should one pursue the investigation of where did the money come from? I say that there is no certain and unique answer for this question. One should pursue the investigation if one is suspicious of the source.

## How to Repent from Financial Sins

You should know that if one repents and he still has money that was earned from an unlawful source mixed up with the rest of his money, then he has two obligatory duties. The first is to identify the unlawful wealth and separate from the rest of his wealth. The second duty is to determine the way of spending this money.

### How to Identify the Unlawful Money?

It is easy to achieve this duty if the amount of wealth that has been obtained through unlawful means is known. When the amount of wealth is not known or if the wealth is mixed up with other wealth that was obtained using lawful means, then he should attempt to identify the unlawful wealth. The way to do that is to estimate the amount of wealth that has been obtained through unlawful means. If he is unable to make a good estimate, he can follow one of the following two approaches:

1. the first approach is to make an estimate based on the knowledge that he is certain of;
2. the second approach is to make an estimate based on the most probable amount.

### Issues

Issue 1: If one had obtained a property from a wrongdoing governor then he repented, then he must estimate the benefit that he gained from the property since he received. He must give this money away for his repentance to be accepted.

Issue 2: If one inherited wealth and did not know how this wealth was obtained whether it was obtained using lawful or unlawful means and there was no sign to indicate that it was gained unlawfully then it is considered lawful. If he knew that part of it was obtained using unlawful means then he should estimate, as much as he can, the portion that was obtained using unlawful means and give it away. If he knows that the testator was in the employment of a wrongdoing governor but did not receive a compensation for his work or that the compensation has all been spent, then it is not obligatory to give away this money, but he can give it away out of piety.

### How to Spend the Unlawful Wealth?

Once he identified the unlawful wealth and intended to give it away, then there are three situations

1. If the rightful owner of the wealth is known, then the wealth in addition to any benefit that may have accrued should be returned to him; if he is dead then it should be returned to his heirs; and if he is absent then the wealth should be put in trust until he comes back.
2. If the rightful owner is not known and there is no way of identifying him then the money should be put in trust until the owner or his heirs have been identified; otherwise, it should be given out in charity. The same situation may occur when the rightful owner is many people who cannot be all identified. Similarly, if the rightful owners are many and the usurped wealth is a small sum that cannot practically be divided among the many owners then it should be given out as charity.

3. If the wealth was usurped from a general fund that is controlled by the state for the benefit of all Muslims, then the wealth should be spent on projects that will benefit all Muslims e.g. building bridges, mosques, etc.

The money should be given to a religious judge to manage it. Otherwise, the usurper himself should manage spending the wealth in ways that benefit all Muslims.

It may be asked what is the evidence that wealth obtained using unlawful means can be spent in charity? And how can a person spend in charity that which he does not own? Some scholars are of the opinion that this is not permissible because the wealth has been obtained unlawfully. It has been narrated that Al-Fadeel once received two Dirhams, when he realized that they were unlawful he threw them away. He said, *“I only give away in charity that which is lawful. I don’t like for others except that which I like for myself.”*

I say that this may be probable and it could be valid. However, I choose a different opinion based on the traditions of the Prophet (PBUH), the actions of the companions, and the application of rational analogy.

**Prophetic Traditions:** It has been narrated the Prophet (PBUH) was once invited to a meal and he was offered a cooked sheep meat. The sheep told the Prophet (PBUH) that it was obtained unlawfully. The Prophet (PBUH) did not eat and commanded<sup>53</sup> that it would be used in feeding the captives.

**The Actions of the Companions:** Ibn Masoud (RA) once bought a slave girl; the slave girl’s owner did not get her price right away and disappeared somehow. Ibn Masoud tried to locate his whereabouts but was never able to locate the seller to pay him his dues. He gave the price to charity and said, “God give him the reward for this charity if accepted it, otherwise make me the recipient of the reward.”

**The Rational Analogy:** Since the rightful owner of this wealth is unknown and cannot be identified, then it could be either thrown away or spent in charity. It is imperative that spending it in charity is better than throwing it out to the sea. No benefit will be accrued to the rightful owner or anybody else if it is thrown out to sea. If it is given in charity to a poor man, the poor man will make a supplication to God on behalf of the rightful owner. This way both the rightful owner and the poor man will benefit from it.

The statement that we only give in charity what is lawfully gained is a true statement if we were seeking reward for our charity. In this case we are not asking for reward; we are trying to rid ourselves of a wrongdoing.

## Issues

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<sup>53</sup> Narrated by Abdu Allah ibn Qais and reported by Abu Haneefa

Issue 1: What would one do if received wealth from those in authority? Some scholars said the wealth should be returned to the governor so that the governor will give it back to its rightful owner. If he knows that the governor will not give the wealth back to its rightful owner, then returning the wealth back to the governor will amount to supporting the wrongdoing by the governor. It is better in this case to spend it out in charity asking God to reward its rightful owner.

Issue 2: What would a person do if he received wealth that was gained using unlawful means and he does not know the rightful owner? He should be generous if he gave the wealth to poor people, he should be miser in spending this money on himself, and he should spend moderately if he is spending on his family.

Issue 3: What if one of his parents' wealth was obtained using unlawful means or he had a suspicion that was gained unlawfully? He should then abstain from eating their food even if this angers them. He should admonish them and abstain from eating food that was obtained unlawfully to please them and displease God. But, if he did not have a proof that the wealth is unlawful and he only has a suspicion that it is unlawful and he wants to abstain out of piety, then he should try to abstain nicely because it is an obligation to please his parents. If he could not abstain without angering them then he should eat only a little.

Issue 4: Should a person who had money which he earned through unlawful means perform pilgrimage? Pilgrimage is not an obligatory duty for a person whose money has been obtained using unlawful means. He does not have to pay a monetary ransom because he is bankrupt. He does not need to pay poor-dues. If he can identify the rightful owner, then he should return the money to him otherwise he should give it in charity to the poor. If the money, he has is doubtful and it is probable that it was lawful then he should perform pilgrimage. He should endeavour to buy food using the money that he knows is lawful. If he could not do this during the whole time of pilgrimage, he should do it while he is in the state of Ihram. The least he can do is to eat and dress using lawful money on the Day of Arafah. His heart should be filled with fear and sadness that he is compelled to eat using unlawful money.

## **Annuities and Awards given by Rulers, What is lawful and what is unlawful?**

You should know that whoever receives money from a ruler must consider three issues

1. How did the ruler earn this money?
2. Why is the person receiving this money?
3. Does he deserve the amount of money that he is receiving? Is the money distributed fairly between him and his associates?

### **Types of Rulers' Income**

There are two lawful sources of income for the ruler, whether for him personally or in conjunction with the rest of the Muslims: money taken from the disbelievers as spoils of war

whether obtained with or without actual fight; and money taken from Muslims which includes inheritance and lost money whose owners could not be identified, and money put in trust.

Annuities, awards and benefits given by a ruler to a scholar or another individual are drawn from one of the following eight budgets: poll tax, inheritance, trusts, ruler's salary, ruler's property, money taken from tax collectors, money taken from wholesalers, and money taken from the treasury. It is more appropriate to abstain from taking such awards because the price for accepting the reward of a ruler involves humiliation, begging, and abstaining from forbidding evil. If one knows that the money was obtained from an unlawful source, then accepting it is absolutely unlawful. Similarly, if most of the money is unlawful then accepting it is unlawful. It is lawful to accept the money, if he knows that the source of the money is lawful. The scholars have different opinions regarding the case when it is not known for certain whether the source of the money is lawful or unlawful.

There are different levels of piety when it comes to accepting awards from the rulers. These are

1. The First Rank: One should not accept their money.
2. The Second Rank: One should only accept the money when it is known that it came from a lawful source.
3. The Third Rank: One should accept the money and spend it in charity to the poor. Not accepting the money may be a means for supporting the ruler's wrongdoing.
4. The Fourth Rank: One should accept the money even if he is not certain of the lawfulness of its source assuming that it is known that most of the sources of money are lawful. This was the case for the rulers during the time of the first and second Muslim generations (the companions and the followers).

If you understand these ranks, you will come to realize that the annuities of the wrongdoers at the present time are not similar to that. There are two main differences between the two

1. The rulers' money in the present time is all unlawful or at least most of it is unlawful.
2. The unjust rulers of the earlier generations felt guilty for the wrongdoing they were committing and tried to attract the support of the companions and the followers; and they never made them feel humiliated for accepting their awards nor prevented them from forbidding what was evil.

### **The Amount to be accepted and the Qualification of the Receiver**

The ruler can give out of his money what he wishes and to whom he wishes. He can only give those who deserve an annuity or a reward if it is coming out of the general funds. The undeserving rich person should not be given out of that fund. This is the correct decision even though some of the scholars disagree with this decision.

However, if the ruler was one of the wrongdoers, then there are two considerations

1. A wrongdoer ruler should quit his position. He should be considered as ousted or should be ousted. In this case, how can one accept money given by an ousted ruler?
2. The second consideration is that this ruler singles out specific people to award them money. How can these individuals accept the fact that they are singled out? Can they accept only their fair share? Is it unlawful for them to accept any award? Or do they accept what they are given?

Regarding the first consideration, we see that it is lawful for a person to accept his fair share from a wrongdoing ruler; because it may be difficult to oust a wrongdoing ignorant ruler or his ousting may create sedition. In this case, the people should not revolt against him and should be obedient to him in the way people should be obedient to their rulers.

As for the second consideration related to the situation when the ruler singles out certain people to receive awards or annuities and does not address the needs of all who deserve to receive money, there are four different opinions. At one extreme, they said the person should not accept the money from the ruler because all Muslims have a share in whatever sum he receives. Another opinion allowed the person to accept an amount sufficient to satisfy his needs for one day, this is the least amount that he is entitled to. A third opinion allowed the person to accept an amount sufficient to satisfy his daily needs for one year. They said it would be difficult to request money on a daily basis and in the meantime, he is entitled to that money. A fourth opinion stated that he should accept whatever he was given, even though an injustice may have fallen on the others. This last opinion is the opinion that one arrives at using rational analogy.

## **The Lawful and Unlawful in dealing with the Wrongdoing Rulers**

You should know that your relationship with the wrongdoing rulers is one of three states.

**The First State:** This is the worst of the three. In this state it is you who seek to be in the presence of the wrongdoing ruler. The Messenger of God has been quoted to have said<sup>54</sup>, *“There will be, after my time, rulers who will lie and deal unjustly. Whoever believed their lies and supported them in their wrongdoings does not belong to me and I have nothing to do with him and he will never drink from the Basin.”* Abu Dhar (RA) said to Salamah, “Salamah, do not seek the presence of the rulers because if you get anything from their worldly life, they will get more from your Hereafter.” Ibn Massoud (RA) said, *“A person who seeks an audience with the ruler, he enters the court with his religion and exits without his religion.”* They asked him why? He said, *“Because he pleases the ruler and displeases God.”*

The Duaa that one is allowed to make for a wrongdoing ruler is to ask God to guide him to do good deeds.

**The Second State:** In this state, it is the ruler who would be seeking your company. It is lawful to stand up for him and honour him in reciprocity for honoring you with his visit. Since he honoured the knowledge and religion by honouring the scholars then he deserves to be honoured. If the meeting is between you and him alone, then it is better not to stand up to emphasize the dignity of religion and the worthlessness of injustice; and to declare your disapproval of his wrongdoing.

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<sup>54</sup> Narrated by Kaab ibn Ajra and reported by Al-Nassaie and Al-Tirmidhi

**The Third State:** In this state, you refrain from seeing the ruler; you would not seek his audience, and you would not receive him as a visitor. If it is said that some Muslim scholars sought audience with the rulers before, we say that there were reasons and etiquette for seeking audience with the rulers. If you are able to learn the reasons for their visits and the etiquette they followed, then you can seek audience with the ruler, and you should follow their example during the visit. They declared their disapproval whenever they saw evil being committed and they admonished the ruler whenever it was appropriate to do so. This is the etiquette which the scholars, who were seeking the Hereafter, followed. The scholars who are seeking the pleasures of this worldly life seek the audience of the ruler to become their close confidants, to show them the ways to cut corners in the application of the law and to find creative ways to help them to achieve their desired objectives. The objective of these scholars is not reform; their objective is to seek fame and acceptance of the ruler.

There are two pitfalls that only a stupid person would fall victim to. The first is to say that my intention is to reform the ruler and admonish him. He may even believe himself when he says this. His true intention is to seek fame. The criterion for discerning the veracity of this claim is to ask oneself if he would be happy that one of his colleagues admonishes the ruler and effects the desired reform? If the answer is with the affirmative, then he is truthful in his claim but if it is not then he is only conceited. The second pitfall is the claim that he is only seeking an audience with the ruler to intercede on behalf of a Muslim who has been wronged. The same criterion outlined earlier can be used to discern the accuracy of the claim.

#### Issues:

Issue 1: What would you do if a ruler gave you money to distribute among the poor? If the money was taken from a rightful owner, then it is unlawful to take the money. But if it is not and the ruler likes to give the money in charity then you should take and distribute the money to the poor. Some scholars declined to take and distribute such money. However, it is better to take it if you could avoid three pitfalls:

- The ruler may think that taking the money is a tacit admission from you that his money is lawful.
- Other scholars may think that the ruler's money is lawful. They follow your example thinking it is permissible, but they do not investigate further when similar situation arises.
- You may become attached to the ruler because he chose you for the distribution of the money.

Issue 2: Doing business or living in markets which were built using unlawful money is unlawful. If a person lives in such building but earns his living using lawful means, then his earnings are lawful; but he becomes a sinner for living in this place. It is lawful for people to buy from him. However, it is better to buy from other markets if they were available.

Issue 3: It is unlawful to walk on a road that was established on a usurped land. However, it would be lawful to use the road if the land did not have a specific owner.

Issue 4: What is the difference between a bribe and a gift? Both are given by consent, and both are given for an objective, but one has been rendered unlawful while the other is considered lawful. I say that a person gives away money only to achieve a certain objective. There are two kinds of objectives: one that will be realized in the Hereafter such as God's reward; and one which can be realized in this life. The objectives to be realized in this life include money, actions, help in achieving a specific objective, endearing the heart of those who receive the gift. These objectives can be summarized as follows:

1. Spending money for the sake of the reward in the Hereafter. In this case money is given to someone who is in need, a scholar, or a pious religious person. If the money is given based on need and the receiver has no need for money, then he should not accept it. If the money is given because the receiver is a scholar or has an honourable pedigree, the receiver should not accept the money if he knows that he is neither a scholar nor does he have an honourable pedigree.
2. Giving a gift for the realization of an immediate reward. As in the case when a poor person gives a rich one a gift hoping that he would be rewarded by a better gift. This is a conditional gift that does not become lawful until the expected reward has been received.
3. Giving money with the intention of soliciting help regarding certain matters. As in the case of a person who pays the ruler's deputy money to intercede on his behalf to get the ruler to approve his transaction. This is a conditional gift, and its permissibility depends on the type of the transaction involved. If the transaction is unlawful then the gift is unlawful. If the transaction involved the removal of injustice or restoring a right for the one giving the gift, then it is unlawful because this is a bribe. If the transaction is permissible, then the gift is lawful if the expected transaction was fulfilled.
4. Giving a gift for the sake of only endearing someone is the objective of people of understanding and is encouraged by Islamic law.
5. Giving a gift for the sake of endearing an influential person not because he is interested in his affection or companionship but because he is interested in what he can achieve by being close to such an influential person. Had this person not influential he would not have given him any gifts. This is very much like a bribe, and it is disliked to receive such gift.

It has been narrated that the Messenger of God (PBUH) once sent a man to collect the poor-dues from the tribe of Al-Azad. The man came back and gave the Messenger (PBUH) some of the money he had and kept some. He said to the Messenger (PBUH) the money I kept was given to me as a gift. The Messenger of God (PBUH), said<sup>55</sup> to him, *“Why did you not stay home and wait for your gift to arrive?”*

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<sup>55</sup> Narrated by Abu Hameed Al-Saaidy and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

## **Book 5: Etiquette of Cordiality, Brotherhood, and Companionship**

# The Virtue of Cordiality and Brotherhood, its Conditions and Degrees

## The Virtue of Cordiality and Brotherhood

You should know that cordiality is the fruit of good character; treating people uncordially is the result of bad character. Good character promotes amity, harmony, and agreement. Bad character promotes hate, envy, and animosity. A good tree bears good fruits. Islam recognizes the virtue of good character. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>56</sup>, *“The best things which help people enter paradise are God consciousness, and good character.”* Osama ibn Shriek (RA) asked the Messenger (PBUH), *“What is the best thing that humankind can have?”* The Messenger (PBUH) answered<sup>57</sup>, *“Good character.”* The Messenger (PBUH) said<sup>58</sup>, *“I was sent to perfect the good character.”* He also said<sup>59</sup>, *“The heaviest thing to be placed in the balance is a good character.”*

God bestowed the virtue of cordiality and affection on the believers, *“He has put affection between their hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth you could not have put affection between their hearts, but God has done it. He is Eminent, Wise”* (8: 63) and *“for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, you became brethren.”* (3: 103) God has also warned us of the evil of disunity, *“And hold fast, all together, to the rope of God, and do not be divided among yourselves.”* (3: 103) Abu Idris Al-Kholani (RA) said<sup>60</sup> to Moaz (RA), *“I love you in God.”* Moaz said, *“I give you glad tidings. I heard the Messenger of God (PBUH) say, ‘Chairs will be set, around the Throne on the Day of Judgement for, a group of people. These people will have faces like the full moon. They will not entertain any fear while the rest of people will be terrified. These are the friends of God, ‘there is no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.’ The Messenger (PBUH) was asked, ‘Who are these people?’ The Messenger (PBUH) said, ‘These are the people who love each other in God.’”* Abu Hurairah (RA) added, *“There will be illuminated high chairs around the Throne, sitting on them will be people whose dresses are illuminated, and their faces will be illuminated. They are neither prophets nor martyrs. They will be envied by the prophets and the martyrs.”*

It is also said that the brothers in God who used to visit each other for the sake of God will benefit each other on the Day of Judgment. If one of them has a higher rank than the second, God will raise the rank of the second to match the rank of his brother. The brotherhood that was established in the sake of God will be as strong as the blood relationship between family members or between the parents and their progeny, *“And those who believed and whose descendants followed them in faith –We will join with them their descendants, We will not deprive them of anything of their deeds.”* (52:21) The Messenger of God said<sup>61</sup>, *“Seven groups of people will be protected by the shade of God on the Day when there will be no protection except under the shade of God, ..., two men who loved each other for the sake of God. The remembered*

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<sup>56</sup> Narrated by Abi Hurairah and reported by Al-Tirmidhi.

<sup>57</sup> Reported by Ibn Majah.

<sup>58</sup> Narrated by Abi Hurairah and reported by Al-Bukhari.

<sup>59</sup> Narrated by Abi Al-Dardaa and reported by Al-Tirmidhi.

<sup>60</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Ahmed and Al-Hakem.

<sup>61</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

*God when they met and when they parted ways.” The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>62</sup>, “A man went to visit his brother in God. God sent an angel who queried the man. The angel asked, ‘Where are you going?’ The man said, ‘I am going to visit my brother, so and so.’ The angel asked, ‘Do you need something from him?’ the man said, ‘No.’ The angel asked, ‘Is he family?’ the man said, ‘No.’ The angle asked, ‘Has he done you favour and you are repaying him?’ the man said, ‘No.’ The angle asked, ‘Then why are you visiting him?’ the man said, ‘I love him in God.’ The angel said, ‘God sent me to tell you that He will admit you to paradise because of your love to your brother.’”*

Ali (RA) said, “*Look after your brothers, they are your support in this life and in the Hereafter. Do you not hear what the companions of the fire will say, ‘We have no intercessors, nor a devoted friend.’ (26: 100-101)*” Al-Hassan said a contradictory statement, “*Son of Adam, do not be deluded by what they say that a person (will be on the Day of Judgment) with those whom he loves. Only your deeds will make you join the righteous. The Jews and Christians love their prophets however they will not be with them.*” This is an indication that loving a brother without imitating him in doing good deeds is not enough to be with him in the Hereafter. It has been narrated that God inspired Moses (PBUH), He said, “*Did you ever do something fully devoted to me?*” Moses (PBUH) said, “*God, I prayed, I fasted, I paid charity, and I paid Alms.*” God said, “*Prayer will be evidence for you (on the Day of Judgment), fasting is protection for you, charity is a shadow (that will protect you on the Day of Judgment), Alms will be a light for you. So, what did you do for me?*” Moses (PBUH) asked, “*God, tell me what to do?*” God said, “*Moses, did you befriend one of My friends? Did you take My enemy as your enemy?*” Moses (PBUH) then realized that the best of deeds is to love someone for the sake of God and to hate someone for the sake of God. Al-Fadil said, “*A look of affection and mercy between two brothers is an act of worship.*”

## **Definition of Brotherhood in God and how it differs from Brotherhood in the Worldly Life**

You should know that there is a mystery regarding love and hate for the sake of God. We will remove this mystery. Companionship between two people can be classified into several categories. One category is companionship that happens by chance e.g. companionship between neighbours, companionship between office colleagues, companionships between school or business mates, and companionship between travellers. Another category is companionship that happens by design. This is what we will discuss, because brotherhood in faith belongs to this category. Only deeds which are motivated by deliberate choice will be rewarded. One may love another only for the sake of love or for the sake of attaining something else that will accrue because of this love. The thing that may be gained from loving someone may be a matter of this world, a matter of the Hereafter, or a matter related to God. These are four categories:

1. **Loving someone only for the sake of the person himself.** This is possible. You may find pleasure in seeing that person, knowing him, and admiring his character. People love beautiful things that give them pleasure. One finds pleasure in the things he adores, and adoring is generated by harmony and agreement in disposition. One may like

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<sup>62</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Muslim.

someone because of his handsome looks, or one may like someone because of his mature intellect and good character. Good character promotes good deeds. Mature intellect results in wide knowledge. Both these are attractive to a person with sound disposition. However, cordiality may result for a mysterious reason other than good looks or good character. This may be a result of harmony between the inner dispositions of the two. Two similar souls will be attracted to each other. Inner dispositions are hidden; no human being has the power to understand their mysteries. The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>63</sup>, “*The souls are drafted soldiers, two harmonious souls will befriend each; and two disharmonious souls will not befriend each other.*” From this it appears that a person may like another simply because of the harmony between their inner dispositions. Puritanical loving and the love of the beauty of nature is part of this kind of love. Love for the sake of God is not part of this category.

2. **Loving someone to attain something else.** The beloved in this case is simply a bridge for something that is loved. The means to secure a loved thing is also loved. People love gold and silver because they are means to acquire the thing they love, e.g. worldly pleasures, power, or knowledge. This is also not a part of the love for the sake of God because the intention is to acquire a commodity that will be of benefit only in this world. This kind of love could be lawful or unlawful depending on the nature of the thing to be acquired. If the acquired thing is lawful then this love is lawful, but if the acquired thing is unlawful then this love is unlawful.
  
3. **Loving someone to attain something you love which will be of benefit to you in the Hereafter.** An example of this is to love one’s teacher because the knowledge learnt from the teacher is intended for seeking the Hereafter. This kind of love is for the sake of God. Another example is the teacher who loves his student, because his student will learn and he will become knowledgeable. This will elevate the teachers rank in the kingdom of heaven. We even go further and say that the love that a person has for his servant who performs the house chores to relieve him of these chores and enable him to devote his time completely to gain knowledge, to do his work, and to perform acts of worship is a love for the sake of God. The love that a person - who is known to love God, to seek His satisfaction, and to love meeting Him in the Hereafter, has for another person is a love for the sake of God; because his love of the person must be congruent with his love of God. The love that a person, who has combined in his heart the love of God and the love of the worldly life, has for another person - who has excelled in pursuing these two loves and who can teach him to pursue these two kinds of love - is a love for the sake of God. Similarly, the love of a person for a teacher that teaches him religion and teaches him how to manage his worldly affairs is a love for the sake of God. The love of God and the love of comfort, health, and security in the worldly life are not mutually exclusive. The invocation that the prophets were commanded to say combined both, “*Our Lord, give us in this world (that which is) good and in the Hereafter (that which is) good and protect us from the torment of the Fire.*” (2: 201)

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<sup>63</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Muslim

4. **Loving for the sake of God and in the sake of God.** This is the case when you love someone with no intention to learn from him or to get any benefit because of this love. This is the highest ranks of love. It is delicate and mysterious; however, it is possible. One of the signs of extreme love is that the person who loves someone would love those who love his beloved, those who serve his beloved, those who praise his beloved, and those who seek the satisfaction of his beloved. Similarly, when the love of God fills the heart, it will go beyond loving God to loving all His creations. When the Prophet (PBUH) was offered the first fruit of a harvest, he would wipe his eyes with it and said<sup>64</sup>, “*It has been recently near to God.*”

If love was only limited to those from whom a benefit is expected, then no one would have loved people, scholars, companions of the Prophet (PBUH), and the Prophets (pbut) who are dead. The love of all these resides in the heart of each Muslim. This is evident from the fact that a Muslim becomes angry when someone abuses one of them and feels happy when someone praises one of them. The love of these people is a love for the sake of God, because they are special servants of God and whoever loves God loves those whom He chooses to be His special servants.

Such love motivates the person to give up or share some of his gains; like the one who gives his beloved half or one third of his wealth. The amount of wealth that one is willing to give his beloved is a measure of his love. When love floods the heart such that no place remains in the heart for the love of someone else, the person would be willing to give up all his possessions for the one he loves. As an example, for this is Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (RA) who gave up his daughter, whom he loved dearly, and all his wealth.

## **Hating for the Sake of God**

You should know that as you love for the sake of God, you should also hate for the sake of God. You love someone for the sake of God because he is obedient to God, so when he disobeys God, then you must hate him because he is a sinner and is hated by God. If you love someone for a specific reason, then you must hate him for the opposite reason. If the deeds of your brother are a mixture of good and bad deeds, then you love him for the good deeds and you hate him for the bad deeds.

People are three kinds: those who are mostly sinners, and those who are mostly obedient, and the third group consists of people who are sometimes sinners and sometimes obedient. These people should be treated according to their deeds. Bad deeds should be recompensed by hate; turning away; or shunning. Good deeds should be rewarded by love; drawing near; or companionship. You should be able to discern a distinct difference between a sinner and a disbeliever. The sinner should still show love for Islam and readiness to abide by its rules.

If you ask how can one express his hate for the bad deeds committed by a brother? Hate for these deeds can be expressed either by words, by action, or by shunning. It is better to ignore a mistake which is committed by a brother who expresses his regret and declares his intention not to repeat

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<sup>64</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Al-Tirmidhi

the mistake again. It is better to be good to those who hurt you, but you should not be good to those who hurt others and disobey God. Treating a tyrant nicely hurts his victims. It is more appropriate to show consideration to the victim.

## **Degrees of Hate for the Sake of God**

You should know that there are two types of acts of disobedience: disobedience in matters of the doctrine and disobedience in their practices. Those who disobey God in matters of the doctrine are either disbelievers or innovators in religion. The innovators are two groups; a group who proclaim their innovation and call people to join them, or those who keep their innovations to themselves. Those who do not call upon people to join them in their innovation may have been unable to call upon people to join them or they may have conscientiously chose not to call upon people to join them.

### **People who belief in a corrupt doctrine may be divided into three categories**

1. A disbeliever: A disbeliever who wages war on Islam and Muslims should be killed or enslaved. This is an appropriate punishment for such a person. A non-Muslim should not be punished; however, it is recommended that he would not be taken as an intimate friend.
2. An innovator in religion: A person who adopts an innovation that renders him a disbeliever and who openly declares his innovation and recruits people to join him in his innovation is worse than a non-Muslim, because a non-Muslim often has a contract with the Muslim state. The contract guarantees the safety of the non-Muslim if he pays the poll tax. If the innovation does not render the person a disbeliever, then his sin in the sight of God is lesser than the sin of the disbeliever. However, he should be treated more harshly than the disbeliever because the impact of his claim is stronger than the impact of a disbeliever since he is known to the people as a Muslim. Such a person should be punished by ignoring him and avoiding greeting him in the hope that this will make him return to the fold. Even though greeting a Muslim is an obligatory duty, there are exceptional situations which allows one to drop the obligatory status e.g. while being in the washroom. Avoiding greeting the innovator as a punishment provides a much stronger reason for the exception.
3. An innovator in religion who is a lay person. Such a person is usually incapable of promoting his ideas and does not have a following. Such a person should be advised kindly, however, if he persists then he should be rebuked harshly.

### **People who are disobedient in their practices can be divided into three categories**

1. People who commit disobedient practices that include inflicting harm on others like injustice, usurping money, false testimony, and backbiting. This is the worst group. They should be avoided and their company should be shunned.

2. The owners of bars and brothels. These people do not inflict harm on people in their daily life, but they corrupt their religion. Since they do not force people to frequent their businesses their crimes are of a lesser degree than the first category. These people should be rebuked, and their company should be shunned.
3. People whose acts of disobedience are limited in their consequences to themselves e.g. drinking or missing one of the religious duties. This is a lesser offense than the previous two. However, if they are seen committing the offense, then they should be prevented from committing these sins using whatever way would be effective. They should be approached wisely using a mixture of kindness and rebuke. It has been narrated that one of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) cursed a man who repeatedly drank alcohol. The Prophet (PBUH) admonished his companion not to curse the man saying<sup>65</sup>, *“Do not aid Satan against your brother.”*

## **The Attributes of the Person worthy of Companionship**

You should know that one should choose his companions carefully. The Messenger of God said<sup>66</sup>, *“Close friends usually imbue each other with the same qualities. One should carefully choose his friends.”* A righteous brother may intercede on behalf of his brother on the Day of Judgment, makes supplication for him in this life, helps him in times of difficulty, and enjoy his company in times of ease.

There are five essential attributes that one should look for in those who he chooses to be his friends. These are:

1. A friend should be a person of intellect. There is nothing good that comes out of befriending an idiot. Befriending an idiot will eventually have a sad ending even if it lasts a long time. This is not surprising since an idiot’s attempts to benefit you will end up harming you.
2. A friend should be a person of good character. Having an intellect is not enough; it must be supplemented by a good character. The decisions made by a person with intellect, but who has no character may be affected by anger, desires, and whims. A person of intellect may know the consequences of his actions but lacking good character makes him unable to control his weaknesses and desires.
3. A friend should be a person who does not transgress. There is no use in befriending a transgressor who is adamant in committing transgression. A person who insists on committing a major sin is a person who does not fear God. One cannot trust a person who does not fear God, *“And do not obey one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance and who follows his desire and whose affair is ever in neglect.”* (18: 28)
4. A friend should be a person who is not an innovator in religion. Befriending an innovator subjects the person to the danger of following his innovations. In addition, an innovator is

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<sup>65</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Al-Bukhari.

<sup>66</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Abu Dawood and Al-Tirmidhi.

a person who should be shunned, so how can you befriend him? Umar (RA) said, *“You should choose your friends from among those who always tell the truth. They will be an enjoyable company to you in good times, and they will support you at difficult times. Think best of your brother until you get a solid proof that he is otherwise. Do not associate with your enemy. Be cautious of your friend except those whose integrity is undisputed, those are the ones who fear God. Do not befriend a transgressor for fear of learning from him and do not entrust him with your confidential matters. If you want to consult someone in your affairs choose those who are awed by God.”*

5. A friend should be a person who is not obsessed by the love of the worldly life. Those who are obsessed by the love of this life are poison that should be avoided.

The following sayings summarize the types of people to befriend and the types to avoid. Bisher said, *“A brother is one of three: a brother that will benefit you in the Hereafter, a brother that will benefit you in this life, and a brother that you would enjoy his company. It is rarely that you find a person who can serve these three objectives.”* Al-Maamoun said, *“The brothers are three: One is indispensable like food, one is needed at times like medicine, and one that you never need like ailment.”* It was said that *“People are like trees. Some provide a shade but do not yield fruits. They provide a benefit in this life but have no benefit for the Hereafter. Some do not provide a shade but yield fruits. They provide benefit in the Hereafter but do not provide benefit in this life. Some who provide shade and produce fruits. Some neither provide shade nor provide fruits. If you do not find a brother who becomes your companion and benefits you in one of these objectives, then solitude is better for you.”* Abu Dhar (RA) said, *“Loneliness is better than having an evil companion, but a good companion is better than loneliness.”*

## **Rights of Brothers and Companions**

### **Financial Rights**

Supporting your brother financially has three levels

1. The first level is to give him the same level of support that you give your servant. At that level you support your brother using money that remains after you have satisfied your needs. However, you should spare him the humiliation of begging for help.
2. The second level is to treat him as you treat yourself. At that level you accept that the two of you share whatever money you have.
3. The third level, the highest level, is to prefer him over yourself. At that level you satisfy his need first before you satisfy your need. This is the level of the saints. The fruit of this behavior is to reach a state whereby a person prefers others over himself.

If you cannot accept helping your brother in one of the three ways mentioned above, then you should know that you have not achieved the level of true brotherhood. You are only two people who are engaged in a superficial companionship. This kind of companionship has no impact on the intellect or faith. Ali ibn Al-Hussien (RA) said to a man, *“Do you put your hand in your brother’s pocket and take whatever money he needs without asking the brother’s permission?”*

*The man said, "No." Ali (RA) said, "Then, you are not brothers." Supporting a brother financially is better than a giving charity to a poor man, Ali (RA) said, "I prefer to give my brother in God Twenty Dirham than to give a hundred Dirham to poor people." He also said, "I prefer to cook a meal and invite my brothers in God to eat than to free a slave."*

### **The Right for Help with Chores**

This includes running errands and performing chores. This right has three levels, the lowest of which is to perform these chores when asked, provided you can perform them, willingly and gladly. Some of the earlier generations continued to look after their deceased companion's family for forty years. You should be always aware of the needs of your brother as are aware of your needs. You should always take the initiative to provide help and do not wait until he asks for your help.

### **The Right for Non-Verbal Support**

A brother should not discuss his brother's mistakes neither in his presence nor in his absence. He should ignore these mistakes. He should not be argumentative in his discussion with his brother. When he comes across his brother on the way, he should not embarrass him by asking where he is going or from where he obtained certain things. He should keep his brother's secrets; he should never divulge these secrets to anyone not even if they abandoned each other. Divulging secrets is the sign of mean character and evil inner self.

He should neither talk about his bad traits nor the bad traits of his family because this constitutes back biting; this is unlawful. There are two things that can help one stop practicing the bad habit of backbiting. The first one is to reflect on one's own faults. Even if you find one fault this could be reason enough to overlook the faults of your brother. The second thing is that you should know that if you were looking for a perfect human being, you will never find one.

It is not enough only to keep your silence about his faults, but it also important to silence your heart regarding his faults. You should not harbour any doubts against him. The doubts for the heart are equivalent to backbiting for the tongue; they are also unlawful. There are ways to deal with these doubts. If there are two explanations for his actions, then you should consider the best explanation. If it becomes evident without doubt that he has done something wrong, then you should assume that this was a mistake. You should avoid doubts which are aroused by twisted interpretations of signs. Twisted interpretations combined with preconceived ideas may lead to wrongful accusations. This is unlawful. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>67</sup>, "*Beware of suspicions. Suspicions are the worst of lies.*" He (PBUH) also said<sup>68</sup>, "*Whoever covers the shame of his brother, God will cover him in this life and in the Hereafter.*" You should know that a person's faith is not complete until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself. The lowest rank of brotherhood is to treat your brother the same way you like him to treat you. A wise person once said, "*Do no befriend a person whose friendship will be affected when he becomes angry, when he becomes affluent, when he becomes greedy, or when he follows his whim.*"

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<sup>67</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>68</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Muslim.

## **The Right for Verbal Support**

Voicing endearing statements and showing concern at times of difficulty or illness are equally important to strengthen the brotherhood as being silent about the brother's mistakes. Brotherhood is sharing in both good and bad times. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>69</sup>, *"If you love your brother, you should tell him that you love him."* One should call his brother with the names that he likes best. One should cite the good traits of his brother and praise him for these traits. One should praise his family, his trade, and his deeds without exaggerations or lies. One should show gratitude to his brother when he does him a favour. One should even show gratitude for his brother's intention to do him a favour. One should defend his brother in his absence if someone attacked him. Someone said, *"Every time someone attacked my brother, I would imagine that the brother was present and I defend him in his absence as if he were present."*

Those who are insincere in their brotherhood are hypocrites. The signs of sincerity are to show the same feelings towards your brother whether he is present or absent; whether you are alone together or in a group; whether you are both in agreement or you have different opinions. Your words should reflect the feelings you harbour in your heart towards him. The absence of these signs destroys the affection between the brothers. Companionship is demanding; it is better for those who are unable to fulfil its conditions to live in seclusion and do not attempt to have brothers or companions.

A brother should also educate and advise his brother. Your brother's need for knowledge is not less than his need for money. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>70</sup>, *"A believer is the mirror of his believing brother."* Umar (RA) used to say, *"May God reward a man who advises his brother when he commits a fault."* Advising your brother in confidence is an act of kindness but advising him openly is an act of humiliation. Imam Al-Shafi'i said, *"Admonishing in confidence is an advice and an act of beautification, but if it is done publicly, it becomes a scandal and a disgrace."*

## **The Right for Forgiveness**

When a brother commits a mistake, one should give him the benefit of doubt by imaging all the extenuating circumstances that could have led him to committing this mistake; one should think of seventy extenuating circumstances. If you find this difficult to accept, then you should blame yourself for being harsh with him. If your brother offered his apology, then you should accept his apology whether you think he was sincere or not. When a rift occurs between you and your brother you should not exaggerate in the enmity, *"Perhaps God will put between you and those to whom you have been enemies among them, affection. God is All-Powerful; He is All-Forgiving and Giver of Mercy."* (60: 7)

## **The Right for Supplications and Prayers**

A brother should pray for his brother during his life and after his death. He should ask God to give his brother the things he likes for himself and his family. You should know that whatever

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<sup>69</sup> Narrated by Al-Miqdam ibn Maadi Kareb and reported by Al-Bukhari.

<sup>70</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Abu Dawud.

you pray God to give him is as if you were praying for yourself. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>71</sup>, *“When you pray God for your brother an angel will pray God to give you the same.”*

### **The Right for Loyalty and Sincerity**

One should be loyal to his brother. Loyalty means that your affection to your brother should be constant until death separates you. After death, a brother should be loyal to the brother’s family and friends. The objective of loving your brother is to gain the reward in the Hereafter. Stopping the love of your brother before his death frustrates the deeds and nullifies your strive to the Hereafter. Loving your brother’s family is an indicator of the strength of your love to your brother. Even the dog guarding his door should be held in a special place above all other dogs. It has been said that the brotherhood in God between two men is only destroyed by a sin that one of them commits. This is corroborated by the Quran as it quoted Joseph (PBUH) saying, *“After Satan has induced estrangement between me and my brothers.”* (12: 100) Bisher used to say, *“The loss of a brother is a result of the deficiency in the person’s acts of obedience to God.”*

Loyalty dictates that one should be modest to his brother even when he becomes affluent, powerful, or famous. However, you should know that loyalty does not mean that you agree with your brother when he strays away from the truth in a matter of faith. Loyalty in this case dictates that you show your disagreement. A sign of your sincerity and loyalty is to be afraid of being separated from your brother. Loyalty dictates that you should not listen to rumours about your brother. This is especially the case when these rumours are spread in a devious way by people who claim that they are sincere, but they actually aim to instill hatred between you and your brother. Loyalty dictates that one should not befriend the enemy of his brother.

### **The Right for Ease when Dealing with Him**

One should not overburden his brother with requests, nor expect a reward for his love; but he should be altruistic; he should dedicate the love of his brother to God. It has been said that cordiality lasts if it is not costly and love endures if it is not burdensome. This right can only be fulfilled if the person considers himself, out of modesty, to be of a lesser status than his brother. Only if he considers his brother better than himself, he will be better than his brother. He would be despising his brother if he thinks that he is better than him, and this is bad. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>72</sup>, *“It is enough evil for the believer to despise his fellow Muslim brother.”* One should also consult with his brothers and accept their advice.

This is a summary of the rights of the brothers and companions. These rights are only fulfilled if you serve your brothers with all your senses. You look at them with your eyes a look of affection, a look that makes them happy. You appreciate their good attributes and turn a blind eye to their mistakes. You face them when they speak to you. You enjoy listening to them talk, you believe what they say, and you do not interrupt them. You should apologize if you need to leave. You should only listen to what they like you to hear.

We have mentioned the rights to be performed by the tongue. However, we can add that one should not raise one’s voice in front of his brothers and he should only speak to them about

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<sup>71</sup> Narrated by Abu Al-Dardaa and reported by Muslim.

<sup>72</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Muslim.

things they understand. The hands should be ready to help a friend. One should use his legs to walk behind his brothers as a follower not as a leader. He should not advance himself, but he should wait until they advance him. He should not approach them until they approach him. He should stand up when they approach him and he should sit modestly. When the unity of brotherhood becomes perfect, the burden of these rights becomes lighter.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

To conclude, this chapter summarize the etiquette of companionship, which promotes good relationships between people. If you want to enjoy good relationship with people, then you should observe the following rules while in the company of people:

- Meet your friend and foe with a smile without being fearful or humiliated. Be balanced in all your affairs.
- Do not look around too often.
- Do not lock your fingers.
- Do not play with your beard.
- Do not play with your ring.
- Do not pick your teeth.
- Do not put your finger in your nose.
- Do not spit and clear your nose too often.
- Do not push the flies off your face too often.
- Avoid stretching and yawning too often.
- Be quite.
- Make your speech organized and ordered.
- Listen attentively when spoken to. Do not exaggerate in expressing your praise. Do not ask the speaker to repeat what he said.
- Do not participate in joking.
- Do not express your admiration of your son, your daughter, your hair, and anything that belongs to you.
- Dress modestly.
- Be moderate in applying oil to your hair.
- Do not encourage anyone to commit injustice.
- Do not be persistent in asking.
- Do not let anyone, even your family; know how much wealth you have. You will be humiliated in their eyes if they think it is little; and you will never be able to satisfy them if they think it is much.
- Let your family fear you without taking recourse to violence and be lenient with them without being weak.
- Do not joke with your servants for fear of losing their respect.
- If you quarrel with someone maintain your dignity and control your anger.
- Avoid pointing excessively with your hands, looking behind you, or kneeling. You should talk only after your anger has been dissipated.
- When you join a group of people, you should start by greeting them and then find an empty space to sit. Do not cross over people and show humility. When you sit, greet the person sitting next to you. Do not sit in the way.

- The etiquette of sitting in a company is to lower your gaze; to stand up for those who have been wronged; to help the needy, the weak, and those who ask; to guide the one who is lost; to return the greeting; to command what is good and forbid what is evil; to be careful where you spit.

## **Rights of your Fellow Muslim, your kin, and your Neighbour**

### **The Rights of your Fellow Muslim**

- You should great him when you meet him.
- You should accept his invitation when he invites you.
- You should pray for him when he sneezes.
- You should visit him when he becomes sick.
- You should follow his funeral when he dies.
- You should honour his oath when he swears.
- You should give an advice if he asks for it.
- You should protect his reputation in his absence.
- You should love for him what you love for yourself; and hate from him what you hate for yourself.
- You should hurt him neither by deeds nor by words.
- You should humble yourself to him.
- You should not listen to what people say about each other.
- You should not desert your brother for more than three days.
- You should treat your brother nicely.
- You should seek permission to enter your brother's house. If permission was denied after three requests, then he should return.
- You should address your brothers in a way they understand.
- You should respect the elders and be kind to the younger.
- You should meet your fellow Muslims with a smile on your face.
- You should fulfill a promise that you made.
- You should treat people fairly; treat people as you like them to treat you.
- You should respect prominent people in the community.
- You should try to mend differences between people as much as you can; the Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>73</sup>, *“Should I tell you about a deed the reward of which is higher than prayer, fasting, and charity?”* They said, *“Yes.”*, he said, *“Mending rifts between people.”*
- You should protect the reputation of all Muslims and do not publicise their mistakes. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>74</sup>, *“Whoever protected the reputation of a Muslim and did not publicize his mistakes, God will protect his reputation and hide his mistakes in this life and in the Hereafter.”*

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<sup>73</sup> Narrated by Abi Al-Dardaa and reported by Abu Dawud and Al-Tirmidhi.

<sup>74</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Muslim.

- You should not spy on Muslims. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>75</sup>, “*You who professed faith with your tongue, but faith has not entered into your heart, do not backbite Muslims and do not spy on them. God will scandalize those who spy on people.*”
- Avoid getting entangled into doubtful situations, to save people the sin of thinking badly of you.
- You should help those who need help with the authorities as much as you can.
- You should shake hands when you greet people. This is a prophetic tradition.
- The person who is riding should be the first to greet those who are walking; and those who are walking should be the first to greet those who are sitting. A group of few people should be the first to greet a group of a larger number. A younger person should be the first to greet an older person.
- One should not bow when greeting people.
- Standing up to greet someone is disliked if it is done as a sign of difference in status, but it is liked when it is done as a sign of honouring people. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>76</sup>, “*He who thinks that people should stand up to greet him will take his place in Hell fire.*” He also said<sup>77</sup>, “*A man should not ask another to give up his place in a meeting for him to sit; but you should make room for each other.*”
- It is hated to greet someone while he is in the washroom.
- One should not greet someone saying, “*On you peace (Alika Al-Salam),*” because this is how to greet a dead person. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>78</sup>, “*When you meet each other say, ‘Peace be on you (Al-Salam Alaikum)’*”
- A person who enters a meeting and does not find a place to sit among the attendees should sit in the back rather than leave the meeting. Three men came into the Mosque while the Prophet (PBUH) was talking. The first man found a small place among the people, so he squeezed himself in. The second sat in the back behind the group. The third turned away and left the Mosque. The Prophet (PBUH) described the condition of each one of the three saying<sup>79</sup>, “*One sought a refuge of God and God gave him refuge. The second felt ashamed so God was shy to turn him away. The third turned away from God so God turned away from him.*”
- You should protect the honour, the life, and the wealth of your brother against any injustice inflicted by others; and you should help him as much as you can.
- One should pray for his brother when he sneezes. Two men were in the company of the Prophet (PBUH) and sneezed. The Prophet (PBUH) prayed for one and did not pray for the other. He was asked why he did pray for one and did not pray for the other. He said<sup>80</sup>, “*I prayed for the man who praised God after he sneezed and did not pray the other who did not praise God.*” If one sneezes while in the washroom, he should praise God in his mind.

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<sup>75</sup> Narrated by Ibn Umar and reported by Al-Tirmidhi.

<sup>76</sup> Narrated by Muawiyah and reported by Al-Tirmidhi

<sup>77</sup> Narrated by Ibn Umar and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>78</sup> Narrated by Ibn Jerry Al-Hajimi and reported by Al-Tirmidhi and Al-Nissaie.

<sup>79</sup> Narrated by Abi Waqid Al-Lithi and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>80</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>81</sup>, “*Pray for a person when he sneezes up to three times. If sneezes more than three times, then he has a cold.*” The Prophet (PBUH) used to sneeze quietly, and he used to cover his nose with his hand or his sleeve.

- One should cover his mouth with his hand when he yawns. Yawning is from Satan.
- One should persevere if he is subjected to wrongdoing from an evil person. He should try as much as he can to avoid the harm of an evil person. It was said, “*Be sincere to a believer, but know how to deal with the transgressor. A transgressor is only interested in the superficial relationship.*” The Quran says, “*Repel evil by means of what is best.*” (23: 96) Abu Al-Dardaa said, “*We meet people with a smile while our hearts curse them.*” This is the way to deal with the transgressors.
- One should avoid the company of the affluent and join the company of the poor and should be good to the orphans.
- One should be sincere to every Muslim and should try to bring happiness to his heart. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>82</sup>, “*One’s faith is not perfect until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.*”
- One should visit the sick and follow the etiquette of visiting the sick. This includes: to knock the door lightly; do not say, “I,” when it is asked who is knocking; do not stand facing the door; glorify God and praise Him when you enter; make the visit short; do not ask many questions; show kindness; and pray for the sick. Uthman (RA) said, “*I was sick and the Prophet (PBUH) came to visit. He recited surat Al-Ikhlās several times.*” It is preferable for a sick person to say, “*I seek refuge in the eminence and power of God from the evil that I may encounter and that which I try to avoid.*”
- One should follow the funeral of Muslims who die. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>83</sup>, “*Whoever follows a funeral will have a reward but those who will stay at the grave until the dead person has been buried will get two rewards.*”
- One should pray God to bestow His mercy on the dead Muslims and console their relatives with few kind words.
- The etiquette of following a funeral includes being solemn, avoid chatting, and reflecting on death.

## **The Rights of your Neighbour**

The neighbour has rights that go beyond the rights of your Muslim brother. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>84</sup>, “*Gabriel commanded me to take care of my neighbour repeatedly to the extent I thought that the person will have a share in the estate of his neighbour.*” The Prophet was once told about a woman that used to fast by the day and pray by the night, but she used to hurt her neighbours. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>85</sup>, “*She will end up in Hell fire.*” The rights of the neighbour are

- One should be the first to greet his neighbour.
- One should not be verbose with his neighbour.
- One should not show great curiosity about the condition of his neighbour.

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<sup>81</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Al-Tirmidhi.

<sup>82</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>83</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>84</sup> Narrated by Aisha, and ibn Umar and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>85</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Ahmed.

- One should visit him when he is sick, console him when he is sad, support him when someone in his family dies, and wish him well in happy occasions.
- One should forgive the mistakes of his neighbour.
- One should not spy on his neighbour.
- One should not bother his neighbour by placing obstacles around his house.
- One should not keep watch on the coming and going of his neighbour.
- One should protect the privacy of his neighbour.
- One should help revive his neighbour when he loses consciousness.
- One should keep an eye on his neighbour's house when he is away.
- One should not listen to bad rumours about his neighbour.
- One should lower his gaze when the wife and the female servant of his neighbour pass by.
- One should be kind to the neighbour's children.
- One should teach his neighbour whatever he needs to know of the matters of this life and the Hereafter.
- You should know that one should not only spare his neighbour of what annoys him but should also endure whatever his neighbour may inflict on him of hurt; while being gentle and kind to him.

A man asked the Prophet (PBUH)<sup>86</sup>, *“How do I know I am doing good or doing bad?”* The Prophet (PBUH) said, *“When your neighbours say you did good; then you know that you did good. When your neighbours say you did bad; then you know that you did bad.”*

### **The Rights of Kin**

The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>87</sup>, *“God says, ‘I am the Lord of Mercy (Al-Rahman), I made the name of the womb (Rahim) a derivation from my name. Whoever, joined the relationship of the womb (the relationship of the kin) I will join him; and whoever disjoined it I will disjoin him.’”* He also said<sup>88</sup>, *“Whoever wants God to bless his progeny and to enlarge his provision should join the relationship of his kin.”* Abu Dhar (RA) narrated that the Messenger of God<sup>89</sup> (PBUH) commanded him to maintain the kin relationship even with those who turn their backs to him; and to say the truth even if it were bitter.

### **The Rights of the Parents and the Children**

The closest of kin to a person are his parents and his children; their rights have been confirmed. A man from the tribe of Bani Salamah asked the Prophet (PBUH)<sup>90</sup>, *“How can I be good to my parents after they have died?”* The Prophet (PBUH) said, *“You should pray for them, ask God to forgive them, fulfill any promise that they may have made, honour their friends, and join their kin relationship.”*

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<sup>86</sup> Narrated by Ibn Masood and reported by Ahmed.

<sup>87</sup> Narrated by Aisha and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>88</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>89</sup> Narrated by Abu Dhar and reported by Ahmed and Ibn Habban.

<sup>90</sup> Narrated by Malek ibn Rabeeya and reported by Abu Dawud, Ibn Habban, and Al-Hakem.

One should be particularly kind to the children. Al-Aqrai ibn Habis (RA) said<sup>91</sup>, when he saw the Prophet (PBUH) kissing his Al-Hassan (his grandchild), *“I never kissed any of my ten children.”* The Prophet (PBUH) said, *“God will not be kind to a person who is not kind to people.”*

Abd Allah ibn Shaddad (RA) narrated that one day while the Prophet (PBUH) was praying; his grandchild Al-Hussein climbed his back. The Prophet (PBUH) continued to prostrate himself for a longer time than was usual. People were worried about what happened to the Prophet (PBUH). After the prayer, they asked the Prophet (PBUH) why he stayed in prostration for a longer time than usual. He said<sup>92</sup>, *“My grandchild was on my back, I did not want to rush him, so I waited until he came down on his own accord.”*

These sayings confirm that the rights of the parents and children are more important than the rights of brotherhood. There are two rights that are unique to the parents. The first is to be obedient to them, even when they ask for something that is legally doubtful (from the religious point of view). However, it is known that they should not be obeyed if they ask for something that is clearly forbidden. The second is that you should seek their permission before you travel when your travel is not an obligatory duty. Obligatory travels include travel to seek necessary religious knowledge that is not available in your city. A man migrated from Yemen seeking to join the Prophet (PBUH) in Jihad. The Prophet (PBUH) asked him, *“Are your parents in Yemen?”* He said, *“Yes.”* The Prophet (PBUH) asked, *“Did they permit you to join me in Jihad?”* The man said, *“No.”* The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>93</sup>, *“Go back to them and ask for their permission; if they refuse then be good to them. This is the best deed that you bring on the Day you meet God after accepting Islam.”* Another man came to the Prophet (PBUH) asking to join him in battle. The Prophet (PBUH) asked<sup>94</sup>, *“Do you have a mother?”* The man said, *“Yes.”* The Prophet said, *“Stay with her. Paradise is at her feet.”*

### **The Rights of the Slave**

- One should share his food and his clothing with his slaves.
- One should not overburden his slave.
- One should not look down on his slave or treat him arrogantly.
- One should overlook his mistakes. If he becomes angry at his slave, he should remember his shortcomings in performing God’s commands.

One of the last commands of the Prophet (PBUH) before his death was to treat the slaves kindly.

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<sup>91</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Al-Bukhari.

<sup>92</sup> Narrated by Abd Allah ibn Shaddad and reported by Al-Hakem.

<sup>93</sup> Narrated by Abu Saeed Al-Khudri and reported by Ahmed and Ibn Habban.

<sup>94</sup> Narrated by Muawiyah ibn Jahema and reported by Al-Hakem.

## **Book 6: Etiquette of Living in Seclusion**

## Introduction

People are divided regarding the advantages and disadvantages of living in seclusion. This difference became more apparent in the second generation of Muslims. Most of the scholars prefer enjoying people's company over living in seclusion; however, a number of the scholars still prefer living in seclusion over enjoying people's companionship.

## The Arguments for and Against Seclusion

A number of the scholars from the second generation of Muslims preferred living in seclusion over enjoying people's company. It has been narrated that Umar (RA) said, *"Take your share of living in seclusion."* Ibn Sreen said, *"Living in seclusion is an act of worship."* Abd Allah ibn Aamer Al-Jihni asked the Prophet (PBUH)<sup>95</sup>, *"How can one achieve salvation?"* He said, *"Stay in your home, keep your silence and cry (out of remorse) over your sins."* The Prophet (PBUH) has been asked<sup>96</sup>, *"Who is the best among people?"* He said, *"A believer who strives in the way of God with himself and his wealth."* He was asked who is the second best; he said, *"A person who lives in seclusion in an isolated place; he worships God and he does not hurt anyone."*

However, those who prefer people's companionship over living in seclusion cite the Quran, *"For you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, you became brethren."* (3: 103) *"And do not be like those who became divided and differed among themselves after clear proofs had come to them."* (3: 105) This is a weak argument because the verses refer to the differences in the interpretation of the Quran and the different opinions regarding the rules of Islamic jurisprudence. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>97</sup>, *"He who mingles among people and endures their wrongdoing is better than he who lives in seclusion."*

It is thus clear that neither argument is strong enough to settle the dispute. We will attempt to settle this dispute by exploring the advantages and disadvantages of living in seclusion.

## The Advantages and Disadvantages of Living in Seclusion

You should know that the dispute between the protagonists of seclusion and the protagonists of companionship is similar to the dispute between the protagonists of marriage and the protagonists of celibacy.

### Advantages of Seclusion

1. Seclusion provides the opportunity for devoting oneself to worship and reflection. A person living in seclusion trades the company of people for the private communication with God. He will be able to spend his time contemplating the hidden laws of God that control this life and the Hereafter; and the kingdom of the heavens and earth. These tasks require devotion which is not possible without living in seclusion. The Messenger of God (PBUH) used to seek seclusion in the cave of Hiraa worshipping God; until he became

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<sup>95</sup> Narrated by Uqbah ibn Aamer and reported by Al-Tirmidhi

<sup>96</sup> Narrated by Abu Saeed Al-Khudri and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>97</sup> Narrated by Ibn Umar and reported by Al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Maja

ready to receive the light of prophethood<sup>98</sup>. Having reached this state, he was able to live among people with no barrier between him and God. He lived with his body among people, but his heart was with God. The people thought that Abu Bakr (PBUH) was the Prophet's (PBUH) intimate friend, but the Prophet (PBUH) told<sup>99</sup> them that were he to take an intimate friend from among his companions, he would have taken Abu Bakr (RA) as an intimate friend; but his intimate friend was God.

2. Seclusion provides a way to avoid the commitment of the sins, which a person may commit when he is in the company of people. These are backbiting, calumny, showing off, abstaining from enjoining good and forbidding evil, and becoming desensitized to bad behavior motivated by excessive interest in the pleasures of this worldly life. A person who listens to someone backbiting another and does not object is party to the sin; however, people will hate him if he objects. Enjoining good and forbidding evil is a fundamental principle in Islam. People's company is rarely free from indecencies being committed. A person who does not object is party to the sin. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>100</sup>, "*God will ask his servant on the Day of Judgement, 'What prevented you to object when you saw indecencies committed?' If God enabled the servant to make an excuse he will say, 'Lord, I was afraid of people and I had hope in your forgiveness.'*" Showing off is a chronic disease; it is very difficult to avoid. When one continually socializes with bad company, he will eventually be desensitized to bad character. His minor sins will seem trivial to him in view of the major sins that they commit.

It is thus prudent to avoid socializing with these types of people and to run away from them as you run from a lion. Their company will increase the love of the pleasures of this worldly life in your heart and will distract you from working for the Hereafter. It will weaken your will to obey God and make your sins seem trivial in your eyes. You should keep the company of those who remind you of God. A good company is better than loneliness and loneliness is better than a bad company.

3. Seclusion protects one from being entangled into sedition and animosities. It was narrated by Abdel Allah ibn Amr (RA), "*The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>101</sup>, 'When you see people in chaos, the trust becomes violated, and they get entangled with each other,' and he joined the fingers of his hands together. I said, 'What do you command me to do?' He said, 'Keep to your house, hold your tongue, take what you know and leave what you do not know. Look for the scholars and turn away from what lay people are doing.'*" Abu Saeed Al-Khudri narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>102</sup>, "*There will come a time the best thing one can do is to tend sheep in the side of a mountain where he can find pasture and rain. Thus, avoiding being tested in his faith.*" This is how the companions avoided being dragged in people's major disputes.
4. Seclusion protects the person from the evil deeds of people. People can hurt you by backbiting, doubting your intentions, lying, and calumny.
5. Seclusion lowers people's expectations of you and your expectations of people. Lowering people's expectations of you is good because one can never please everyone all the time.

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<sup>98</sup> Narrated by Aisha and reported by Al-Bukhari.

<sup>99</sup> Narrated by Ibn Masood and reported by Muslim.

<sup>100</sup> Narrated by Abu Saeed Al-Khudri and reported by Ibn Maja.

<sup>101</sup> Narrated by Abdel Allah ibn Amr and reported by Abu Dawud and Al-Nassaie

<sup>102</sup> Narrated by Abu Saeed Al-Khudri and reported by Al-Bukhari.

Spending the time reforming oneself is more important than following funerals, visiting the sick, and attending social events. One cannot accept the invitations of some and turn down the invitations of others even when there are good reasons to do so. Those whose invitations were turned down will be angry with you. Lowering your expectations of them is also useful. It is better not to be overly interested in the pleasures of this worldly life, *“And do not extend your eyes toward that by which We have given enjoyment to some of them.”* (20: 131) Eliminating the chances of socializing lessens the opportunity of seeing what people have and consequently lessens the desire in what they have.

6. Seclusion provides protection from encountering foolish people.

### **Advantages of Interacting with People**

1. Learning and teaching. One cannot learn and teach while in seclusion. Al-Nakhie said, *“Learn first then go into seclusion.”*
2. Benefiting people and benefiting from them. One cannot earn a living by living in seclusion; one must interact with people while conducting a business or performing work. Similarly, a person cannot serve people, helping them financially or physically, without interacting with them. A person will be rewarded for serving people. Providing such services is not possible while a person is living in seclusion. Interacting with people to provide such services within the confines of Islamic law is better than living in seclusion.
3. Gaining self discipline and teaching others how to tolerate people’s mistakes. Interacting with people makes the person subject to people’s wrongdoing. Learning to endure people’s wrongdoing is a virtue. This cannot be achieved if one lives in seclusion. Similarly, teaching others how to tolerate people’s mistakes can only happen while interacting with people.
4. Socialising and being Sociable. Socializing with people is the objective of accepting invitations and companionship. It is recommended to keep the company of the righteous. It is also recommended to socialize when socialization reenergizes the person for worship. It is said that the most steadfast worship is moderate worship.
5. Gaining Rewards and Allowing People to gain Rewards. One can reap rewards by attending funerals, visiting the sick, and attending Eid prayer. Attending Friday prayer is a must. There is no exemption for attending the daily prayers in congregation except when the person may be subjected to harm or difficulty that would outweigh the benefit of attending the congregation prayer. People may gain rewards when they visit him when he is sick, console him when he is sad, and congratulate him when he is blessed with a bounty from God.
6. Showing Modesty. Modesty is a high rank that cannot be achieved by living in seclusion. Arrogance may be the motivation behind living in seclusion. Another motivation behind seclusion may be the fear that people would discover his shortcomings; so, he chooses to live in seclusion to give the impression that he is an ascetic and a devout person while he, in reality, is not. The signs of such a person are that he likes to be visited but he does not like to visit people; and he likes people to approach him and seek his blessings. Being humble in treating people does not diminish the status of a scholar. When Abu Hurairah was the governor of Medina, he used to carry firewood on his head and he would say to people, *“Make way for your leader.”*
7. Gaining Experience. People gain experience from interacting with each other. Human intellect cannot, on its own, discover the things that may benefit them in this life as well

as in the Hereafter. Practical experience is necessary. The seclusion of an inexperienced person is in vain. Interacting with people will provide a chance for a person to discover his own shortcomings; whether it is anger, jealousy, or hatred. These shortcomings cannot be discovered if the person lives in seclusion protected from factors that usually bring these shortcomings to the surface.

### **Etiquette of Seclusion**

A person seeking to live in seclusion should have the intention to dedicate his seclusion to the following tasks:

1. To abstain from hurting people.
2. To seek protection from the wrongdoing of evil people.
3. To get rid from the shortcomings of not serving the Muslims.
4. To devote himself to the worship of God.

During his seclusion, he should devote his time to learning, working, remembrance of God, and reflecting. He should avoid entertaining people, asking about their news, and listening to their rumours. He should live a simple life otherwise he may need the help of others if he lives a sophisticated life. He should endure the wrongdoing of his neighbours.

He should not listen to people praising him or to those criticizing him. He should have a righteous wife or a righteous companion to enjoy their company for a brief period during the day. This will help him continue his endeavours the rest of the day.

He will not be able to persevere in his seclusion unless he abandons any interest in the pleasures of life that people around him indulge into. This can only be achieved by convincing himself that he will not live long. In the morning, he should think that he will not last till the evening and in the evening, he should think that he will not last till the morning. This way he can take one day at a time.

## **Book 7: Etiquette of Travel**

## Benefits of Travel

Travel is a means to escape something or reach something that you desire. Travel is two categories: a physical travel where the body changes locations from one place to another; and a spiritual travel where the heart moves from the lowest of the low to the kingdom of heaven. The spiritual travel is the most honoured of the two.

## Types of Travel

1. Travel for seeking knowledge may be a compulsory duty or a voluntary duty depending on whether the knowledge is a necessary knowledge or voluntary knowledge.
2. Travel to perform an act of worship. This includes performing pilgrimage, striving in the way of God, visiting the graves of the righteous, and visiting the living which is more important than visiting the dead.
3. Travel to escape a bad environment that hinders the practice of religious duties. This is a good travel. Only prophets and messenger can endure such environments. One should also escape leadership responsibilities, status, and overwhelming interactions with people because they fill the heart leaving no place for God in the heart.
4. Travel to escape a physical harm that may afflict the body or the wealth. Such travel may not be only acceptable but also recommended in some cases; depending on the situation and the benefits that can accrue. However, one should not flee a country when a plague has struck; as according to the Prophet's (pbuh) tradition in this respect.

These are the types of travel from which it is clear that travel can be classified as bad, good, and lawful. The bad travel is further classified as unlawful and disliked. Examples of the unlawful travel are the fleeing of the slave and the travel of the disobedient. Fleeing the plague is an example of the disliked travel. The good travel can be further divided into a duty e.g. travel for performing pilgrimage and seeking knowledge; and recommended e.g. visiting the scholars. Travel is classified as lawful depending on the intention of the traveller. If the intention of a person is to travel to make enough money to render him self-sufficient, protect his integrity and the integrity of his family, and give him a chance to pay charity; then it is lawful. Such travel becomes a deed that leads to reward in the Hereafter. The Prophet (pbuh) said<sup>103</sup>, "*Deeds are evaluated according to the intentions behind them.*"

## Etiquette of Travel

1. One should redress all wrongdoings that he had committed in the past, pay back all debts that he owes, and arrange for the expenses of those who are under his care. One should return any trusts to their owners. A person should ensure that the provision for the trip has been obtained lawfully. One should have enough provision to share with his travel companions.
2. One should choose a travel companion to help him to remember his religious duties if he forgets and to support him if he remembers. It has been said, "*The companion first then the way.*" The Prophet (pbuh) prohibited individuals to travel each one

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<sup>103</sup> Narrated by Umar and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

- separately<sup>104</sup>. The Prophet (pbuh) also said<sup>105</sup>, *“If you were three travelling together then choose a leader.”*
3. One should bid farewell to his family and friends. They should recite the prayer which the Prophet (pbuh) recommended to be said at bidding someone farewell. It was narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said<sup>106</sup>, *“Luqman said, ‘When God is entrusted with something He will preserve it.’ (He would then say to those who are bidding him farewell) I entrust your religion, your trust, and your deeds to God.”*
  4. One should pray the prayer for guidance (Istikhara) before deciding on the travel and should pray the travel prayer just before he starts his travel.
  5. When he is about to leave, he should recite the following supplication, *“In the name of God, I put my trust in Him. No power or strength can be mustered except by God. I seek refuge in God to protect me from going astray or leading someone astray; to protect me from slipping or making someone else slip; to protect me from committing injustice or becoming subjected to injustice; to protect me from being treated badly or treating someone else badly.”* When he starts his travel he should recite the supplication, *“My God, with Your help I started, I put my trust in You, I seek your protection, and I direct myself towards You; You are my confidant; You are my hope so take care of what is of interest to me, what is of no interest to me, and what You know best. He who seeks refuge in You is honoured, Your praise is great, and there is no deity except You. God, provide me with God consciousness, forgive my sins, always lead me to the good.”* When he settles on his ride he should recite the supplication, *“In the name of God, by God, and God is great. I put my trust in God. There is no power or strength except by the help of God. Whatever God willed will be; and whatever He did not will not be. Glory be to Him who subjected this to us, otherwise we would not have been able to control it, and to Him we will return.”* Then he would recite, *“Praise be to God who guided us to this otherwise we would not have been guided. God, You provided the ride and on You we rely.”*
  6. One should leave early in the morning. It is recommended to start the travel on Thursdays. One should not leave after dawn on Friday; otherwise, he would be committing the sin of skipping the Congregation prayer on Friday.
  7. One should not stop for rest until the sun becomes hot. He should make most of his travel by night. When he reaches the place of rest he should say, *“God, the Lord of the seven heavens and what they cover; the Lord of the seven earths and what they carry; the Lord of the devils and those who were lead astray; the Lord of the wind and what they spread; and the Lord of the flowing seas I ask that You give me the best of this place and the best of his inhabitants and I seek refuge in You of the evil of this place and the evil of its inhabitants.”* When he disembarks, he should pray two rakaa and say, *“My God, I seek refuge, in the perfect words of God which cannot be trespassed by a good or an evil person, from the evil of any of Your creation.”* At night fall, he should say, *“Land, my Lord and your Lord is God, I seek refuge in God from your evil; from the evil of anything that walks on you; and the evil of wild animals, serpents, or scorpions. I seek refuge in God from the evil of the inhabitants of this place. To Him belongs that which reposes by night and by day, and He is the*

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<sup>104</sup> Narrated by Ibn Umar and reported by Al-Bukhari

<sup>105</sup> Narrated by Ibn Masood and reported by Al-Tabarani

<sup>106</sup> Narrated by Ibn Umar and reported by Al-Nissaie

*Hearing, the Omniscient.*” Whenever he gets to the top of a mound, while he is travelling, he should say, “*God, to You belongs all honour, and to You belongs all praise.*” When he descends to a valley, he should glorify God. Whenever he feels lonely, he should say, “*Glorified is the King, the Holy, the Lord of the angels and the spirit.*”

8. He should keep close proximity to the caravan he is traveling with to avoid any unexpected danger. He should be readily alert during his sleep. Travel companions should take turns to stand guard during the night. If he is faced with a wild animal or an enemy he should recite the verse of Al-Kursi (2: 255), surat Al-Ikhlās (112), surat Al-Falaq (113), and surat Al-Nas (114) and other supplications.
9. He should treat his riding animal mercifully. He should not overburden it, nor should he strike it on the face; this is unlawful. He should not sleep on its back. Travel breaks are beneficial. They allow the riding animals and their drivers to rest, and they provide a chance for the rider to exercise.
10. One should have a travel kit that includes items like a mirror, a comb, and a toothbrush.
11. On the way back he should follow the tradition of the Prophet (pbuh). The Prophet (pbuh) used to say, “*God is great (three times). There is no deity except God. He has no partners. To Him belongs the sovereignty, to Him belongs all praise, and He has power over everything. We have returned, to God we repent, and Him we worship. We prostrate ourselves to our Lord as an expression of our gratitude. God has fulfilled His promise, he supported His servant, and He defeated the confederates all alone.*” When the Prophet (pbuh) approached Medina, he would say, “*God, settle us in this city and provide for us good provision.*” He would then send a person to alert his family to his return. One should not go home during the night but should wait till the morning. The Prophet (pbuh) used, upon his return to Medina, to go the Mosque first to pray two rakaa, then he would go home. One should bring a present to his family.

### **Hidden Travel Etiquette**

One should not attempt a travel unless it is beneficial for his faith. He should defer to his heart regarding the places he would visit and the duration of his stay. He should have the intention of visiting the scholars in each town he visits to benefit from them. He should not stay in one town more than a week or ten days. He should keep the company of the poor and the pious. If he intends to visit a friend, then he should not stay with his friend more than three days. This is the limit of hospitality; unless invited to stay longer.

## **Travel Exemptions**

It is allowable for a traveller to benefit from the following exemptions:

1. To wipe the socks when making wudu.
2. To perform Tayamum.
3. To shorten prayers.
4. To pray Zuhr and Asr together and Maghreb and Isha together.
5. To perform voluntary prayers while riding.

6. To perform voluntary prayer while walking. He would bow his head in lieu of bowing and prostration.
7. To abstain from fasting during his travel.

**Book 8: Etiquette of Listening to Music and  
Ecstasy**

## **Different Views of the Scholars Regarding the Permissibility of Listening to Music and Singing**

You should know that listening to music is the first step on the road. Listening leads to a condition in the heart called ecstasy. Ecstasy causes the limbs to perform movements. These movements could be random, we call this chaotic motion; or it could be controlled, we call this clapping and dancing.

Let us consider first the case of the permissibility of listening.

### **Views of the Scholars**

Justice Abu Al-Taiyb Al-Tabari reported narrations which lead to the conclusion that Imam Al-Shafi'i, Imam Malik, Imam Abu Hanifa, Sufian and others are of the opinion that listening to music is unlawful. Abu Taleb Al-Makki reported that a group are of the view that it is permissible. He said that a number of the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) did listen to music; of these are Abd Allah ibn Jaafar, Abd Allah ibn Al-Zubayr, and Al-Mughira ibn Shu'bah.

### **Evidence that Listening is Permissible**

You should know that saying that listening to music is unlawful implies that listening to music is punishable by God. This is not a matter of opinion, but it has to be decided based on legal text or legal analogy. The term "legal text" means something that the Prophet (pbuh) said or did. The term "legal analogy" means a rational extrapolation based on what the Prophet (pbuh) said or did. If neither a legal text nor a legal analogy, that indicate that listening is unlawful, exist then it should be permissible. We start by saying that there are both legal texts and legal analogy which indicate that listening is permissible. To get to the correct decision we need to examine the elements of listening then consider the problem as a whole. Singing is the rendering of meaningful words which move the heart using pleasant and melodious voices. We will detail this in the following:

1. Pleasant Voices: Listening to a pleasant voice cannot be considered unlawful. Legal analogy indicates that listening is lawful since it provides good pleasure to the hearing. Legal texts from the Prophet's (pbuh) and the Quran praise pleasant voices. The Prophet (pbuh) said<sup>107</sup> praising Abu Musa Al-Ashaari (RA) for his pleasant voice, "*You have been given a pipe like the pipe of Dawoud.*" The Quran says, "*The worst sounds are the sound of donkeys.*" (31: 19).
2. Melodious Voices: The next step is to examine the attribute of melody. A melodious voice is a step higher than a pleasant voice. The voice produced a nightingale using its throat is a pleasant melodious voice. Listening to this voice cannot be considered unlawful. Similarly, a pleasant melodious voice produced by the throat of a human being cannot be considered unlawful. The only exception to this is the music produced using

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<sup>107</sup> Narrated by Abu Musa Al-Ashaari and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

instruments which was associated with drinking alcohol. These were prohibited by a legal text when the prohibition of drinking was prescribed because such music was considered an integral part of the drinking environment.

3. **Meaningful Words:** The third step is to consider meaningful words sung using a pleasant melodious voice. This is poetry. This is a sound produced using the throat of a human being which conveys a specific meaning. This also cannot be considered unlawful. The Prophet (pbuh) did not prohibit his companions to recite poetry in his presence<sup>108</sup>.
4. **Moving the Heart:** The fourth step is to consider the effect of listening to meaningful words using pleasant and melodious voices on the heart. I say there is a divine secret behind the wonderful impact of pleasant melodious voices on the souls. Some voices evoke sadness and some evoke happiness; some cause people to sleep and some make people laugh. Those who are not moved when they listen to pleasant, melodious, and meaningful words are lacking, unbalanced, far from spirituality, and have a rough nature.

If you ask whether there are situations where listening to music and singing is considered unlawful? The answer is yes. There are five situations where listening to music and singing is considered unlawful. These are

1. **Situation 1:** If the singer is a woman and there is a fear that men would be tempted when they listen to her.
2. **Situation 2:** If it uses instruments which are normally associated with drinking.
3. **Situation 3:** If the words are unlawful, e.g. indecent poetry, lies, or slander.
4. **Situation 4:** If the listener is one who will easily succumb to temptation to commit indecency, because of listening.
5. **Situation 5:** If listening becomes an obsession for the listener.

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<sup>108</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

## **Book 9: Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil**

## The Obligation and Virtue of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

Enjoining good and forbidding evil is one of the most important pillars of the religion as can be seen from the following verses: *“And let there be among you a community that enjoins what is good and forbids what is evil. These are the successful;”* (3:104). This verse indicates that success cannot be attained unless this duty has been fulfilled. It also indicates that enjoining good and forbidding evil is a collective duty, not an individual duty. The Quran also says, *“The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil and establish prayer.”* (9: 71) *“Cursed were those who disbelieved among the Children of Israel by the tongue of David and Jesus, the son of Mary. That because they disobeyed and transgressed. They used not to prevent one another from wrongdoing that they did. How wretched was that which they were doing.”* (5: 78-79) The verse emphasizes the gravity of abstaining from enjoining good and forbidding evil. It states that the Children of Israel deserved to be cursed because they stopped enjoining good and forbidding evil. The Quran also says, *“And when they forgot that by which they had been reminded. We saved those who had forbidden evil and seized those who wronged, with a wretched torment, because of their transgression.”* (7: 165) *“Why do the rabbis and religious scholars not forbid them from saying what is sinful and devouring what is unlawful? How wretched is what they have been doing.”* (5: 63) *“So why were there not among the generations before you those of enduring discrimination forbidding corruption on earth – except a few of those We saved from among them?”* (11: 116)

Abu Thaalaba narrated that he asked the Prophet (PBUH) about the interpretation of the verses, *“Believers, you are responsible for your own souls. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided.”* (5: 105) The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>109</sup>, *“Aba Thaalaba, you should enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, but when you see that people became stingy, followed their whims, became greatly influenced with the pleasures of this life, and everyone became obsessed with their own opinions, then you should go into seclusion. There will come a time when sedition like the dark nights will be abound. At this time, he who will hold firmly to the religion which you now hold to will receive the reward of fifty of you.”* The companions asked, *“Fifty of them?”* The Prophet said, *“No, fifty of you because now you have people to support you to do good but then they will have no one to support them.”* The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>110</sup>, *“Do not stand around while a man is unjustly murdered because those who witness his murder without trying to defend him will be cursed. Do not stand around while a man is unjustly beaten because those who witness his beating without trying to defend him will be cursed.”* The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>111</sup>, *“A person should not be afraid to say the truth. Speaking the truth will not shorten the life of the person nor will it deprive him of a provision that God had decreed for him.”* The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>112</sup>, *“Whoever witnesses an evil act being committed should strive to stop it by force. If he is unable to stop it by*

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<sup>109</sup> Narrated by Abu Thaalaba Al-Khashni and reported by Abu dawud and Al-Tirmidhi

<sup>110</sup> Narrated by Ibn Abass and reported by Al-Baihaqi

<sup>111</sup> Narrated by Ibn Abass and reported by Al-Baihaqi

<sup>112</sup> Narrated by Abu Saeed Al-Khudri and reported by Muslim.

*force, he should voice his objection. If he is unable to voice his objection, then he should at least object to it in his heart. This is the weakest of faith.”*

## **Protocol and Conditions of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil**

The expression used to denote the process of enjoining good and forbidding evil is called *Al-Hisbah*. The name is derived from the principle that the person who enjoins good and forbids evil is seeking a reward from God. The process of *Al-Hisbah* has four components: The oversight official (the one giving the admonitions), what to be enforced (the subject of the admonition), the person to be admonished, and the levels of enforcement.

### **The Oversight Official**

There are several criteria that must be satisfied by a person to qualify for the position of an oversight official. These are

**Criterion 1: Age of Majority.** Age of Majority is reached when one reaches puberty and is held responsible for performing oversight religious duties.

**Criterion 2: Islam.** A person has to be a Muslim to be able to take the undertaking of enjoining good and forbidding evil.

**Criterion 3: Justice.** Justice means commitment to the practice of religious duties and having a good reputation. Some scholars are of the opinion that a transgressor cannot be an oversight official. They used the following verses and traditions to support their opinion: “*Do you command people to do good and forget yourselves.*” (2: 44) “*It is most hateful to God that you say what you do not do.*” (61: 3) The Messenger of God (PBUH) said<sup>113</sup>, “*On the day I was taken on the trip of Israa, I saw people whose lips were being clipped using clippers made from fire. I asked Gabriel, ‘Who are these?’ He said, ‘These are the orators who used to enjoin good but did not do it themselves, and they used to forbid evil but never abstained from doing it themselves.’*” They may have also used the principle of legal analogy and concluded that he who is not righteous cannot admonish other to be righteous. However, this opinion is not correct because it implies that only those who are infallible can fulfill this obligation; while it is incumbent on anyone to enforce the principle of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil. Espousing this opinion will render the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil impossible to enforce. The companions were not infallible and so are the rest of the Muslims. Saeed ibn Jabeer said, “*If only those who are infallible are allowed to enjoin what is good and to forbid what is evil, no one will ever enjoin what is good and to forbid what is evil.*” They claimed that only those who commit minor sins can practice this obligation. Thus, a person who wears silk shirts could admonish those who are drinking or committing adultery. If we ask, “*Can a Muslim who drinks fight in the ranks of the believers and admonish the disbelievers against disbelief?*” If they say, “*No,*” then they have broken the rule that was established by the consensus of the scholars. Muslims who drank and sinned were allowed to join the Muslim army during the time

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<sup>113</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

of the Prophet (PBUH) and after his time. However, a person whose transgression is known to people is not required to enjoin good and forbid evil because his admonition is useless. No one will listen to him because of his known transgression. The verses that were cited to support this opinion are in fact meant as a rebuke for those who enjoin good but do not practice it. They do not imply that people should abandon enjoining good, but they imply that they should themselves practice the good they enjoin. The verses indicate that they have no excuse not to practice what they preach.

**Criterion 4: Authority.** An oversight official must be authorized by the ruler or the Imam to act as an oversight official. Some scholars insisted that this is a necessary condition and did not allow those who were not authorized to practice enjoining good and forbidding evil. However, we are of the opinion that this condition is invalid. The verses and the traditions we have explored indicate that a person sins if he witnesses an evil being committed and does not attempt to forbid that evil. There is no basis for the condition that a person must be authorized by the state to practice this function.

**Criterion 5: Ability.** The person must be able to perform such an undertaking. If he is unable then he can only object in his heart to the evil being committed. This condition includes the physical inability, the fear of being subjected to harm because of attempting to forbid an evil act, and the realization that it is useless to admonish the guilty. Four cases may be encountered

1. A person is not obliged to forbid an evil if he is afraid that he will be harmed if he spoke against the evil being committed or if he knew that his admonition would fall on deaf ears. In some cases, it may even be unlawful for him to attempt to forbid evil. However, he should leave the place where the evil is being committed.
2. A person is obliged to attempt to forbid an evil if he is capable and does not fear harm because of his attempt.
3. A person is not obliged to attempt to forbid evil if he knows that his admonition will fall on deaf ears even though he is not afraid to be harmed. However, he should voice his objection so that it will be known that such evil is unacceptable.
4. It is neither an obligation nor unlawful for a person to forbid evil if he knew that he will be able to stop the evil, but he will be subjected to harm; however, it is recommended for him to do so. However, it is unlawful for him to forbid evil if he knew that someone else will be hurt because of his actions. In this case stopping the evil cannot be realized unless another evil is committed.

The decision to assume the responsibility of enjoining good and forbidding is thus subject to *Ijtihad*. The oversight official should follow the results of his own *Ijtihad*. Therefore, we are of the opinion that a lay person should not take that responsibility except in cases where the verdict is well known e.g. drinking adultery, and abandoning prayers. The lay person cannot practice Hisba in situations which require *Ijtihad*; he may cause more harm if he practices *Ijtihad* without having the essential knowledge. This supports the opinion that the oversight official should be appointed by the state, so that only people who are qualified can be chosen for this responsibility.

## What can be Enforced?

Evil deeds which come under the jurisdiction of the oversight official should satisfy four conditions. These are

1. **Condition 1:** The deed should be reprehensible. We did not use the word, “sin” because a reprehensible act is more comprehensive than a sin. A deed may not be considered a sin, but it could be reprehensible. An act of disobedience committed by an insane person is not punishable, but it is a reprehensible act that should be forbidden. A person who sees an insane adult drinking should prevent him from drinking, even though this is not a punishable act of disobedience due to the insanity of the perpetrator.
2. **Condition 2:** The guilty person should be caught in the act. The oversight official has no jurisdiction over acts that have been already committed. If the oversight official has a valid proof that a person will commit an evil deed, then he can only admonish the prospective perpetrator not to commit this evil act. If the person denied that he intends to commit an evil act, then it is not allowable for the oversight official to even admonish the person because it reflects mistrust.
3. **Condition 3:** The evil act should be committed openly. The oversight official is not allowed to spy on people while they are in the confines of their homes nor is he allowed to enter their houses without their permission. The oversight official can enter a house if high voices could be heard on the street outside the house indicating that the people inside the house are committing evil acts. The oversight official should not assume that a person who is hiding a bottle under his clothes, is hiding a bottle of alcohol. However, if the smell of alcohol is very strong then he can enforce the *Hisbah*. The oversight official should not probe what God has covered.
4. **Condition 4:** The evil deed should be deemed evil without taking recourse to *Ijtihad*. Any deed that requires *Ijtihad* to decide whether it is good or bad does not come under the jurisdiction of the oversight official.

You should know that problems of jurisprudence can be classified in two categories

1. The first category includes problems that can be dealt with using *Ijtihad* even though different scholars may arrive at different answers. All answers arrived at using *Ijtihad* are deemed correct. These are the problems dealing with lawful and unlawful actions. Scholars are allowed to form opinions based on *Ijtihad* regarding these problems.
2. The second category includes problems that have only one correct answer. Examples of the problems of this category are the question of seeing God, predestination, and negating the ideas that God can have a body, form, or shape. These questions can have only one correct answer and the wrong answer will become clearly obvious.

## The Perpetrator

The principle of forbidding evil can only be enforced on creatures from which such deeds are considered evil deeds. Thus, the principle applies to the human beings even if they have not reached the age or responsibility; a boy who did reach puberty should be prevented from drinking alcohol even though he is not considered responsible for his actions.

If you ask is it obligatory for whoever sees cattle eating from a field that belongs to a person to chase the cattle out of the field? Or is it obligatory for whoever sees a property of a Muslim being destroyed to salvage it? We would be asking too much of people if the answer to these two questions affirms these obligations. Such obligations may put people under great hardship for as long as they live. The correct answer is one should endeavour to protect the property of people if he is physically able and provided that it will not subject the person to financial or moral loss.

A question arises regarding the obligation of a person who finds a lost item. Is it obligatory for a person who comes upon a lost item to pick it up, since picking it up will save the item until its owner reclaims it? The correct answer is that the decision depends on the place where the item is found. If the person knows that the item will remain in its place and it will not be picked up until its owner comes back and reclaims it, then it is not obligatory on him to pick it up. This applies to items left in a Mosque or in a place, whose clientele are well known and honest. But if the place where the item is found is not safe and leaving it there means that it would be lost, then the matter should be considered. If keeping the item until it has been claimed will cost the finder trouble, then he is not obliged to pick it up. The example for this is a lost animal that needs to be fed and taken care of. This is because picking up a lost item preserves the property of a human being and the finder is also a human being who should not be forced to sacrifice his right to preserve the property of someone else.

## The Levels and Etiquette of the Enforcement

There are different levels for enforcing the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil. These are

1. **Level 1:** The first level involves seeking information that an evil is being committed. This is not permissible because it involves spying. The oversight official is not allowed to eavesdrop on people in their homes to find out whether they are playing music or not; nor is he allowed to smell a person closely to find out whether he has been drinking or not. The oversight official is not allowed to ask the neighbors about their neighbors. However, if two just persons volunteered the news that someone is drinking in his home, then the oversight official can enter that person's home without his permission. However, this is disputed. It is more proper not to enter without permission.
2. **Level 2:** Educating the perpetrator that what he is doing is evil. There is always the possibility that a person is doing an evil deed unknowingly. Making the perpetrator aware of the evil nature of his deed kindly may be all what is needed for him to stop.

3. **Level 3:** Admonishing the perpetrator and advising him not to do evil deeds. This applies to a person who is aware that what he is doing is evil but continues to do it. The admonition should be done nicely and kindly. The oversight official should avoid being egotist, arrogant, or showing off. These are doors to the hidden association of partners with God. For the oversight official to find out whether he is treading onto this dangerous path or not, he should ask himself whether he is more interested in claiming the credit that his efforts were successful in making the perpetrator stop or is he more interested in having the perpetrator stop out of his own accord or with the help of someone else.
4. **Level 4:** When the kind admonition fails to stop the perpetrator from committing evil deeds, the oversight official can take recourse to stern rebuke and harsh words. The oversight official can only do this when it is absolutely necessary. In his rebuke, the oversight official should only say the truth and should be as brief as possible.
5. **Level 5:** Stopping the evil deed by force. This may include breaking wine cups or removing the perpetrator from a stolen property. The oversight official should refrain from applying force to change things if he can convince the perpetrator himself to perform the required changes. If he is forced to use force, he should only use the necessary amount of force. He should not hurt the perpetrator unnecessarily. You should know that the objective of admonition is to prevent an evil deed in the future; the objective of the punishment is to provide a retribution for an evil deed committed in the past; and force can only be used to stop an act being committed in the present. The layperson can only use force necessary to destroy the tools of the bad deeds. It is the responsibility of the state to punish the perpetrator.
6. **Level 6:** Threatening the perpetrator with physical punishment if he does not stop. The threat should be realistic.
7. **Level 7:** Inflicting bodily harm on the perpetrator without the use of any tools.
8. **Level 8:** If the oversight official is unable to perform level 7 alone, he could use the help of others who may be armed. There are different opinions regarding this level. Some say that this level can only be enforced by the state because this kind of enforcement may lead to an armed conflict between the oversight official and his associates on one side and the perpetrator and his associates on the other side; this will disturb the peace. Others are of the opinion that individuals should be allowed to use this level of enforcement. This opinion is supported by using legal analogy.

### **The Qualifications of the Oversight official**

The oversight official should have three characteristics: knowledge, God consciousness, and excellent character.

1. The oversight official should have knowledge of what should be enforced, the limits of enforcement, and the etiquette of the enforcement so that he would not transgress the legal limits.
2. The oversight official should be conscious of God so that he would not commit a sin knowingly by transgressing the limit. He should be logical and convincing in his admonition.
3. The oversight official should have an excellent character because being kind and gentle in delivering the admonition is the corner stone of the strategy to forbid evil. Knowledge and God consciousness are not sufficient to keep his anger checked but it is necessary for him to have excellent character.

These three traits will ensure that the sole purpose of the enforcement is to gain God's reward. If these qualities are absent in the oversight official, then the evil will not be forbidden, and the enforcement itself will become an evil deed.

The oversight official should avoid having relationships that may cause him to turn a blind eye to evil deeds.

# **Book 10: Etiquette of Living and the Character of the Prophets**

## How did God Educate the Chosen Beloved Muhammad (PBUH) using the Quran

The Messenger of God (PBUH) often prayed God asking Him to grant him excellent manners and honourable characters. He used to pray<sup>114</sup>, “*God, improve my physical being and as well as my character.*” He used also to pray<sup>115</sup>, “*God, help me avoid having evil characters.*” God fulfilled the promise He made in the Quran, “*Your Lord said, ‘Ask me and I will answer your prayer,’*” (40: 60) and He answered his prayer. God revealed the Quran to the Prophet (PBUH) which included the ethical teachings he requested. The Prophet’s (PBUH) character was moulded according to the ethical teachings of the Quran. Saad ibn Hisham (RA) said<sup>116</sup>, “*I asked Aisha (RA) about the Messenger’s (PBUH) character. She said, ‘Do you not read the Quran?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ She said, ‘His character was moulded according to the ethical teachings of the Quran.’*” These ethical teachings included, “*Be tolerant and command what is right and avoid the ignorant.*” (7:199) “*God commands justice, good conduct, and generosity towards relatives; and He forbids immorality, evil deeds, and oppression.*” (16:90) “*My son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is evil, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, all these are matters which require resolve.*” (31: 17) “*And whoever is patient and forgives – indeed that is a sign of real resolve.*” (42: 43) “*Pardon them and overlook (their misdeeds). Indeed, God loves the doers of good.*” (5: 13) “*Let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that God should forgive you?*” (24: 22) “*Repel evil with what is better and your enemy will become like a valued friend.*” (41: 34) “*And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the righteous. Those who spend (in the way of God) during ease and hardship; who restrain their anger; and who pardon people; and God loves the doers of good;*” (3: 133-134) “*Believers, avoid much suspicion, some suspicion is a sin. Do not spy nor backbite each other.*” (49: 12)

When the Messenger of God (PBUH) was wounded and his tooth was broken during the battle of Uhud, he said<sup>117</sup>, “*How a people would succeed when they do this to their prophet who is calling them to God?*” God corrected him, “*Not for you is the decision (but for God); He could forgive them or punish them, for indeed, they are wrong doers.*” (3: 128) The Quran embodies many of similar instructions which were meant to educate the Messenger of God (PBUH) and from him would emanate the light that would educate the rest of the people. Quran came to educate the Prophet (PBUH) so that he can educate the rest of the world. The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>118</sup>, “*I was sent to perfect the ethical teachings.*” And the Quran praised him saying, “*You are indeed of great moral character.*” (68: 4) This shows that God loves those who have moral character.

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<sup>114</sup> Narrated by Aisha and Ibn Masood and reported by Ahmed and Ibn Hebban.

<sup>115</sup> Narrated by Qutbbah ibn Malek and reported by Al-Tirmidhi.

<sup>116</sup> Narrated by Saad ibn Hisham and reported by Muslim.

<sup>117</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Muslim

<sup>118</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Ahmed.

Moral characters include friendliness, generosity, and gentleness; helping people, spreading peace, visiting the sick, following the funeral of your Muslim brother, being neighbourly whether your neighbour is a Muslim or non-Muslim, and showing respect to the elders. They also include accepting invitations, making supplications to people who invite you, forgiving people, and mending rifts between people; as well as being generous, tolerant, starting people with the greetings, and controlling anger. People of good character avoid prohibited entertainment, backbiting, lying, stinginess, deceit, trickery, arrogance, boasting, extravagance, abusive language, envy, oppression, transgression, injustice, cutting family ties, and spreading animosity between people.

## **An outline of the Prophet's (PBUH) Good Characters According to the Scholars**

The Prophet (PBUH) was the gentlest, the greatest in courage<sup>119</sup>, the most fair<sup>120</sup>, and the most virtuous of all people. He never touched a woman who was not lawful for him to touch. He was most generous<sup>121</sup>. He never kept any money over night. He used to look for needy people to give them whatever money he had before going to bed<sup>122</sup>. He would only take enough provision to keep him and his family for a year<sup>123</sup>. His provision was dates and grain. Anything that he receives beyond the yearly provision, he would give it to the needy. He never turned down the request of a needy person<sup>124</sup>.

He used to repair his slipper and his clothes; he used to serve his family at home<sup>125</sup>. The Prophet (PBUH) was bashful; he avoided gazing at people in the face<sup>126</sup>. He used to accept invitations extended to him and he used to accept people's gifts and give gifts in return<sup>127</sup>. However, he never accepted charity<sup>128</sup>. He was always ready to help anyone especially a poor person or a slave girl<sup>129</sup>. He never responded angrily to attacks on his person, but he would be angry at attacks levelled at God. He was always steadfast in upholding what is right even if he would be personally, or any of his companions, hurt.

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<sup>119</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Muslim and Al-Bukhari.

<sup>120</sup> Narrated by Ali ibn Abi Taleb and reported by Al-Tirmidhi.

<sup>121</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Al-Tabarni.

<sup>122</sup> Narrated by Belal and reported by Abu Dawud.

<sup>123</sup> Narrated by Umar and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>124</sup> Narrated by Jaber and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>125</sup> Narrated by Aisha and reported by Ahmed.

<sup>126</sup> Narrated by Abu Saeed Al-Khudri and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>127</sup> Narrated by Aisha and reported by Al-Bukhari.

<sup>128</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>129</sup> Narrated by Abu Saeed Al-Khudri and reported by Al-Hakem.

He was offered the chance to ally himself with idolatry tribes against his enemy, but he turned down the offer even though he was weak and the number of his followers was small. He said<sup>130</sup>, “*I will not ally myself to an idolater against an idolater.*” When a Muslim was found dead in a Jewish neighbourhood in Medina, he did not accuse any of them of killing the Muslim nor did he ask them to pay the blood money to the family of the deceased. He paid the blood money out of the charity fund at a time when the Muslims were very poor.

One time he was so hungry that he attached a rock tightly to his abdomen to relieve the pain. He was very modest in his meals; and used to eat whatever is available. He used to eat sitting on the ground and he never had his full of wheat bread three days in a row. He was neither poor nor stingy, but he could not see himself living luxuriously while others were destitute. He used to visit the sick, follow funerals, and walk alone among his enemies without a bodyguard. He was modest in his behavior, succinct in his talk, and eloquent in his speech. He had a smile on his face<sup>131</sup> and he was never terrified by worldly events<sup>132</sup>. He used to dress in various styles if the style was lawful<sup>133</sup>. He wore a silver ring, sometime in his right hand and sometime in his left hand<sup>134</sup>. He would use whatever ride is available: a horse, a camel, a mule, or a donkey. He would let his slave ride with him on the same animal. He sometimes walked barefoot with no overcoat or hat. He liked perfumes and hated bad smell. He used to socialize with the needy<sup>135</sup> and share their meals<sup>136</sup>. He used to honour people of good manners and reconcile people of bad manners by treating them nicely<sup>137</sup>. He used to be kind to his family members without nepotism<sup>138</sup>. He never treated people harshly<sup>139</sup>. He used to accept apologies extended to him<sup>140</sup>. He used to joke but always told the truth<sup>141</sup>. He used to laugh but not loudly<sup>142</sup>. He allowed innocent entertainment<sup>143</sup> and used to race his wife<sup>144</sup>. He used to be patient with his companions even when they argued loudly in his presence<sup>145</sup>. He kept camels and sheep for the livelihood of his family<sup>146</sup>. He used to dress and feed his servants and slaves the same way he was dressed and ate. He was always busy remembering God, fulfilling his and his family needs, or serving

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<sup>130</sup> Narrated by Aisha and reported by Muslim.

<sup>131</sup> Narrated by Ali ibn Abi Taleb and reported by Al-Tirmidhi

<sup>132</sup> Narrated by Aisha and reported by Ahmed

<sup>133</sup> Narrated by Sahl ibn Saad and reported by Al-Bukhari

<sup>134</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Muslim

<sup>135</sup> Narrated by Abu Saeed Al-Khudri and reported by Abu Dawud

<sup>136</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Al-Bukhari

<sup>137</sup> Narrated by Mibed ibn Khaled Al-Ansari and reported by Al-Hakem

<sup>138</sup> Narrated by Ibn Abbas and reported by Al-Hakem

<sup>139</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Abu Dawud and Al-Tirmidhi

<sup>140</sup> Narrated by Kaab ibn Malek and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>141</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Ahmed

<sup>142</sup> Narrated by Aisha and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>143</sup> Narrated by Aisha and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>144</sup> Narrated by Aisha and reported by Abu Dawud, Al-Nissaie, and Ibn Majah

<sup>145</sup> Narrated by Abd Allah ibn Al-Zubair and reported by Al-Bukhari

<sup>146</sup> Narrated by Salamah ibn Al-Akwaa and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

people<sup>147</sup>. He never despised a person for his poverty and never feared a king for his power; he called both types of people to God in the same way<sup>148</sup>.

Although he grew up illiterate, orphaned, and poor in a land of ignorance, God bestowed on him the best character and wise leadership. God taught him what can lead to salvation in this life and happiness in the Hereafter. We ask God to help us to follow in his footsteps and to be obedient to his commands.

## **More on the Prophet's (PBUH) Good Character**

The Messenger of God (PBUH) was not a person who would either verbally abuse or curse people<sup>149</sup>. When he verbally abused a Muslim, he would ask God to make it as a penitence for the person's sin<sup>150</sup>. He was once asked to curse his enemies who were fighting the believers, he said<sup>151</sup>, *"I was sent as mercy not to curse people."* Whenever someone asked the Messenger of God (PBUH) to pray to God against a believer or a disbeliever, he would pray God for them<sup>152</sup>. He never used his hand to hurt someone unless he was in a fight in the cause of God. He never executed personal revenge against anyone<sup>153</sup>. Whenever he had to choose between two alternatives, he would choose the easier of the two, unless it was unlawful. He never withheld his help from anyone who would ask for his help, be it a free man, a slave, or a slave woman<sup>154</sup>. Anas (RA) said<sup>155</sup>, *"By the One who sent him with truth, he never rebuked me for doing something that I did which he did not like; and he never allowed any of his wives to rebuke me."*

The Messenger of God (PBUH) used to be the first to greet his companions when they meet; he would extend his hand and shake their hands. He used to remember God whenever he sat or stood up. He did not have a special place to sit among his companions, so much so that a stranger would not be able to set him apart from his companions. He used to honour his visitors and offer them a pillow or a cloth to sit on. He used to face people when he addresses them and treat them in such a way that each one of them would feel that he was special. The atmosphere of his social gatherings was an atmosphere of decency, modesty, and honesty. The Quran described the Messenger (PBUH) saying, *"By mercy from God, you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude to them or harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from around you."* (3: 159) He used to call his companions with the nick names they liked. He would name those who did not have nick names. He also used to call women as the mother of such and such (the name of their

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<sup>147</sup> Narrated by Ali ibn Abi Taleb and reported by Al-Tirmidhi

<sup>148</sup> Narrated by Sahl ibn Saad and reported by Al-Bukhari

<sup>149</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Al-Bukhari

<sup>150</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>151</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Muslim.

<sup>152</sup> Narrated by Abu Hurairah and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>153</sup> Narrated by Aisha and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>154</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Ibn Majah

<sup>155</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

eldest son); he would give a nick name to those who did not have children as well<sup>156</sup>. Even children were given nicknames to honour them<sup>157</sup>. He was most gentle, most kind, and most helpful<sup>158</sup>. He used to close his meetings by saying<sup>159</sup>, “*Glory and praise by to You, I bear witness that there is no deity except You, I seek your forgiveness and I repent to You.*”

## **His Eloquence and Jokes**

He was extremely eloquent. He used to say that people in paradise speak his language<sup>160</sup>. His expressions were elegant and his speech was succinct; his words were like pearls assembled in a beautiful necklace<sup>161</sup>. He had a clearly audible and melodious voice<sup>162</sup>. He neither said anything in vain nor did he ever utter indecencies. He always told the truth whether he was angry or pleased. He would ignore those who utter indecencies in his presence<sup>163</sup>. He would only refer implicitly to things that he disliked. His companions would never argue in his presence and would never speak until he had finished his speech<sup>164</sup>. He was serious in admonishing his companions<sup>165</sup>. He often warned his companions of fighting over the different narrations of the Quran<sup>166</sup>. He always smiled when he met his companions<sup>167</sup>. He was always sociable to his companions, and he often laughed at what they said<sup>168</sup>. He would become sombre only while the Quran was being revealed or while he was delivering a sermon<sup>169</sup>. He was extremely pleasant when he was happy, serious when he was delivering a sermon, and very serious when God’s limit had been breached.

## **His Ability to Forgive**

He was most forbearing<sup>170</sup>, willing to forgive even though he could have exercised revenge. When he distributed the spoils of war after the battle of Khaybar, a Bedouin said to him, “*Messenger of God, be fair in allotting the shares.*” The Prophet (PBUH) said, “*Woe to you, who can be fairer than me?*” Umar (RA) became angry and said to the Prophet (PBUH), “*Let me kill this man because he is a hypocrite.*” The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>171</sup>, “*Far it from me to give the people the impression that I kill my companions.*”

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<sup>156</sup> Narrated by Um Ayman and reported by Al-Hakem

<sup>157</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>158</sup> Narrated by Ali and reported by Abi Al-Dahdah

<sup>159</sup> Narrated by Rafea ibn Khadij reported by Al-Nissaie and Al-Hakem

<sup>160</sup> Narrated by Ibn Abbas and reported by Al-Hakem

<sup>161</sup> Narrated by Um Miebed and reported by Al-Tabarni; and narrated by Aisha and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>162</sup> Narrated by Safwan ibn Aassal and reported by Al-Tirmidhi and Al-Nissaie

<sup>163</sup> Narrated by Ali and reported by Al-Tirmidhi

<sup>164</sup> Narrated by Ali and reported by Al-Tirmidhi

<sup>165</sup> Narrated by Jaber and reported by Muslim

<sup>166</sup> Narrated by Abd Allah ibn Umar and reported by Al-Tabarani

<sup>167</sup> Narrated by Jareer and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>168</sup> Narrated by Abd Allah ibn Masood and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>169</sup> Narrated by Jaber and reported by Al-Tabarani

<sup>170</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>171</sup> Narrated by Jaber and reported by Muslim

During one of the battles, a man from the enemy was able to penetrate the ranks of the Muslims and get to where the Prophet (PBUH) was stationed. The man raised his sword and said to the Prophet (PBUH), *“Who would protect you now from me?”* The Prophet (PBUH) said<sup>172</sup>, *“God.”* The sword fell from the man’s hand. The Prophet (PBUH) picked up the sword and said to the man, *“Now, who would protect you?”* The Prophet (PBUH) then called him to Islam. The man refused but he said to the Prophet (PBUH), *“If you let me go, I will neither join you nor I will join those who fight you.”* The Prophet (PBUH) let him go. The man went back to his clan; he said, *“I just came back from an encounter with one of the best people.”*

Anas (RA) narrated that a Jewish woman brought the Prophet (PBUH) some cooked sheep meat as a gift. The Prophet (PBUH) started to eat then he became suspicious that the meat was poisoned. He asked the woman, why did she try to poison him? She said, *“I wanted to kill you.”* He said<sup>173</sup>, *“God would not have given you the power to do that.”* He forgave her.

One day a man from the Ansar (original inhabitants of Medina) did not like the way the Prophet (PBUH) allotted shares from the spoils, he said<sup>174</sup>, *“This is an allotment that does not please God.”* The prophet (PBUH) was angry when he heard this statement; but he checked his anger saying, *“May God’s mercy be bestowed on my brother Moses (PBUH), he suffered more than this, but he persevered.”* The Prophet (PBUH) used to tell<sup>175</sup> his companions not to talk about the bad things that some of them sometimes do because he did not want to harbour any hard feelings towards any of them.

## **His Courage**

The Messenger of God (PBUH) was an extremely courageous man<sup>176</sup>. Ali (RA) said<sup>177</sup>, *“During the battle of Badr, we were seeking protection behind the Prophet (PBUH) and he was the closest of us to the enemy.”*

## **His Physical Appearance**

The Messenger of God (PBUH) was of a medium height, neither very tall nor very short. He had a moderately fair but bright complexion. Some said he had a nice tan. He had a beautiful face, like a full moon. His expressions often revealed his mood.

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<sup>172</sup> Narrated by Jaber and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>173</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Muslim

<sup>174</sup> Narrated by Ibn Masood and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>175</sup> Narrated by Ibn Masood and reported by Abu Dawud and Al-Tirmidhi

<sup>176</sup> Narrated by Anas and reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim

<sup>177</sup> Narrated by Ali and reported by Ahmed and Al-Tabarani