

# **140 Common noble manners and ethics Among Muslims, Christians and Jews**

by  
**Mansour Amer**

**Honorably Approved  
by**

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## **Foreword**

### **Dr. Mostafa el Feki, Public Intellectual**

Renowned businessman and former lawmaker Mansour Amer occasionally publishes a piece of his enlightened wisdom and insightful views, providing the youth of the new generations with a portion of his reflections, experience, and convictions. What makes his views worthy of appreciation is his ability to always provide documentation and proofs to furnish his statements, thus introducing a fully-developed line of reasoning to his readers with a premise that is firmly rooted in a clear understanding of the subject matter as well as his desired conclusions. When he sent me a copy of his latest book, *Our Shared Manners*, I warmly hailed it because I do believe that all our problems, errors, and transgressions are related to what might be called a “moral crisis.” Hate speech as well as rejecting and discrediting the Other are examples of this moral crisis permeating contemporary life everywhere, particularly our Arab and Islamic communities, despite the fact that we live in the same region where the heavenly religions and divine laws were revealed. But inherited errors, outdated traditions, and obsolete or illogical ideas seem to have overpowered us, even though they are against the three Abrahamic religions’ calls for virtue and for the abstention and resistance of vice. However, man is doomed to sin, error, and straying from the sound path. It is into this context that the words of Mansour Amer and other thinkers enter; those who have thoroughly read the history of religions, the wisdom of divine and natural laws, as well as normative rules, all

of which guide us to a path which the new generations must follow. The author has herein gathered together some 140 proper manners and sound behaviors. Although the writer has patiently worked on his book with the utmost accuracy, perseverance, and scrutiny – all the while respecting the sacred texts and verses of the Holy Quran – he has not shut the door to all the positives things called for by other religions. On reading each line of the book, we are able to feel the degree to which the author was acquainted with the biblical texts corresponding to those of the Quran. He did this while respecting other religions, especially as Islam asserts:

**“The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], ‘We make no distinction between any of His messengers.’ And they say, ‘We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination.’”** (Al-Baqara 2:285)

Mr. Amer has chosen an interesting and magnificent title for his book. *Our Shared Manners* is a direct call that rejects the new sins and abuses that have emerged in our society, such as bullying, disparaging and discrediting others, intolerance, fanaticism, and exclusion. Over the past decades, we have emphasized the importance of introducing joint classes in school about morals to be taught to all our children, regardless of their religion. This new subject would be based on manners that stem from shared calls for virtue and abstention from vice. That is why my enthusiasm for this book is twofold; the author is also a dear friend of mine, and we worked together in parliament for several years. We have also been involved in discussing the affairs of the nation and its people

for years. While Amer's previous writings expressed his clear views on economic reforms and social integration, the current work focuses on the essence of the whole matter, namely our moral system, in a bid to reform it before it is too late. I sometimes think that the wrath of nature – including climate change and the scarcity of energy and water, in addition to deadly epidemics such as the coronavirus, which as I write these words has swept across the globe without exception – is a sign of warning from God Almighty to mankind everywhere and to the followers of every religion. It is a clear call for a moral awakening that will revalidate and revive our noble values, concepts, and high morals.

I extend my best wishes to the Egyptian thinker Mansour Amer, who is concerned with the issues and problems of his homeland, and is always keen to be take a positive attitude in whatever he does, and is able to choose the correct path amid powerful and extreme storms. He does this out of his belief that man is the vice-regent of God on earth and that God has created man to develop the world, based on the good character which the Prophet of Islam was sent to perfect, as well as to complement those established by previous prophets, and convey the Last Word of God to all humans at whatever time or place they may be.

**Dr. Mostafa el Feki**

**Director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina**

**April 2020**

**Foreword**  
**Prof. Nazir Ayyad**  
**Secretary-General of the Islamic Research Academy**

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his household and companions, and all the messengers of God.

Doubtless, we live in an extremely cruel and utilitarian world that appears almost entirely without compassion or mercy. There is no doubt that this requires scholars, researchers, and intellectuals to open their minds and give precedence to objectivity over subjectivity, find common ground among religions, and save humanity from the consequences of the circumstances it is in and which could lead to its ruin.

Searching for interfaith values and adopting dialogue and scholarly research as a basis and approach to these issues has become vital for humankind, especially as we live in a world where barriers have fallen, distinctive features have disappeared, interests have intertwined, and people's needs from one another have increased.

It should be noted with satisfaction that the Islamic civilization – which has delighted humanity for centuries – acted as a safe fortress for religions and cultures. Adherents of different faiths and sects lived under this civilization while preserving their beliefs and freedoms without having their religious teachings abused, disrespected, or restricted.

This book is part of a long lineage of important research that focus on this by searching for the common ground between Islam and Christianity at the level of moral values.

Such a work undoubtedly deserves appreciation and praise from us, especially since the crisis afflicting our nation and societies across the world is first and foremost a moral one. This book focuses on a set of moral values that people should display. The author presents in his book 140 manners, citing texts from the Quran and the blessed *Sunnah* (Prophet Muhammad's sayings, acts, and approvals) alongside texts from the Bible, to emphasize that truth is one and the same, and does not differ from one religion to another.

In summation, this book carries a purposeful message that asserts the value of a good character; a message that is worthy of attention, learning, and application to the various aspects of our lives, since its presence is truly vital. Pleasingly, the title *Our Shared Manners* reflects its content.

We pray to Allah to thank and reward the author, Mr. Mansour Amer, and to add the book to the author's Scale of Good Deeds, for Allah is worthy of this plea and He alone is able to bring this to pass.

Allah knows best the intention behind one's deeds, for He is sufficient for us and is the best Disposer of affairs. May Allah send His prayers and blessings upon our Prophet Muhammad, his household, companions, and followers.

**Prof. Nazir Mohammed Ayyad**  
**Secretary-General**  
**Islamic Research Academy**

**Foreword**  
**His Eminence, Bishop Anba Markus**

Society is passing through a grave phenomenon of moral deterioration. News comes to us daily about abuses, killings, harassment, bullying, selfishness, and more; all of these cause us concern regarding the future of the coming generations. We need to join hands to consolidate our real, authentic manners.

This is a strong initiative by the vigilant friend Mr. Mansour Amer, the former parliamentarian, who has compiled important types of Oriental manners in this book that we have been raised to respect. He exerted great effort in finding the roots of these manners in both Islam and Christianity, citing verses from the Bible next to the Islamic texts, which he excellently provided, to emphasize that all members of Egyptian society agree on these high values.

In light of the fact that a work like this would require a great deal of effort to yield a complete, balanced piece of writing, we appreciate this interconnected approach and hope for more works providing further space for Muslims and Christians to examine each other's faiths through a genuine and pure lens, and not through false and divisive stereotypes. This will only take place when we devote further efforts to joint actions that follow the same contours of this individual initiative, for which we are very grateful.

I can only thank and pray for the author of this book, as he has set forth the first call, and has laid down the foundations for joint action, in addition to shared culture and coexistence.

May the Lord preserve Egypt and its beloved President Abdel Fattah El Sisi, as well as its blessed people, with the prayers of His Holiness Pope Tawadros II.

**Anba Markus**  
**Bishop of Shubra el-Kheima**

## Preface

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent as a mercy to the worlds, as he said: “I was sent to perfect good character.”

The question is: What are the manners that God Almighty is pleased to see His servants observe, and for which He sent messengers (peace be upon them all) one after another until He sealed His message to mankind with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)?

In this book, I am trying to present this issue in a simplified way, in an effort to make a survey of as many good manners stated in the Quran and *Sunnah* (the prophet’s sayings, acts, and approvals) as I am able.

The Prophet’s saying, “I was sent to perfect good character,” implies that he was preceded by other messengers who had preached the same. Therefore, I wish to share with you – wherever appropriate – as many verses from the Bible (Old and New Testaments) that I view as matching the noble manners that I have included in the book.

Given that a large segment of Arab society, especially the new generations, are not familiar with the standard Arabic (*Fuṣḥā*) of the Holy Quran, I found it necessary to articulate the moral values in the book in a simple, accessible language.

I beg scholars, jurists, and clergymen to forgive me for this colloquial style of writing, which I have adopted to better explain

the meaning and aspects of each manner. I did so to make the book beneficial for the public, and in a humble attempt to open the door to further writing on the same issue by scholars.

I wish to extend my thanks and sincere gratitude to Dr. Mostafa el Feki for writing a foreword to this book; to His Eminence the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Al-Tayyib, for requesting the Islamic Research Academy review this book; to the Islamic Research Academy's Secretary-General Dr. Nazir Ayyad for his honorable foreword and authorization of this book; and to my dear brother and friend, His Eminence Bishop Anba Markus, for his gracious foreword and authorization of this book.

The following are the one hundred and forty manners and moral values that God Almighty has guided me to count.

Allah is the Grantor of success and the One sought for help.

**Mansour Amer**



## 1 - Spending in the Way of God

Spending in the way of God is a good manner, one that Allah has invited us to through His messages, and one which incorporates the concepts of sharing, empathy, and thanking God Almighty for His favors. The person who has this manner spends in the way of Allah, and his spending will bear fruit that will benefit others.

Allah likes to see His servants spending in this way, to the extent that He has warned that He may replace a people with another if they withhold spending out of greed. Allah says: **“Here you are – those invited to spend in the cause of Allah – but among you are those who withhold [out of greed]. And whoever withholds only withholds [benefit] from himself; and Allah is the Free of need, while you are the needy. And if you turn away, He will replace you with another people; then they will not be the likes of you,”** (Muhammad 47:38).

Allah also draws our attention to the great reward He reserves for those who give charity, saying: **“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, ‘My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be among the righteous,’”** (Al-Munafiqun 63:10). Allah, Exalted be He, explains that a person after their death would come to know that almsgiving is a good manner, one of the most rewarded by Allah.

The above verse tells us how at this moment, a person would say: **“My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity.”** Here Allah instructs us that the favor of almsgiving is incomparable, so that the person before their death, as the verse tells

us, sees nothing better than spending in the way of Allah. They beg Allah to allow them more time to give charity, after they have come to understand its merit.

Many Quranic verses urge us to give charity. Part of this charity is represented in fulfilling the “known right” Allah has obliged us to partake in by giving alms to the poor. So we are obliged to pay it, and the poor must receive it. Allah says: **“And those within whose wealth is a known right. For the petitioner and the deprived,”** (Al-Ma’arij 70:24-25). The “known right” is the *zakah*, the obligatory charity, which is the minimum level of charity. However, I believe that spending in the way of Allah would in fact be considered the money a person gives that goes above and beyond the minimum, mandatory level of *zakah*. Of course, this favor is for whomever wants to please their Lord.

I found many verses in the Bible addressing the advantages of almsgiving, including:

**“Stretch out your hand to the poor, so that your blessing may be complete,”** (Sirach 7:32).

**“Do not let your hand be stretched out to receive and closed when it is time to give,”** (Sirach 4:31).

**“Prayer with fasting is good, but better than both is almsgiving with righteousness. ... It is better to give alms than to lay up gold,”** (Tobit 12:8).

**“Give alms from your possessions, and do not let your eye begrudge the gift when you make it. Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor, and the face of God will not be turned away from you,”** (Tobit 4:7).

My mother – may Allah bestow mercy on her – taught me never to forget the poor, who she used to call “the kind people.” She would always say: “What have you done regarding the kind people? Have they got their share of the children’s toys you have, have you given

them clothes or paid them money?” She would always urge me to do so. The best aspect of her advice was to perform charity while making a sale or purchase. If she bought something from a street vendor, she would give him several times more than what he was asking. In such a situation, she would draw my attention to the “hidden alms” contained within sales and purchases, saying that such a street vendor had dependent children, and giving to him generously – if possible – would encourage him to maintain his work.

Giving charity is the path of righteousness laid out by Allah for humankind. How great is a person, that they may be the target of Allah’s beneficence? This is a high level dedicated by Allah to those who spend from what they love, as the Quran says: **“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend – indeed, Allah is Knowing of it,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:92). It is asked that we do not spend or give in the cause of Allah from that which we do not like; rather, it would be better to give from that which we love. This implies the values of altruism, fraternity, and the highest degree of trust and gratitude toward Allah for what He has bestowed on us.

The person who spends in the cause of God must have a friendly, empathetic character so that they can share their bread with others; this is a person who Allah loves because they are grateful. Allah says: **“Allah will reward the grateful,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:144). Thanking God is not only done by words, but by delivering Allah’s provisions to His servants as well.

This good manner of spending in the way of Allah should be incorporated into our school curricula. That way, if some families fail to teach their children this good manner, the school will carry out the task. Additionally, if the government wants to promote the value of community participation among the wealthy, it should add something about this manner to the school curricula, so that the young generations will be aware of how great and beneficial this manner is.

The noble Quranic verse, **“Who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people – and Allah loves the doers of good,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:134) teaches us that the merits of almsgiving in times of adversity is higher than spending in times of prosperity. This is because the person who gives charity may be in need of that very same money, but they are certain that they have made an enduring trade with God, and it could indeed provide a path out of their adversity.

I am inclined to the view that almsgiving can take a form other than giving charity. If so, no one will be deprived of its favor, and almsgiving will be available for everyone, even those who have nothing to give but faithfully wish that they could. Charity can take the form of sharing anything good, helping the weak and vulnerable to regain what they have lost and which is their right. Examples include a physician who provides medical treatment to those who can't afford it, or someone helping a student understand their lessons. Generally, charity is not only about material things. It can take any form whatsoever, such as sharing Allah's favors with others, materially or morally.

In this sense, spending in the way of Allah implies the value of sharing and empathy, rushing to help others, and giving unto them from that which Allah has bestowed on us. Congratulations to those who hold the moral value of spending in the cause of Allah!

In short, we should foster the value of spending in the way of Allah. We and our communities should learn that we will leave behind in this world that which we love, but what we spend in the way of Allah will fall in His Hand and will be kept for us in the Hereafter.

It would be highly agreeable to see people receive awards for being the best almsgivers. It would be highly agreeable, too, if the state offered rewards for the best volunteer work carried out by individuals and companies.

## 2- Perfection

Perfection is a manifestation of good manners, which God and His messenger have enjoined us to achieve. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: **“Allah loves someone who when works, he performs it in perfect manner.”** So when you perfect your work, you are trustworthy, and this draws you closer to Allah. There is also a kind of perfection that takes place when we are getting ready for prayer, as the Quran says: **“O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid [place of worship], and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess,”** (Al-A’raf 7:31).

The messenger of Allah has taught us how to perform prayers with perfection, explaining in one of his recounted sayings (known as a *hadith*) that: **“When you stand for prayer say *takbir* [saying: ‘*Allahu Akbar*’ (Allah is the Greatest)] and then recite from the Holy Quran (of what you know by heart) and then bow till you feel at ease. Then raise your head and stand up straight, then prostrate till you feel at ease during your prostration, then sit with calmness till you feel at ease (do not hurry) and do the same in all your prayers.”** In this manner, concentration is the best way for a worshiper to perfect their prayer.

Given that Paradise is set in levels with each having its own dwellers, as Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has informed us, perfection is a key criterion for gaining promotion to a higher level. Perfection here encompasses all acts of obedience, such as prayer (*salah*), compulsory alms (*zakah*), remembrance (*dhikr*) of Allah, and in doing good deeds. All of these can promote those who do these acts of worship to higher levels in Paradise.

There are many verses of the Quran speaking about perfection, such as this one that refers to perfection of the Hajj pilgrimage: **“That [is so]. And whoever honors the symbols of Allah – indeed, it is from the piety of hearts,”** (Al-Hajj 22:32).

Allah also says: **“They used to sleep but little of the night, And in the hours before dawn they would ask forgiveness,”** (Adh-Dhariyat 51:17-18).

**“Is one who is devoutly obedient during periods of the night, prostrating and standing [in prayer], fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord, [like one who does not]? Say, ‘Are those who know equal to those who do not know?’ Only they will remember [who are] people of understanding,”** (Az-Zumar 39:9).

This last verse refers to the one who stands in prayer during the night to perfect the acts of worship that draw them closer to Allah.

Regarding the perfection of spending in ways that are righteous, Allah says: **“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend – indeed, Allah is Knowing of it,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:92). So the verse teaches us that spending in the way of Allah has a kind of perfection – that is, spending benevolently out of what we really love, with honesty and pleasure.

Allah has also invited us to compete toward perfection to attain higher levels, saying: **“So for this let the competitors compete,”** (Al-Mutaffifin 83:26).

Verses of the Bible also speak about the merits of perfection, including:

**“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart,”** (Galatians 6:9).

**“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully,”** (II Corinthians 9:6).

Here too is a call for us to compete in perfecting acts of worship, in addition to our professional endeavors or any other such thing – simply put, you should strive to perfect what you do.

Currently, the other nations that have surpassed us in Egypt have done so by coming to know the value of perfection earlier, taking it as an approach, and teaching their younger generations how to respect it. The result has been that their products are of high quality, and can be sold everywhere in the world because they have been made with perfection. Those who conducted studies and research with perfection have also surpassed us in terms of their inventions and innovations.

Perfection in itself can be considered a good manner, one that all of us have been invited to observe and instill in our children.

### **3- Making the Scales Heavy**

Given that a person's good and bad deeds will be weighed on the Day of Judgement, adding good deeds to your Scales (*Mawazin*) is a good manner, and one who does so can rest assured that there will be rewards (*thawab*) and punishment (*'iqab*) in the Day of Judgment, and that each and every last one of their deeds will be weighed on the Scale (*Mizan*). Your life is your opportunity to add more good and righteous deeds to your Scales, until you either die or lose consciousness.

Allah says: **“Then as for one whose scales are heavy [with good deeds], he will be in a pleasant life,”** (Al-Qari'ah 101:6-7).

**“And those whose scales are heavy [with good deeds] – it is they who are the successful,”** (Al-Mu'minun 23:102).

Several verses of the Bible echo the same meaning, such as:

**“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart,”** (Galatians 6:9).

**“Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness,”** (Psalms 37:3).

**“Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow,”** (Isaiah 1:17).

The person who has this manner is always keen to add something good to their balance of good deeds (*hasanat*) every day, just as a person would be keen to go to the bank deposit money into their account on a daily basis. This person strives to add new good deeds to their balance of *hasanat*.

A good deed can be something quite simple, such as smiling in someone's face, warm greetings, giving charity, helping others, mastering one's work, speaking properly, and many others. These are but a few of the ways you can add good deeds to your scales to make them heavy on the Day of Resurrection.

Allah has explained to us that the one who perfects their deeds knows that Allah is right and that the reckoning in the Day of Judgment is right, and therefore they fear Allah and love to enter Paradise. On the other side, Allah finds them vigilant and keen to increase their balance of good deeds through acts that please Allah. And Allah reserves the reward for them, for He multiplies the reward for whom He wills.

It is true that humans cannot be admitted to Paradise by their deeds only. Yet Allah likes to see His slaves watchful and doing more good deeds, which will intercede on their behalf to attain Allah's mercy, and they will enter Paradise by His leave.

In the end, someone who practices this good manner will be the type of person who deals with other people kindly – whether in personal relationships, financial matters, etc. – and wants their balance of good deeds to increase and not decrease. For instance, they can do this by rendering a trust or duty that they have been charged with, so that they can be rewarded for it, and other things of this nature.

The one who has this manner will succeed, and whoever comes nearer to this person or deals with them in any way will also be greatly pleased; this is why it is one of the good manners.

## 4- Respect

With regards to respect as a good manner, I am most interested in drawing the reader's attention to how when we respect others, others will respect us, until both parties reach a state of mutual respect.

There are many aspects that reflect this moral value, such as the one indicated in this Quranic verse: **“And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge. Thus We have made pleasing to every community their deeds. Then to their Lord is their return, and He will inform them about what they used to do,”** (Al-An'am 6:108).

We can bring insults upon ourselves and our families if we insult others, and in doing so, we will no longer have this good manner of mutual respect in our relationships. In turn, this will lead others to lose respect for us.

The noble Quranic verse above sets a rule: We should always understand that situations may develop because of actions we take. This means we must begin respecting others, not only by avoiding insulting them, but also by actively speaking to them in a good way, as well as by dressing properly. In the Quranic verse **“... take your adornment at every masjid (place of worship),”** (Al-A'raf 7:31), Allah instructs us that we should dress properly before entering the mosque – the place where we stand before Him – out of respect. We learn from this verse that we have to observe the proper outfit suitable for every gathering or outing, to show respect for others and be polite to them, thus compelling others to deal with us with respect.

I recount how when I was appointed to the Public Prosecution in 1982, the late revered judge Samir Nagi (may Allah admit him to

Paradise) lectured us. The first thing he uttered was the French phrase “*prestige oblige*.” However, none of us understood his meaning. He then explained how a person’s “*prestige*” is their image, their style, their way of moving and speaking, and how they should exhibit this while dealing with people. “*Oblige*” here means one’s style or manner will require – or oblige – people to deal with you in a certain way. In this way, he roused us to demonstrate the poise that is required of a public prosecutor when dealing with people, in terms of his attire, gentlemanliness, sensibility, and poise. By doing so, other people are themselves obliged to refrain from stepping out of line, and to show respect for the person who first behaved politely.

If a parent, for example, gets angry that a teacher has gone beyond the proper limits in dealing with their child, it could be the mistake of the student or the parent. The parent might have failed to instruct their child how to respect their elders and teachers. If the parent had taught their child how to show proper respect, the teacher might not have been so harsh.

Many verses of the Bible also command respect, such as:

**“And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. ... But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire,”** (Matthew 5:22).

**“Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king,”** (I Peter 2:17).

**“(T)o speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men,”** (Titus 3:2).

**“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity,”** (1 Timothy 4:12).

**“Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go; Keep her, for she is your life,”** (Proverbs 4:13).

Despite its immense social importance, the moral value of respect is not taught in schools. Regardless, respect is something that develops from our inner self, not from others.

Respecting someone else could in turn oblige them to show respect to you in return. The same is true if someone else shows respect for you. Going forward, we must reflect on and monitor our behavior, and see how we are really dealing with people. We have to show respect, for a respectful person is loved by everyone. People like to draw nearer to them, interact with them, befriend them, or even marry them, for such a person is socially respectable. Respect is a manner that requires training, practice, and hard work. It bears repeating that we must understand that the first steps should come from within ourselves, not from others.

Respect is an initiative that we first start to practice with those around us. It will impose itself on the nature of our relationships, even if it takes some time.

There are many ways we can show respect, such as respecting domestic workers and the staff who work with us, as well as through taking due care of their conditions. This could include people with disabilities, who require a special way of dealing with them. We should also respect beggars, and not rebuff them. In conclusion, respect is a moral value that characterizes a person's social conduct and governs all aspects of their life, including respect for appointments, privacy, the excuses of others, the young, and the elders.

Showing respect to a person is not limited to the time they are alive, and should continue after their death by participating in the funeral prayer, accompanying the funeral procession, making sure they are buried in the best way, invoking Allah's mercy for them, and even doing good deeds in their names out of respect for them. If we do this, others will surely do the same for us after our death, and that is why it is a good manner.

## 5- Hoping for God's Rewards

The person who hopes for God's rewards can only call for help from Allah, Who they invoke in every unit of prayer, saying: **“It is You we worship and You we ask for help,”** (Al-Fatiha 1:5), bearing in mind the Messenger's saying: **“When the matter gets the better of you, say: For me Allah suffices, and He is the best disposer of affairs.”** This recounted saying of the Prophet (*hadith*) explains that if you feel overpowered by something, say: **“Allah suffices me, for He is the best Disposer of affairs”** (*hasbiya Allah wa ni'ma al-wakil*), that is, seek help from Allah, do not give up, and ask Him for support.

There are many Quranic verses to this effect. The following two are worth quoting at length:

**“Those [believers] who responded to Allah and the Messenger after injury had struck them. For those who did good among them and feared Allah is a great reward – those to whom hypocrites said, ‘Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them.’ But it [merely] increased them in faith, and they said, ‘Sufficient for us is Allah, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs.’ So they returned with favor from Allah and bounty, no harm having touched them. And they pursued the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is the possessor of great bounty,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:172-174)

**“And when they have [nearly] fulfilled their term, either retain them according to acceptable terms or part with them according to acceptable terms. And bring to witness two just men from among you and establish the testimony for [the acceptance of] Allah. That is instructed to whoever should believe in Allah and the Last day.**

**And whoever fears Allah – He will make for him a way out. And will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah – then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent,”** (At-Talaq 65:2-3)

The phrase **“Sufficient for us is Allah, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs,”** means that Allah is sufficient for us and able to ward off danger from affecting His servants. And **“the best Disposer of affairs”** is praise for Allah, Exalted be He, for we do not see anyone else who is capable of doing so except He. The person who possesses the manner of hoping for God’s rewards feels the need for Allah, declares that they dispense with everything that human beings can provide them with, and puts all their trust in Allah – the best Disposer of affairs.

We also find this value in the following verses of the Bible:

**“Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!”** (Psalms 34:8).

**“Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; But he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him,”** (Psalms 32:10).

**“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding,”** (Proverbs 3:5).

**“Consider the generations long past and see: has anyone trusted in the Lord and been disappointed?”** (Sirach 2:10).

Looking at this from a different angle, we can say that hoping for God’s reward has another side, wherein if a calamity afflicts someone, they anticipate the reward from Allah for their patience. They are aware that they will be rewarded for their patience. That is why they ask Allah to keep the reward for them. This meaning is found in the

Quranic verse: **“Who, when disaster strikes them, say, ‘Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return,’”** (Al-Baqara 2:156). So they accept what has befallen them and keep patient. This is the other side of the manner of hoping for Allah’s reward.

An enduring patience when hoping for Allah’s reward is a manner full of faith (*iman*), submission to Allah’s ability, and entrusting all affairs to Him.

The advantage of this manner when it comes to dealing with people is that it gives us the power to face hardships and accept shocks, thus making us less anxious and more steadfast. Our reactions will then be balanced and will not add further complications to things. Therefore, the one who commits to this moral value will lead a calmer life and be welcomed in their relationships.

## **6- Dressing Modestly**

In this chapter, I will not speak about religious edicts on the subject of dressing modestly, but instead simply present the good manner itself, which is decency. By this, I mean that one loves to wear attire that is covering in order to please God as much as one can.

Many Quranic verses tackle this moral value, including: **“O children of Adam, We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your private parts and as adornment. But the clothing of righteousness – that is best. That is from the signs of Allah that perhaps they will remember,”** (Al-A’raf 7:26).

Another says: **“And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands’ fathers, their sons, their husbands’ sons, their brothers, their brothers’ sons, their sisters’ sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed,”** (Al-Nur 24:31).

Likewise, the Bible states: **“In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing,”** (I Timothy 2:9).

The woman who commits to this manner knows how to strike a balance between dressing modestly in front of others in a way that pleases Allah, versus what she wears at home and for her family or for those whom she can lawfully display herself. She knows that she is required to cover herself to guard against being a source of sedition (*fitnah*) to others. She is aware that modest attire is not a kind of restriction, but rather an honor for her. She always tries to come closer to Allah by dressing modestly, caring only about what pleases God and that which satisfies herself.

The good manner of dressing modestly prompts a decent woman to dislike being seen by others in an inappropriate situation or with an improper appearance. Nor does she like to be the focus of others' attention because of her adornment, apparel, etc. She likes to be admired for her personality, character, and good manners, and not for displaying her beauty.

Men can dress modestly as well. A modest man does not like to be noticeable to others, and wears proper attire that suits his desire not to attract attention.

The messenger of Allah advised some of his companions while returning from a journey to keep tidy, clean, and good-looking, saying: **“You are coming to your brethren; so tidy your mounts and tidy your dress, until you are like a mole among the people. Allah does not like obscene words or deeds, or do intentional committing of obscenity.”**

Dressing modestly is a good manner through which man shows obedience to Allah. And if they have to choose who to please – that is, choose between God or other people – they will choose to satisfy their Lord. This is, in my view, the manner of modestly.

It should be borne in mind that I have not tackled specific formalities regarding how to dress modestly. If Muslim women are required to be modest by wearing the obligatory hijab (headscarf), there is no obligation for specific attire or covering in Christianity, which certainly requires the believers to dress modestly.

Anyway, I am talking here – as I mentioned above – about a moral value based on conscience, inhibitions, and the inner desire of humankind to display this moral value. The manner itself is shared by the heavenly religions, regardless of some formal differences in the dress code.

## 7- Doing Good (Benevolence)

Benevolence or doing good (*ihsan*) is a manner that is stated in many verses of the Quran. Those who do good (*muhsininun*) are promised great rewards.

The doing of good is to do someone a favor that is beneficial for them in a way that changes their condition for the better, such as offering food to the hungry, giving money to the poor, and providing shelter to the vulnerable.

The term *ihsan* in Arabic is the opposite of *isa'ah* (doing something wrong, abuse). The acts described as *mahasin* (done well) are the opposite to *masawi'*. The term is derived from the root *hassana*, which means to improve, beautify, ameliorate, adorn, embellish, put into the right form, etc. The noun *ihsan* means doing good things.

Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) explains the meaning of *ihsan*, saying: **“*Ihsan* is to worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not achieve this state of devotion, then (take it for granted that) Allah sees you.”** Here in this *hadith*, the term means perfection of worship.

The term *ihsan* is also mentioned in the Quranic verse **“Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct...”** (Al-Nahl 16:90), rendered here as “good conduct.”

Allah has promised the *muhsininun* (doers of good) a great reward for their *ihsan*, saying: **“... indeed, Allah loves the doers of good,”** (Al-Baqara 2:195), and **“Is the reward for good [anything] but**

**good?”** (Al-Rahman 55:60). The meaning of this last verse is that the reward for those who do good in their lifetime will be good in the Hereafter.

When it comes to almsgiving, *ihsan* means the amount of charity that exceeds the compulsory limit you pay in *zakah* (mandatory charity). In *zakah al-mal* (mandatory almsgiving from one's wealth), for example, a Muslim is required to pay to the needy people 2.5 percent of their savings that have been held for a lunar year. So *ihsan* in this case would be to pay more than this certain amount (2.5 percent) out of love for what is good for people. This also includes speaking well to people. Pardoning people also denotes *ihsan*, as in Allah's saying: “... **and who pardon the people – and Allah loves the doers of good,**” (Al-i-Imran 3:134).

In this respect, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) told Ali ibn Abi-Talib: “**May I inform you of the noblest manner in the world and the Hereafter. Maintain the bonds of kinship with those who severed them with you and give those who denied you. This is *ihsan*.**”

The holy Quran refers to this moral value in many verses that deal with the following situations:

In facing hardships, Allah commands us to maintain patience: “**And be patient, for indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good,**” (Hud 11:115), meaning it is better for you to be patient in the face of adversity.

In a verse that deals with the subject of paying *diyyah* (blood-money) to the relatives of a murdered person, Allah says: “**But whoever overlooks from his brother anything, then there should be a suitable follow-up and payment to him with good conduct. This is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy,**” (Al-Baqara 2:178).

In dealing with divorced women, Allah says: **“There is no blame upon you if you divorce women you have not touched nor specified for them an obligation. But give them [a gift of] compensation – the wealthy according to his capability and the poor according to his capability – a provision according to what is acceptable, a duty upon the doers of good,”** (Al-Baqara 2:236), and **“Divorce is twice. Then, either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with good treatment,”** (Al-Baqara 2:229), meaning the divorce should be done with good conduct and without hassles.

In restraining anger and pardoning people even when you have the ability to retaliate, Allah says: **“Who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people – and Allah loves the doers of good,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:134). The verse praises those who exercise good conduct and pardon those who have done evil to them. Restraining anger is a high level, but the higher level is to do so while you can retaliate – this is the level of *ihsan*.

*Ihsan* can also come through the words you speak. Allah says: **“And tell My servants to say that which is best. Indeed, Satan induces [dissension] among them,”** (Al-Isra’ 17:53); **“And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best,”** (Al-Ankabut 29:46), meaning our way of speaking to others should be better than the way they speak about us, and if we must say something, we should either say something good or remain silent.

In disputes and differences, Allah says: **“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better,”** (Fussilat 41:34), which means by speaking well or doing something good to remove the dispute.

In dealing with orphans and the weak, Allah says: **“And do not approach the orphan’s property except in a way that is best until**

**he reaches maturity,”** (Al-An’am 6:152). The phrase “in a way that is best” means you would only take actions that would increase and preserve this property.

In the exchange of greetings, Allah says: **“And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet [in return] with one better than it or [at least] return it [in a like manner],”** (An-Nisa 4:86).

In maintaining peaceful communities through good conduct, Allah says: **“And spend in the way of Allah and do not throw [yourselves] with your [own] hands into destruction [by refraining]. And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good,”** (Al-Baqara 2:195). The verse instructs us that people’s hearts can come together by the doing of good (*ihsan*) and this leads to a sound, coherent society.

The above verses indicate that Allah has promised great rewards for the doing of good things, for He loves the doers of good (*muhsininun*). How great is that, when Allah loves someone, they will be among the winners in this world and the Hereafter?

In the Bible, there are many verses encouraging benevolence, such as:

**“And it shall be, if you go with us – indeed it shall be – that whatever good the Lord will do to us, the same we will do to you,”** (Numbers 10:32).

**“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,”** (Matthew 5:44).

**“Blessed is he who considers the poor; The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble,”** (Psalms 41:1).

**“For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in,”** (Matthew 25:35).

This good manner can elevate the benevolent to higher levels if they do it without anticipating gratitude from anyone, and move to help the needy secretly, motivated by sympathy toward them. In all this, there should be a good intention (*niyyah*) that no one knows except Allah. It is well known in Islam that intention is pivotal for all of a Muslim's actions.

*Ihsan* is a good manner that we should learn, practice, and teach to our children. It instills the values of perfection. It produces a likable, accepted person who is welcomed by others, and people pray for them. So who among us doesn't want to practice this manner and teach its advantages to their children?

## 8- Sincerity (Faithfulness)

Sincerity/faithfulness (*ikhlas*) is when an action originates from the heart and is not a mere formality, so that the internal shall match the external in both worship (*ibadah*) and transactional dealings and relationships (*mu'amalat*).

A sincere person does not betray; if they make a pledge, they fulfill it and keep it, even in the absence of the other party. This is because a sincere person knows that Allah, Exalted be He, loves to see us doing everything honestly and sincerely.

Allah says: **“He is the Ever-Living; there is no deity except Him, so call upon Him, [being] sincere to Him in religion,”** (Ghafir 40:65).

**“It is He who enables you to travel on land and sea until, when you are in ships and they sail with them by a good wind and they rejoice therein, there comes a storm wind and the waves come upon them from everywhere and they assume that they are surrounded, supplicating Allah, sincere to Him in religion,”** (Yunus 10:22).

A sincere person loves to be loved by Allah, and his religiousness is based on sincerity to Allah, Who says: **“Say, ‘He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born. Nor is there to Him any equivalent,’”** (Al-Ikhlās 112). This means that Allah loves us to say and believe that He is *Ahad* (One), *Samad* (Eternal Refuge), He neither begets nor is born, and nothing is equivalent to Him; and that we worship no deity but Him, and are sincere to Him in religion. This is what *ikhlas* or sincerity with Allah means. Whoever declares that *la ilaha illa Allah* (there is no god but Allah) will attain salvation.

Allah, Exalted be He, gives great reward for sincerity, which denotes steadfastness when keeping and fulfilling promises and pledges. Allah says: “... **[Those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous,**” (Al-Baqara 2:177). This manner constitutes a lifestyle and has many aspects in our lives. For example, we say a person can be faithful to their work, team, homeland, etc.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have said many *hadiths* (sayings) related to this matter, including: “**Allah does not accept any deed, except that which is purely for Him, and seeking His Face,**” and “**If you offer the funeral prayer for a deceased person, supplicate Allah sincerely for him.**” When we pray for the deceased, this is proof that we respect them and are sincere in our love.

The Bible tackles sincerity in many verses, including:

“**For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ,**” (II Corinthians 2:17).

“**Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth,**” (I Corinthians 5:8).

From this, we can see how we must purify ourselves and establish our acts on feelings that are real and discernable, and are not false.

The Bible also encourages sincerity in other ways, saying:

“**Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life,**” (Revelation 2:10), which urges sincerity in faith.

**“Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown,”**  
(Revelation 3:11).

The Gospel also talks about sincerity in relationships, such as the faithfulness of John and Mary toward Jesus Christ, and the faithfulness of Ruth, the Moabite, toward her mother-in-law Naomi.

Do you not agree with me that this is a wonderful manner that elevates souls and refines relationships, societies, states, and the whole world?

Do you not agree with me that we need to strive a great deal to attain this manner and instruct our children, in order to reap its fruit in the future? We will reap tomorrow what we sow today. We cannot be competent instructors unless we are positive examples to our children. Likewise, we should be role models in our places of work.

Sincerity, like many other moral values, requires practice. Let our actions verify what dwells in our hearts. Let us speak from the heart, supplicate to Allah from the heart, concentrate and display humility in our prayers, and enjoy this.

Let us enjoy being dutiful to our aging parents, thanking Allah that they are still alive so that we can return their favor. This is a wide path to Paradise. Let us endeavor and start to have the intention (*niyyah*) of sincerity in all that we say or do. The outcome will surely be rejoicing in the world and the Hereafter. How beautiful it is, to take this as an objective.

## 9- Brotherhood (Fraternity)

Brotherhood is a state of being related as a brother; in a biological sense, it is the relation that links two persons through a mother, father or both, yet it can be a non-biological relationship among friends or companions. In Arabic, friends and non-friends can be referred to as *ikhwah* (brothers) and *ikhwan* (brotherhood), such as in the Quranic verse: **“The believers are but brothers,”** (Al-Hujurat 49:10). Prophet Muhammad, may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him, is reported to have instituted brotherhood between the migrants (*Muhajirun*) from the city of Mecca and the helpers (*Ansar*) of the city of Medina. Through this foundation of brotherhood, the helpers provided support to the migrants, who had left everything in Mecca and migrated to Medina.

The holy Quran states the merits of brotherhood in many verses using various expressions, as can be seen in the verses below:

Brothers of the same clan or tribe:

- **“And to the ‘Aad [We sent] their brother Hud,”** (Al-A’raf 7:65).
- **“And to the Thamud [We sent] their brother Salih,”** (Al-A’raf 7:73).
- **“And to Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu’ayb,”** (Hud 11:84).

Brothers in religion:

- **“And you became, by His favor, brothers,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:103).
- **“The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy,”** (Al-Hujurat 49:10).

Brothers in affection and love:

- **“And We will remove whatever is in their breasts of resentment, [so they will be] brothers,”** (Al-Hijr 15:47).

Brothers in the sense of an associate or companion (*sahib*):

- **“Indeed this, my brother, has ninety-nine ewes,”** (Sad 38:23).

Brotherhood in the social sense means compassion, closeness to one another, communication, gallantry, support, and sharing in the sadness and joy of others.

Knowing how meritorious brotherhood is, Allah sent His messengers – the last of whom was Muhammad (peace be upon him) – to teach people this good manner.

The prophet encouraged us to love one another to become true brothers, saying: **“No one of you shall become a true believer until he desires for his brother what he desires for himself.”**

The holy Quran also instructs us to pray for our brothers: **“And [there is a share for] those who came after them, saying, ‘Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed,’”** (Al-Hashr 59:10).

Allah has also urged us to show sympathy with and stand by our brothers in adversity: **“When they were in the cave and he said to his companion, ‘Do not grieve; indeed Allah is with us,’”** (At-Tawba 9:40).

As for the Bible, it attaches great significance to brotherhood. Many verses speak about the merits of this manner, including:

**“Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,”** (I Peter 1:22).

**“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another,”** (Romans 12:10).

**“Love the brotherhood. Fear God,”** (I Peter 2:17).

**“But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another,”** (I Thessalonians 4:9).

The Gospel deems all people as brothers, as stated in the parable of the Good Samaritan who helped and saved the life of an injured man from the man’s enemies (Luke 10).

Let us recognize the rights of our brethren, maintain the bonds of kinship, be compassionate to one another, and support others sincerely. Your associate or companion has the same rights as you do. Brotherhood in either sense is a strong bond with which you are secure and will never feel alone.

Strive to be a polite, well-mannered, sincere brother – as God Almighty loves you to be – one who gives sincere advice, calls for goodness, communicates with others, and takes responsibility for your relationship with your brothers, in the broad sense of the term. Brotherhood is a set of manners that includes the provision of aid and relief, compassion, comfort, tolerance, benevolence, maintaining the bonds of kinship, and many other moral values.

It is a comprehensive value. Make sure to become a brother as you should be, so that God may provide you with whomever is faithful in their relationship with you and to be true brethren. What is important is that we realize brotherliness is a good manner that we have to observe.

## 10- Politeness

Politeness is the heart of all manners. It is a high level among the list of good moral values. A polite person has passed through a number of stages of good manners. Politeness (*adab*) denotes the practice of doing good and honorable acts, or any virtue. Politeness is a refined manner that leaves an impact on the listener, reader, or recipient and leads them to good morals.

In a simpler meaning – as we understand it – politeness is when a person respects the people they deal with, and their behaviors have reached a considerable stage of self-control when dealing with others. Those who deal with a polite person notice that they respect those around them and do not step out of line. The polite person knows how to speak, and their words do not violate the rules of polite discourse. They often expect others to deal with them using the same politeness they show.

Several Quranic verses urge us to have this manner and highlight the attitude of the polite person, including: **“And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the back, but righteousness is [in] one who fears Allah. And enter houses from their doors. And fear Allah that you may succeed,”** (Al-Baqara 2:189). Indeed, it is a great principle that encourages respect for the privacy of others. As the verse explains, houses are not only buildings; I believe the term denotes abstract meanings as well, referring more broadly to other topics and situations, denoting that a person should respect the privacy of others and may only interfere after getting their permission or at their request.

In this sense, Jesus’ words to Allah in the Quran can be understood in this context: **“He will say, ‘Exalted are You! It was not for me to**

**say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen,”** (Al-Ma’ida 5:116). In the above verse, Jesus (peace be upon him), whose good manners and conduct were perfected by Allah, addresses his Lord, saying that he could only speak of good and say what God had commanded, and no more.

A polite person avoids purposeless or meaningless speech. Their speech passes through a filter to purify the words. They differentiate between what is mentionable and what is unmentionable. So let us make sure to set this filter in our minds to sort out what should be said or avoided.

Allah says: **“So when the Qur’an is recited, then listen to it and pay attention that you may receive mercy,”** (Al-A’raf 7:204). Here God Almighty teaches us the ethics of listening attentively to the holy Quran, concentrating on its meanings, and avoiding any side-talk. I have a view, which could be wrong, regarding this verse. I believe it teaches us the ethics of listening in general. When someone – a teacher, lecturer, etc. – speaks to us, we should listen and pay attention to them out of politeness. This also applies to a father or mother while speaking to their children, an employer with employees, and so on. It is the ethics of listening, paying attention, and avoiding interruption except with permission. Only a polite person who respects others can show these moral values and behavior.

The Quranic verse: **“And those who are patient, seeking the countenance of their Lord, and establish prayer and spend from what We have provided for them secretly and publicly and prevent evil with good – those will have the good consequence of [this] home,”** (Al-Ra’d 13:22) refers to another key aspect of politeness: patience. Patience is a trait of a polite person because they know they

are experiencing an affliction, and must persevere without objection or resentment. It is out of their politeness that they respect what God has decreed, and accept it without objection.

Another aspect of politeness is to remain patient when dealing with harm caused by others. It is out of politeness that we allow them to reconsider their positions and views. Here we can see another trait: forbearance. It means that a polite person should be mild, self-controlled, and patient – not because they are unable to face hardships and express objection, but because they are sane. All these are aspects of politeness.

Allah says: **“Indeed, those who recite the Book of Allah and establish prayer and spend [in His cause] out of what We have provided them, secretly and publicly, [can] expect a profit that will never perish,”** (Fatir 35:29). It means that a polite person thanks God Almighty for His favors. Thankfulness should not only be through words, such as saying *al-hamdu-lillah* (thank God), but in spending in the way of God as well. A polite person does not seek to be thanked by people, they just want to thank God Almighty and spend secretly, because they only care about Allah’s consent. This is because they “prevent evil with good,” meaning even if they are offended, they do not answer the offense with an offense. Repelling evil with good is the highest level of politeness in relationships. By exercising this good conduct, Allah guides those around you to the straight path, in application of Allah’s saying, **“Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better,”** (Fussilat 41:34). This last verse implies loftiness, good conduct, and high morals that Allah loves His servants to practice.

The Quranic verse: **“And tell My servants to say that which is best. Indeed, Satan induces [dissension] among them. Indeed Satan is ever, to mankind, a clear enemy,”** (Al-Isra 17:53) implies another aspect of politeness. The prophet came with a message that

teaches us how to check our speech and make sure it is accurate. Some words could hurt or lead to conflicts and differences, while others could heal wounds and spread goodness among people.

Again, we come to the idea of a “filter” that we should use to purify our speech and allow only good words to come from our mouths. The Messenger of Allah said: **“He who believes in Allah in the Last Day must either speak good or remain silent.”** This is the core meaning of politeness – speak good or remain silent.

Let us return again to the Quranic verse of Fussilat: **“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend,”** (Fussilat 41:34). God Almighty teaches us the vast difference between offense and doing good. If we want to hold the good manners of Islam, let us repel evil with goodness in our relationships, even with anyone who has offended us. The good conduct in this case is to refrain from responding to an offense with another offense, but instead respond with gentleness.

Let us move to another trait a polite person should have: asking permission. This is stated in the Quranic verse: **“The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger and, when they are [meeting] with him for a matter of common interest, do not depart until they have asked his permission. Indeed, those who ask your permission, [O Muhammad] – those are the ones who believe in Allah and His Messenger. So when they ask your permission for something of their affairs, then give permission to whom you will among them and ask forgiveness for them of Allah. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful,”** (An-Nur 24-62).

In this verse, Allah teaches us that if you are with a group, do not leave them until you have asked for their permission to do so. Your presence with them could be significant and they may miss you after leaving, so give them an opportunity to come up with an alternative to you departing. This applies to many situations in our life. For example, an employee who intends to leave their company must, out of politeness, ask permission from and give prior notice to their employer, which provides an opportunity to recruit a replacement. This is good conduct worthy of a polite person who respects what they are encouraged to do.

Refraining from abusing others is a manifestation of this good manner. Allah, Exalted be He, says: **“O you who have believed, be not like those who abused Moses; then Allah cleared him of what they said. And he, in the sight of Allah, was distinguished,”** (Al-Ahzab 33:69). A polite person does not harm anyone, and whoever abuses others can never be deemed as polite. We are required, as I have explained above, to repel offense with good. We are required not to harm anyone at all, whether a neighbor, a friend, or whoever.

Let us move now to the etiquette of greetings, which represent another aspect of politeness. Allah says: **“And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet [in return] with one better than it or [at least] return it [in a like manner]. Indeed, Allah is ever, over all things, an Accountant,”** (An-Nisa 4:86). This implies that we should be simple and tolerant in dealing with people, greeting one another, and returning the greeting with a better greeting, as if we are in a competition with one another to see who can make a better greeting. This is the true etiquette of respecting people and meeting their greeting with a more courteous one.

Politeness also has an aspect related to appearance. The Quranic verse **“O children of Adam, take your adornment at every**

**masjid,**” (Al-A’raf 7:31) reveals how to show politeness in God’s places of worship. We should not enter a place of worship while wearing just any garment or any style. We must be washed and purified. Every person should seek to look as clean and presentable as they can if they wish to enter Allah’s house, out of politeness, respect, and awe.

The etiquette of eating is part of the manner of politeness. Allah says: **“O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid, and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess,”** (Al-A’raf 7:31). The verse teaches us the etiquette of eating: just be moderate. A polite individual is moderate and uses what is available to them without excess. I believe this applies not only to eating, but all other aspects of life as well. We must be moderate in whatever is available and permissible for us. The polite enjoy eating the food Allah has made permissible, without excessiveness or wastefulness.

The etiquette of the way you look at people is also an aspect of politeness, which the Messenger of Allah taught us through the verses of the Quran, such as: **“Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do. And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof ...”** (An-Nur 24:30-31). A polite man can look but not stare at a woman within the limits of what God Almighty has made permissible to be visible of her. This also goes for a polite woman. She knows that staring at others is not appropriate. Averting your eyes downward in these contexts is a characteristic of politeness.

Also, the polite person guards their private parts, except in those circumstances which God Almighty has made permissible, as the above

verse of Surah An-Nur indicates. In my opinion, this verse makes it clear that the rules governing how we look at one another are a means of helping people to safeguard their private parts. A look or a glance could be what starts a person down the path toward transgressing permissible limits. Therefore, the polite person knows that they must guard their private parts, and a polite person only uses their private parts in the way Allah has made lawful for men and women, out of politeness and obedience to Allah. This is, of course, the core of piety. A polite person is pious and will be rewarded for their piety.

Again, we should highlight the Islamic etiquette that deals with how to dress, similar to the earlier discussion concerning taking what we wear in a place of worship. Now we will tackle it in relation to the adornments of women. This verse from Surah An-Nur comes directly after the above verse, and expressly regulates this matter:

**“And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands’ fathers, their sons, their husbands’ sons, their brothers, their brothers’ sons, their sisters’ sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed,”** (An-Nur 24:31).

The verse serves as a guide to the etiquette of modesty in general and how women should take care not to display any part of their body to those who do not have the right to see it.

A woman should do this out of politeness. Her modesty will necessarily guide her to decency, so that whoever looks at her should respect her manners. In my opinion, which could be wrong, the man must also be decent in his apparel. He should not wear unnecessarily over-revealing clothes in public. He should follow the same principle of decency: A polite man knows what he should wear in terms of appropriate attire. He should cast down his looks and not stare out of courtesy and politeness toward those with whom he deals.

If we aim to have Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a beautiful pattern of conduct, as Allah orders us in the verse: **“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often,”** (Al-Ahzab 33:31), and as Allah describes His messenger: **“And indeed, you are of a great moral character,”** (Al-Qalam 68:4), we must therefore be polite because politeness encompasses many good manners.

Politeness has of course been the focus of all heavenly religions. Here I must mention that verses in the Bible tackling politeness are numerous, thanks to the greatness of this good conduct. It is a comprehensive manner that includes many other moral values. Here are some examples:

**“Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go; Keep her, for she is your life,”** (Proverbs 4:13).

**“For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life,”** (Proverbs 6:23).

**“Apply your heart to instruction, And your ears to words of knowledge,”** (Proverbs 23:12).

**“Buy the truth, and do not sell it, Also wisdom and instruction and understanding,”** (Proverbs 23:23).

**“The mind of fools is in their mouth, but the mouth of the wise is in their mind,” (Sirach 21:26).**

**“Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty,” (Job 5:17).**

**“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you,” (Exodus 20:12).**

**“It is a disgrace to be the father of an undisciplined son, and the birth of a daughter is a loss,” (Sirach 22:3).**

**“A lie is an ugly blot on a person; it is continually on the lips of the ignorant,” (Sirach 20:24).**

Politeness is a wide-ranging manner that encompasses many moral values. Shared by monotheistic religions, it should be present in our school curricula. It is the foundation for building one’s character, therefore teaching it should not be left solely to the family. Each family might have a different set of values. It would be better if it were taught in school to create a strong basis for the coming generations, who must be beneficial to their communities.

## **11- Satisfaction (or Satisfying Others)**

The one who satisfies others has surely admired the noble verse: **“And your Lord is going to give you, and you will be satisfied,”** (Ad-Dhuha 93:5). This person has learned two ways of giving. The first is to simply give, and this is good and is appreciated. The second is to give until the other party feels satisfaction, and this is of a higher level. The person who does this is interested in achieving the following two things:

First, to be worthy of receiving Allah’s bounty of gifts by fearing Him and observing good conduct in their human and financial relationships.

Second, to satisfy those to whom they give. If they give to a beggar, they not only give enough money for him to buy a meal, but rather give what they have of food or money so that he can bring food to his family. They want to satisfy, and to fill the beggar’s heart with happiness, so as to achieve the outcome of the above verse.

It is truly a good manner. Everyone is invited to practice it. Let us satisfy those around us, relieve their burdens, and save them the embarrassment of asking.

Many verses of the Bible encourage people to satisfy those around them:

**“But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”** (I John 3:17).

**“Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share,”** (I Timothy 6:18).

**“You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand,”** (Deuteronomy 15:10).

**“Jesus said to him, ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me,’”** (Matthew 19:21).

Satisfying people is greatly rewarded by God Almighty. Whoever seeks to satisfy people, Allah will give and satisfy him. In the Quran, Allah says: **“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned,”** (Al-Baqara 2:245).

Satisfying others is a good manner. It is not only confined to giving material things. Satisfying those around you, even just by saying pleasant words, is an aspect of this manner. It also includes situations such as apologizing to those we have wronged, or a student doing homework to satisfy their teacher, or perfecting your work to satisfy your employer, or satisfying your spouse by your good conduct. All these are just a few of the countless examples, and we have to be aware that they are good manners. We must attain these manners and endeavor to have them as an approach to life.

## 12- Asking Permission

In Arabic, asking permission (*isti'dhan*) means asking to do something, or letting others know that you have begun doing something, to get permission for what you intend to do.

Undoubtedly, it is a noble behavior in every sense of the word. By asking permission, you acknowledge that you do not have the right to enter anywhere without prior approval. You cannot attend a meeting, interrupt a talk, reply to a question (in a classroom), or enter a home unless you ask permission. This also goes for many other situations in life. In this context, the Quranic verse sets a rule: **“O you who have believed, do not enter houses other than your own houses until you ascertain welcome and greet their inhabitants. That is best for you; perhaps you will be reminded,”** (An-Nur 24:27). Allah, Exalted be He, commands us to follow this conduct and sent His messenger to teach it to us.

You must surely agree that when we come across a person who sticks their noses into other people’s affairs without permission, we would say they are annoying, as they are interfering in things that do not concern them and are not respecting the privacy of others. If this person keeps acting this way, they will be far from the noble manner that Allah likes to see us practicing.

Asking permission is an aspect of modesty and of showing respect for others, and particularly for your elders. For example, consider how the commander of a military parade asks his commanding officer for permission to start the parade. A pilot asks permission from the control tower before taking off. An injured football player asks permission from the referee before returning to the game, and so on.

Allah the Creator knows that when order is missing, our everyday lives can be disrupted and chaos can prevail. If this happens, it will not have a positive effect on humanity as a whole. So God wants good for us and therefore instructs us to have the value of asking permission. He has also sent us His messengers (peace be upon them) to teach us this and be good examples for us to follow.

We have to teach our children how to ask permission, making sure they are distinguished by this manner and that they adopt it in their approach to life. This is exactly what Allah commands in the verse: **“O you who have believed, let those whom your right hands possess and those who have not [yet] reached puberty among you ask permission of you [before entering] at three times: before the dawn prayer and when you put aside your clothing [for rest] at noon and after the night prayer. [These are] three times of privacy for you. There is no blame upon you nor upon them beyond these [periods], for they continually circulate among you – some of you, among others. Thus does Allah make clear to you the verses; and Allah is Knowing and Wise,”** (An-Nur 24:58). The verse signifies that asking permission is compulsory, even if it is a son or daughter among their family. If someone wants to enter their parents’ house or room, they have to ask permission at three times of day, as the Quran states, out of the need to maintain the parent’s privacy. This improves the children’s conduct and teaches them the lesson that they should display this same behavior of asking permission when dealing with all other people in their life.

Verses from the Bible also encourage this good conduct, including:

**“But whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house,’”** (Luke 10:5).

**“Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go; Keep her, for she is your life,”** (Proverbs 4:13).

**“The mind of fools is in their mouth, but the mouth of the wise is in[a] their mind,”** (Sirach 21:26).

**“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me,”** (Revelation 3:20).

Let us amend ourselves to what Allah has instructed us to do, bearing in mind that we will be rewarded for asking permission before entering a home or interfering in anything, because we have committed ourselves to a good manner commanded by Allah and His messenger.

Therefore, we should not consider that asking permission is a God-given behavior that people always show. Rather, it is a manner that Allah sent His messengers to teach us from among many other noble character traits. It requires us to observe it, guide our children to it, and correct them if they fail to practice it. We, the elders, must also remind ourselves of this conduct, for one should continue to learn until they meet their Lord.

### **13- Seeking Help from God**

A person who seeks help from God has reached a level of certainty (*yaqin*) in their faith, and they know that nothing in this world is beyond the Ability of God. Allah is the Greatest and He is the Subjugator over His servants. This person does not see any human being as perfect, and thus can only seek help from the Creator of creation. This does not arise out of some sort of disrespect for anyone, it is simply a matter of seeking help from the Greatest.

They seek help from Allah to implement His saying: **“And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me – indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided,”** (Al-Baqara 2:186).

They also look to Prophet Mohamed’s saying: **“Be watchful of Allah (Commandments of Allah), He will preserve you. Safeguard His Rights, He will be ever with you. If you beg, beg of Him Alone; and if you need assistance, supplicate to Allah Alone for help. And remember that if all the people gather to benefit you, they will not be able to benefit you except that which Allah had foreordained (for you); and if all of them gather to do harm to you, they will not be able to afflict you with anything other than that which Allah had pre-destined against you. The pens had been lifted and the ink had dried up.”**

The Bible includes many verses on the theme of instructing people to seek help from God:

**“In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”** (Psalms 56:11).

**“It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man,”**  
(Psalms 118:8).

**“With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible,”** (Matthew 19:26).

**“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want,”** (Psalms 23:1).

**“The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?”**  
(Psalms 27:1).

**“The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”** (Psalms 118:6).

**“Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; But he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him,”** (Psalms 32:10).

**“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding,”** (Proverbs 3:5).

Undoubtedly, God knows everything we do, and knows that some of us could believe that power rests in the hands of a high-profile official, a boss, or a similar figure. Whoever understands that the universe has One God Almighty, the Creator, has succeeded. So why not simply ask Him directly? Do we believe that He will not hear us because we are too inferior to be heard, or because we may have neglected to obey him? Never! Indeed, Allah is able to do for His slave what the slave thinks Allah can do for him. Allah, Glory be to Him, informs us – as the above Quranic verse indicates – that He is near to His servants in order to encourage them to ask help from Him directly, asserting that He responds to the invocation of the supplicant when the supplicant calls upon Him.

Let us adopt this as a manner and approach in life. By doing so, we could understand that Allah is Great and He is the Greatest. Therefore He will see that in worship, we are not associating anyone else with Him, and this is one of the foundations of the Islamic creed.

The seeker of God's help does not only have to do so through supplication. The seeker can do it by being in a state of submission to Allah, knowing that He will never let them down and that comfort will certainly come from Him. This is an advanced level of this good conduct – that is, the seeker of God's help rises to the level of submission to His power.

Let us seek help from the Great; the Greatest; the One Who when He decrees a matter, He only says to it “Be,” and it is. Let us seek help from Allah. It is a noble trait of character, as well as an act of worship. How beautiful it is that, when our conduct becomes an act of worship, the reward is twofold.

## 14- Getting Ready

God Almighty encourages us to be ready, and this is a good manner, one that prompts us to do so at every possible opportunity. Our approach when getting ready shall be based on the Quranic verse: **“And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know [but] whom Allah knows. And whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged,”** (Al-Anfal 8:60). My modest understanding is that this is a form of precautionary conduct, that is, when we are armed and prepared, we can deter or repel others. We can therefore avoid being involved in conflicts as much as possible.

This good conduct pushes us toward action, study, making use of all possible means, guarding against indifference, and displaying rationality in our understanding of things. We cannot achieve what we want while sitting idle. We have to strive and get ready.

From my perspective, the matter does not depend on the direct meaning of the verse, that is, military preparedness. It extends to many aspects of our life as well. When we are young, we have to get ready for school exams by studying our lessons, and for sports championships by training and hard work. More broadly, we have to set the stage for progress through study, research, faithfulness, and dedication. We must get ready for competition by first achieving perfection and quality. In our current moment in history, we see how we must prepare to resist diseases and pandemics through scientific research, preventive measures, and developing vaccines. Our life is

full of challenges and Allah has asked us to be cautious and prepared, exert efforts, and do everything we can.

It is very important that parents get their children ready for adulthood, and I believe it is not good to pamper one's children based on the false idea that their demands must be met. Doing so is to stray far from this manner of readiness. Most children's lives in the future will probably not be as easy and comfortable as they are now. They will face waves of challenges in their lives, and these challenges might be fierce indeed. So we must train them in regards to this good conduct from childhood, in order for them to be ready and so they will strive to attain their dreams. At the very least, they will be able to protect themselves by being prepared for any possible challenge in their future.

Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), one of the closest companions to the prophet, said: **“Teach your children swimming, archery, and horse riding.”** He meant that one should teach them how to be ready to learn and to arm themselves with what could benefit them, while bearing in mind that they can only realize their wishes through hard work and preparedness. They will not pass an exam unless they prepare for it, nor will they succeed in their work unless they exert more effort, and so on.

There are many verses in the Bible to this effect, such as:

**“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect,”** (Luke 12:40).

**“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,”** (I Peter 5:8).

**“Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,”** (Titus 3:1).

**“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear,”** (I Peter 3:15).

Readiness is a good manner that teaches us the value of work, exerting efforts, making plans beforehand, and vigilance.

How fine this manner is! Let us train our children and ourselves in it. Let us do our best to be ready. Let it be a principle in dealing with people. The first thing is to take this manner as an approach in our life. Let us also prepare for meeting God Almighty, for this meeting is right. So how have we prepared for it? Have we done something to increase our good deeds? Have we refrained from evils? Have we given more to charity so as to add weight to the Scales of our lives, as we are well aware of the merits of alms?

The person who is always ready is someone who knows that everything they will face in life needs preparation to achieve success. They know that in life, we are merely in transit to the Hereafter, and that what is with Allah is better and more lasting. So they observe the manner of getting ready and being armed with all that they can to face life, and to meet their Lord the Creator with a considerable balance of good deeds.

The question is, shouldn't this manner be taught in school curricula as a way for children to build their character, since it is surely considered a key to success?

## 15- Uprightness (or Taking the Straight Path)

In Arabic, uprighteness or straightforwardness (*istiqamah*) means taking an upright position. The verse: **“So take a straight course to Him,”** (*fa istaqimu ilayhi*) (Fussilat 41:6) means to take a straight path to Allah, Exalted be He, and no one else. The plural verb *istiqamu* (remained on a right course) in the verse, **“Indeed, those who have said, ‘Our Lord is Allah’ and then remained on a right course,”** (Fussilat 41:30) means they were obedient to Allah and followed the prophet’s *Sunnah* (his sayings, deeds and approvals).

Uprightness (*istiqamah*) means to commit oneself to what Allah and His messenger have ordered and to refrain from what they have prohibited. In real life, this can be found in complying with the law and obeying one’s parents. It denotes the lines one should not cross.

Allah has ordered us to be upright in many verses, such as:

**“And whoever holds firmly to Allah has [indeed] been guided to a straight path,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:101).

**“And Allah invites to the Home of Peace and guides whom He wills to a straight path,”** (Yunus 10:25).

Allah, Most High, links faith (*iman*) to uprighteness, as in His saying: **“So those who believe in Allah and hold fast to Him – He will admit them to mercy from Himself and bounty and guide them to Himself on a straight path,”** (An-Nisa 4:175).

Uprightness is a kind of guidance and success that comes from Allah to whoever wants to be guided by Him. Allah says: **“And Allah**

**guides whom He wills to a straight path,”** (An-Nur 24:46), and there are many other verses to the same effect.

One must vigilantly exert efforts and supplicate to Allah to attain this manner. Allah has commanded us to pray to Him to guide us to the straight path. God Almighty has also explained to us that those who follow a straight course are the ones whom He has bestowed His favor on and is pleased with. Allah has even made it compulsory upon us to recite this supplication at least 17 times a day, through 17 units of prayer in the five obligatory daily prayers, in which we read *Surah Al-Fatiha* (the opening chapter of the Quran) and say: **“Guide us to the straight path – The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor,”** (Al-Fatiha 1:6-7). The verses clearly emphasize that we have to really desire this from Allah to let Him know that we wish it. The result will be that Allah will guide us to uprightness – our path to Paradise.

Allah explains the merit of taking a straight course in the following two verses:

**“Indeed, those who have said, ‘Our Lord is Allah’ and then remained on a right course – the angels will descend upon them, [saying], ‘Do not fear and do not grieve but receive good tidings of Paradise, which you were promised. We [angels] were your allies in worldly life and [are so] in the Hereafter. And you will have therein whatever your souls desire, and you will have therein whatever you request [or wish], As accommodation from a [Lord who is] Forgiving and Merciful,”** (Fussilat 41:30-32).

**“Indeed, those who have said, ‘Our Lord is Allah,’ and then remained on a right course – there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve. Those are the companions of Paradise, abiding eternally therein as reward for what they used to do,”** (Al-Ahqaf 46:13-14).

Many verses in the Bible refer to uprightness, including:

**“He who walks with integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will become known,”** (Proverbs 10:9).

**“The way of the Lord is strength for the upright, But destruction will come to the workers of iniquity,”** (Proverbs 10:29).

**“The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them,”** (Proverbs 11:3).

**“He who walks in his uprightness fears the Lord, But he who is perverse in his ways despises Him,”** (Proverbs 14:2).

**“Better is the poor who walks in his integrity Than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich,”** (Proverbs 28:6).

Based on this, uprightness or integrity is a true factor in achieving victory. Success in itself is a sign of God’s pleasure with His servants – that He responded to the supplications they made in life, bestowed on them the uprightness they had long prayed to attain, promised them not to fear and grieve, and then admitted them to Paradise with all its bliss.

It is a fine manner that leads the person to righteousness. It originates from a religious commitment based on convictions. Uprightness also implies steadfastness in obedience to God. How beautiful is this manner that helps one enter Paradise, with God’s permission?

From a worldly angle, isn’t it the goal of any country to motivate its people to take a straight course in life, and to deter those who deviate from this integrity? So how can this be our country’s goal, and yet we do not highlight how virtuous this good conduct is to our children at school? In this way, they could graduate with the understanding that uprightness and integrity are compulsory and not optional, and that

everything has limits that must be observed and not crossed. I invite curriculum developers to explicitly add this manner to textbooks. It should not be left to personal experience. Likewise, the media should highlight suitable role models in society to encourage young people to follow how these role models comport themselves.

## 16- Perseverance

*Istibar* (perseverance, endurance, patience) in Arabic is a foundation that strengthens and enables a person to overcome many of the challenges they face in life. It requires that one should not be hasty to see what happens after giving advice, or in their attempts to reconcile others, and other things of this nature.

I would call patience “the manner of time.” Allah, Exalted be He, says: **“And enjoin prayer upon your family [and people] and be steadfast therein. We ask you not for provision; We provide for you, and the [best] outcome is for [those of] righteousness,”** (Ta-Ha 20:132). This means: Do not anticipate a quick outcome, and be calm with them, because you are assigned the task of inviting them, so let time have its effect in convincing them.

The Bible also has many verses regarding patience, such as:

**“For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise,”** (Hebrews 10:36).

**“But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience,”** (Luke 8:15).

**“But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance,”** (Romans 8:25).

I think having a “culture of perseverance” is something we should adopt as an approach to our lives. Disputes may arise between spouses, to the extent that they feel like their life has become impossible. All the while, they are not aware that time has its magic way of bringing

things back to normal and enabling them to see the good things in each other again, when once they were only seeing the flaws. Look at the Western countries and how they fought each other during World War II, yet after the passage of time and through perseverance, they have now formed the European Union. Similarly, a family could see the death of a dear member as something they cannot recover from, but it is time that empowers them to go on with their lives.

Plants, humans, and animals grow with time. Powers and capabilities change over time. We need time to achieve many things. Education needs years. Athletes need a great deal of training to reach a distinguished level. All these examples impart to us the lesson that time is the governing factor in our lives.

In my opinion, the above Quranic verse invites us to better use the “time factor” – that is, to display perseverance. We all know that things change over time. However, we want to overcome our day-to-day problems hastily and need things to be done very quickly. Instead, we need to persevere, as God has instructed us. Review your journey in life to discover how time has changed many things around you for the better.

Therefore, we must continue to persevere and give sufficient time for things to be done. Do not be in a hurry to see the outcome. If you present an offer to someone, do not rush to get their response. Be calm and give them more time to consider it. This could be in your interest and could allow the other side to make more positive responses.

The husband should be patient with his wife. The father and mother have to exercise patience with their children.

In our differences with others, we are required to be calm and endure for more time. Time is sufficient to make them realize that they have wronged us, and it could move them to apologize.

I advise you (and myself as well) to observe what I call “the manner of time.” Give time its value and do not cast it aside while addressing day-to-day problems. Use and prioritize time; it is proven and effective and its results are extremely good.

Remember: We need to realize how important perseverance is as a character trait, and then instruct ourselves and those around us to hold firm and practice it, because it needs wisdom. And wisdom can never be attained overnight, rather, wisdom is the outcome of accumulated experience and education. If we do things in a hurry, we will not be able to maintain our patience next time. So give time its due value if you want to be effective. Perseverance is a noble trait of character. Be keen to practice it.

## 17- *Islah* (Settlement/Amendment/Reform)

The highly nuanced Arabic word *islah* has a number of layered meanings: settlement, amendment, reform, repair, correction, or reconciliation. It means to enhance something and bring it back to normal. It is the opposite of *ifsad*, which means undermining, spreading corruption or disorder, making mischief, or causing havoc. *Islah* has many aspects, such as reaching a settlement between two disputing parties.

Allah says: **“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two,”** (Al-Hujurat 49:9).

**“And if a woman fears from her husband contempt or evasion, there is no sin upon them if they make terms of settlement between them – and settlement is best,”** (An-Nisa 4:128).

How beautiful this moral value is! It extinguishes the fire of animosity between people and settles disputes. Self-correction is another aspect of *islah*, such as the verse: **“Except for those who repent after that and correct themselves. For indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:89). Here *islah* denotes the correction of oneself. How beautiful is that behavior as well.

In many other verses, we have been enjoined to carry out *islah*, a manner that Allah loves, and forbidden from *ifsad*. For instance, Allah says: **“So fear Allah and obey me. And do not obey the order of the transgressors, Who cause corruption in the land and do not amend,”** (Ash-Shu'ara 26:150-152).

Based on this, *islah* is a noble moral value that we must seek to attain. Only the positive persons among us carry out *islah*, resolve

disputes, do not like to see conflicts or fighting around them, want to mend discord between people, and step in to do so, knowing that they are doing something liked by Allah and His messenger.

Allah, Exalted be He, teaches us a great lesson by commanding us to behave in this polite way: **“Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend,”** (Fussilat 41:34). This is to say you should take the initiative, do good, and do not wait until the other side with whom you have a dispute comes to you. The reward goes to the one that takes the lead and seeks reconciliation. If you fail, your favor will at least soften their hearts.

There are also related verses from the Bible, such as:

**“For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor,”** (Jeremiah 7:5).

**“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted,”** (Galatians 6:1).

*Islah* is an approach that many people are required to adopt: the ruler and their subjects, the boss and their employees, the family’s guardian with their dependents, friends with one another. All should enjoin what is good and forbid what is wrong. This is one of the clearest themes of *islah*, which takes the course of wisdom and good instruction.

There is no good in our souls unless we make amendments as a culture. How far from the messenger of Allah we will be if we give up this conduct? Reassess your attitude and bring yourself into account before you are taken into account.

Ask yourself: Why do I quarrel and do not apologize or forgive? Why don't I step in to reconcile between my family or colleagues? This is negligence. You have to change yourself and be the one who amends (*muslih*).

Teach your children the merit of settlement and amendment. Teach them how to apologize and forgive to lead a happy life. Through this good conduct, personal and domestic disputes can disappear, giving room for a suitable environment to raise good children to be beneficial to themselves and their nation.

Let us practice this good conduct to hopefully become the ones who make amends among people.

On the other hand, amendment/settlement is also handled by the person who is in charge, such as the family guardian, as well as the official in charge of amending the administration, workplace, education, etc., in a way that boosts production, work, growth, engagement, consultation, cooperation, and joy among people.

This also includes the correction of society's ethics and morals, through enjoining what is good and prohibiting what is wrong (*al-amr bil-ma'ruf wan-nahi anil-munkar*), disseminating and acquainting people with the noble traits of character, and inviting people to follow what God has commanded and refrain from what He has forbidden.

In general, a person with this good manner does not like to see anything with a flaw, to the extent that they would stop the car to remove a stone from the road for fear it could hurt others. This is what the messenger of Allah meant when he said **“the removal of harmful object from the road ... is a branch of faith (*iman*).”**

As explained above, the other side of *islah* is self-correction. The one who holds this manner blames themselves for being negligent

and therefore strives to correct themselves. This applies to the student who seeks to obtain higher marks, the worker who wants to boost productivity and quality, and so on. It is a manner that moves a person to develop and correct themselves during their lifetime and prepare themselves for the Hereafter. It protects whoever practices it. So it would be good if it is taught to schoolchildren to help them succeed.

*Islah* is a good manner that reveals a constructive, positive character. We hope to see people observing it.

## 18- Giving Food

Giving food to those who need it is a good manner. The person who does this loves to interact with people through something they love – giving food. So the one who gives food sees that feeding the poor, their neighbors, and those around them is something that pleases and comforts them.

The messenger of Allah has instructed us to give food, saying: **“Feed people, strengthen the ties of kinship, and be in prayer when others are asleep, you will enter Paradise in peace.”** He, peace be upon him, has made us love giving food to others and dislike selfishness. Allah says: **“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend – indeed, Allah is Knowing of it,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:92), i.e. we are required, in order to attain Allah’s reward, to feed others from what we eat and love.

Many Quranic verses encourage us to feed people, such as: **“And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive, [Saying], ‘We feed you only for the countenance of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude,’”** (Al-Insan 76:8-9).

In the Bible, we find the following verses:

**“He who has a generous eye will be blessed, For he gives of his bread to the poor,”** (Proverbs 22:9).

**“Give alms from your possessions, and do not let your eye begrudge the gift when you make it. Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor, and the face of God will not be turned away from you,”** (Tobit 4:7).

This longer verse from the Gospel of Mathew is worth quoting at length:

**“Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me,’”** (Mathew 25:34-40).

It is known in Christianity that if someone refrains from feeding the poor, they will be denied heaven (Matthew 25). Therefore, giving food is a good manner that teaches you not to eat alone and nor leave those around you hungry. Rather, you should find those who need food and feed them, be generous with others, and be delighted to please them – just as God has clothed you and provided you with sufficient sustenance. You should thank God for His provision by showing kindness to His servants.

Similarly, many Quranic verses state that not giving food when you are capable of doing so is a path to Hell. Allah says: **“Except the companions of the right, [Who will be] in gardens, questioning each other About the criminals, [And asking them], ‘What put you into *Saqar*?’ They will say, ‘We were not of those who prayed, Nor did we used to feed the poor,’”** (Al-Muddathir 74:39-44). Just as giving food to the needy is a path to Paradise, refraining from doing so is a path to Hell.

I think food should not only be given to the poor and the needy. Rather, if a wealthy man invites someone to a banquet, he should take care of them and extend warm hospitality that makes them feel that he has spared no effort in welcoming them. So let us instruct our children to be generous and enjoy taking care of others, and not to be mean.

This conduct can be taught to children at home. If they see their parents doing it, they will learn it from them. Let us be role models for our children. Let them see us happy while providing the best of what we have to our guests.

How beautiful this manner is! It implies the values of altruism, love, and good treatment. It is a path to Paradise, as the messenger of Allah has informed us.

Giving food could be simple and inexpensive. We see people setting up public fountains (*sabeels*) providing fresh water to the public for free – and water is the cheapest. So why don't we see a food *sabeel* in Egypt providing the popular staple of fava beans, for example, to the public for free? Beans are a cheap food and well-liked in Egypt. Let us give food, no matter how small in quantity or how cheap it is. A low-income person can cook one or two kilograms of beans and share them with others. Many of us can do this. This would be a good manner that spurs the person to action and prevents them from sleeping while their neighbor is hungry. Their true happiness is in feeding their neighbor.

This is a manner that spreads happiness in communities, brings hearts together, and teaches the value of selflessness. Let us be conscientious about giving food, no matter how little it is, and instruct our children to practice this good manner.

## **19- Moderation and Not Committing Excess**

Moderation means that someone's behavior is balanced and reasonable and is not extreme, with no excess or extravagance, particularly in spending money. Allah, Exalted be He, commands us not to be like those who commit excess, saying:

**“And be not excessive. Indeed, He does not like those who commit excess,”** (Al-An'am 6:141).

**“And eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess,”** (Al-A'raf 7:31).

**“And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck or extend it completely and [thereby] become blamed and insolvent,”** (Al-Isra 17:29).

**“And [they are] those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or sparingly but are ever, between that, [justly] moderate,”** (Al-Furqan 25:67).

I inferred this manner from a recounted saying (*hadith*) of the prophet, peace be upon him, that reads:

**“A group of three men came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet asking how the Prophet (peace be upon him) worshipped [Allah], and when they were informed about that, they seemed to consider it insufficient and said, ‘Where are we from the Prophet as his past and future sins have been forgiven?’ Then one of them said, ‘I will offer the prayer throughout the night forever.’ The other said, ‘I will fast throughout the year and will not break my fast.’ The third said, ‘I will keep away from women and will not**

**marry forever.’ Allah’s Messenger came to them and said, ‘Are you the same people who said so-and-so? By Allah, I am more submissive to Allah and more afraid of Him than you; yet I fast and break my fast, I do sleep and I also marry women. So he who does not follow my *Sunnah* in religion is not from me [out of my followers].’”**

In this *hadith*, the prophet wanted to say that the good manner brought to us by Islam is moderation. He presented himself as an example of leading a normal life – praying and sleeping at night, fasting and breaking the fast, and marrying. It was crucial to see how leading his everyday life did not prevent him from offering acts of worship, including prayer and fasting. He wanted to present Islam as an easy, normal, moderate religion in a way that draws people away from any hardline understanding. The one who observes moderation in religion is eager to follow the prophet’s *Sunnah* (action following his example). It is such a beautiful manner, one that Allah has bestowed upon anyone He blessed with the true understanding of religion. When you understand, you will love and be interested in following in the footsteps of the prophet (peace be upon him).

All these things reveal the manners of someone with balanced and rational behaviors, one who preserves their health and wealth because they behave in a rational, wise way without committing excess.

Any disruption in this balance leads to unfavorable results. Leading a life outside the moderate understanding of religion can produce an uncontrollable person, one who steers away from the commandments of Allah and His messenger. A hardline understanding of religion could lead to extremism and radicalism, or worse. This will not be the fault of those people who are committed to the religion, or the religion itself, but rather the failure to maintain a moderate religious approach. Allah has made us a moderate community, saying: **“And thus we have made**

**you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you,”** (Al-Baqara 2:143).

I will mention here an example from the Bible calling for moderation: **“Of the following things do not be ashamed, and do not sin to save face ... of profit from dealing with merchants, and of frequent disciplining of children, and of drawing blood from the back of a wicked slave,”** (Sirach 42:1-5).

Here is another calling for balance in observing religion, without a strong inclination to one side or the other: **“Do not be overly righteous, Nor be overly wise: Why should you destroy yourself?”** (Ecclesiastes 7:16).

This means that you should not try to present yourself as being too righteous in an unappealing way, one that makes friends and family turn away from you. One example could be someone who spends all their day in prayer, and does not spend time with their family under this pretext. The following verse from Paul the Apostle to the Romans also calls for moderation: **“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith,”** (Romans 12:3).

The one who observes this manner understands that they are invited to maintain moderation and not commit excess in everything, whether it be material things like food, drink, spending, etc., in addition to acts of worship.

It is not an easy job. It needs practice, role models, and lessons learned. How many rich people have wasted their wealth by spending a lot of money on excessively luxurious things? The result can be that

they end up losing their money and going bankrupt! This also applies to matters that affect your health, and in everything provided by Allah that human beings may fail to keep in balance.

I wish there would be a lesson taught to schoolchildren encouraging them to be moderate and not to be extravagant. They can learn how to preserve Allah's bounties in a balanced, rational way and refrain from profligacy.

A person who maintains a moderate approach in every aspect of their life will become a sensible, sober person. People will be happy to make friends with them. They will carry out things in a fair, just way. They will save themselves and those around them. This will qualify the moderate person to succeed in life. From the very beginning, we should comprehend that this manner needs understanding and practice until we become able to maintain it. How beautiful this good conduct is!

## 20- Apologizing

It is a good manner to be able to make an apology for something you have done. Quranic verses explain the positive nature of apologizing, such as:

**“Except for those who repent and correct themselves and make evident [what they concealed]. Those – I will accept their repentance, and I am the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful,”** (Al-Baqara 2:160).

**“And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins – and who can forgive sins except Allah? – and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:135), and many others.

These verses speak about remembering God and repenting from sins and faults. It is a good manner. Only a person who is critical of themselves in a self-aware way can observe it. They are a person who brings themselves into account before they are brought into account on the Day of Judgment, one who takes a second look at their actions, and if they are right, they proceed, but if they are wrong, they repent and apologize.

Apologizing is a call for peace that comforts the one who apologizes and dispels the feeling of needing to fight. Forgiveness is, of course, a major theme in the New Testament, and the following Bible verse relates to this:

**“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you,”** (Ephesians 4:32).

Another example is the parable of the prodigal son: **“I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants,’”** (Luke 15:18-19).

The person who quickly moves to be the first party to apologize is indeed well-mannered; one who believes there is nothing wrong with apologizing even if they have not done anything wrong. They are not the lesser person for doing so. Instead, by making an apology, they confirm to the person they disagreed with or offended that they did not mean it, and that they regret what happened.

Having the good manner of being ready to make an apology when necessary is a cultural trait that starts from childhood. The family should check on their children, see what they do, and always maintain that the right course of action if a child has made a mistake is to apologize. Crucially, the family must instruct the child regarding how and when to apologize.

There is a fine line between a sincere apology and fabricating excuses, or coming up with reasons for a mistake. The student might claim they got sick in order to cover up the fact that they did not complete an assignment. The student’s family might even help by getting a fake certificate for sick leave! By doing so, we give false testimony, teach our children how to lie, and give up the good manner of apologizing. All these are bad lessons that divert the child from the way of discipline that pleases God Almighty.

It will be more honorable for the student who did not do their homework to apologize to their teacher and say they forgot or neglected it, instead of lying. In my opinion, the teacher should pardon the student and give them another opportunity; this would motivate

the student and also reward them for being brave enough to apologize and not simply lie to cover up the mistake.

There is a vast difference between apologizing and creating excuses. The former reveals good conduct, while the latter reveals lying and worthless talk.

Let us all try to embrace the culture of apologizing, even if this would force us to deal with the consequences. It is far better than making fake excuses or refusing to apologize at all, which could complicate things.

The daily squabbles between spouses may grow until, God forbid, they end up getting a divorce and breaking up their family. This would have been due to the absence of a “culture of apology.” If the one who made the mistake apologizes, they can avert a major crisis and all its negative repercussions.

The good manner of apologizing can take the form of kind, pleasing words, a gift, or giving something of this nature to the other party. This will be consistent with Allah’s saying: **“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend,”** (Fussilat 41:34).

Many international conflicts could have been nipped in the bud by apologizing. Wars claim the lives of thousands of people, perhaps because of the absence of an “apology culture.”

Let us review our attitudes and be up to the responsibility, so that whenever we make a mistake against others, we must apologize and not become arrogant. Apologizing is surely among the list of good manners.

One of the most wonderful Quranic parables about the merits of apologizing is the supplication made by Prophet Jonah (Yunus), referred to in the verses below, known in Arabic as *Dhan-Nun* (the man of the fish), after he had been swallowed by the whale. Allah says: **“And [mention] the man of the fish, when he went off in anger and thought that We would not decree [anything] upon him. And he called out within the darknesses, ‘There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.’ So We responded to him and saved him from the distress. And thus do We save the believers,”** (Al-Anbiya 21:87-88).

Let us learn and memorize this verse, which implies an apology that we should repeat in our daily lives. Let us take Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) as an example. The supplication in the verse includes a secret that allowed Prophet Jonah to be released following his apology. This supplication was revealed to him from God: **“There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.”** Let us memorize this formula for apologizing to God Almighty, hoping that as He had saved Prophet Jonah He will save us, with His permission.

## 21- Recognizing Favors

When I speak about the idea of recognizing favors, I mean that a person should be aware of the services and favors given to them by the people around them, and feel that they owe what they have to others and they are grateful for others' good conduct. This could be within the family, such as thanking one's parents, or in daily life, such as thanking a teacher at school, a doctor for treating a patient, or a friend or any other person who did a favor or good deed.

As a good manner, the recognition of favors requires us to be appreciative, and not thankless. It is indeed based on thankfulness. It may also develop from simple gratitude into faithfully returning the favor. This means that it turns into positive behavior just as if you would say: "I will not forget what you have offered to me, I feel and appreciate it, and now I am happy to give you what I can to express my gratitude for the favor you have given to me, even if you do not demand it, but I'm ready to do it." These concepts are based on the verses: **"Is the reward for good [anything] but good?"** (Ar-Rahman 55:60) and **"And do not forget graciousness between you. Indeed Allah, of whatever you do, is Seeing,"** (Al-Baqara 2:237).

Dutifulness to one's elderly parents is a great example of this manner. You should honestly enjoy caring for your parents out of appreciation for what they did, even if they may have displayed some behaviors you did not like. You should not forget the graciousness of your parents, and should show a desire to repay the debt you owe them, in gratitude for what they did for you.

For the greatness of this manner, the messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), recommended us to recompense the one who does us a favor, saying: **“Requite him who does a favor to you, but if you are unable to requite him, go on praying for him till you are sure that you have requited him adequately.”** In the Quran, we see this manner in the parable of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) with the two women when he helped them and give water to their flocks in the Sinai desert. Then their father sent one of them to Moses, and she said: **“Indeed, my father invites you that he may reward you for having watered for us,”** (Al-Qasas 28:25). So their father wanted to recompense Moses in gratitude for the favor he did.

There are many verses in the Bible about gratefulness, including:

**“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,”** (I Thessalonians 1:2).

**“And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me,’”** (Matthew 25:40).

**“To make it known that one must rise before the sun to give you thanks, and must pray to you at the dawning of the light; for the hope of an ungrateful person will melt like wintry frost, and flow away like waste water,”** (Wisdom 16:28-29).

**“Be very grateful to the high priest Onias, since for his sake the Lord has granted you your life,”** (2 Maccabees 3:33).

Nations are built upon this manner and they make progress by it. The citizen who gratefully recognizes the favor of their homeland and seeks to return the favor and serve it with all their heart – through defending and developing it – is well-mannered and will please their nation. Why

don't our textbooks contain the moral values of recognizing the favors we have received and feeling gratitude for them?

Let us reassess and remember who has done us a favor or stood by us. Let us meet their love with love, their noble stance with a noble stance, and feel that we owe them and will not rest until we repay the debt.

Look to your nanny, if you had one; perhaps her children need help. Look to your teachers and be dutiful to them as you are to your parents. Look for whoever helped you at the beginning of your life and think about how to help and please them. Look for whoever had done you a favor and tell them: "Thank you; I will never forget your favor, I will be pleased if you ask me to do whatever I could." This is the gratefulness that God loves to see His slaves have.

Whoever has this good manner knows the favor of God and His messenger, and will try to repay the debt by worshiping Him, and being obedient to Him and His messenger, and seeking to do what pleases Them.

It is time to give priority to classes in school dealing with morals, more than anything else. A class on morals must be taught in school, and through this we will construct something positive, building from each day to the next.

## 22- Holding Fast to Allah

In Arabic, *i'tisam* means to hold fast to Allah, who has ordered us to do so. Allah says: **“So those who believe in Allah and hold fast to Him – He will admit them to mercy from Himself and bounty and guide them to Himself on a straight path,”** (An-Nisa 4-175). The verse tells us about those who combine worship (*ibadah*) and putting trust in God (*tawakkul*) in all their affairs, that is, they hold fast to Allah and steer away from what displeases Him.

Several verses in the Bible stress this conduct, including:

**“Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle,”** (II Thessalonians 2:15).

**“But hold fast what you have till I come,”** (Revelation 2:25).

**“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,”** (John 6:68).

**“O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You,”** (II Chronicles 20:12).

Holding fast to Allah is the manner of the one who understands that God has the keys of everything, and becomes certain that only God can create benefit for them. Therefore, this person holds fast to God in everything in the world and in resisting the pleasures of life, based on a strong belief that only God can rescue them.

It is a manner that God Almighty loves to see His servants observing, for He has provided us with secrets of forbearance,

endurance, and survival that drive us to hold fast to what He has commanded us. This will discourage us from that which invokes His wrath. By holding fast to Allah, we come under His mercy and favor, and with which He guides us to the straight path, protects us, and grants us the best of success.

This manner corrects many concepts and guides us to the right path in life; those who lose out in life are those who have steered away from the path that pleases God, while the winners are those who have recognized that rescue lies in holding fast to Allah.

The question is: Why are we not keen on teaching our children this manner, and giving them this knowledge so that they may use it to protect themselves in life? It could keep them from committing many mistakes in their life. It makes their life more stable, calmer, and more peaceful. Let all of us, young and old, learn and observe this good manner.

## 23- Turning Away

This manner is about turning away or leaving (*i'rad*) a thing that is not good. This behavior is explained in many Quranic verses, including:

**“And when you see those who engage in [offensive] discourse concerning Our verses, then turn away from them until they enter into another conversation. And if Satan should cause you to forget, then do not remain after the reminder with the wrongdoing people,”** (Al-An'am 6:68).

**“Take what is given freely, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the ignorant,”** (Al-A'raf 7:199).

Many other verses indicate the manner of turning away or avoiding wrongdoers. This protects us from sliding into error. If we find, for example, friends who have deviated from what they should be doing, or have given up their morals by drinking alcohol or taking drugs, we must turn away from them in order not to become like them.

Turning away can be the best way to avoid bad friends. How often have we seen a young man whose family exerted a lot of effort to educate him, and indeed he did turn out to be a respectable man, yet after he became friends with bad people, his behaviors and morals began to change?

The lesson learned here is to make better choices about who we make friends with, spend time with, or share things with. We should have the courage to turn away from them without feeling embarrassed – because by doing so we survive.

Do not believe that you are mature and experienced enough to say that such bad friends cannot affect you negatively. The result is almost inevitable – the bad impose their behavior on others with all kinds of persuasion and temptations. That is why the prophet warned us, saying: **“Man follows his friend’s religion, you should be careful who you take for friends.”**

We must be reasonable and cautious in social gatherings and be careful in the people we choose. At the same time, if we discover something suspicious, we should be quick to turn away from anyone whose friendship we feel will distance us from godly people, and who will not draw us closer to Allah.

Let us learn how to say no when it is appropriate, and how to apologize for not attending an event that we do not like or an outing that could negatively affect our morals. We should not blindly follow any trends or behaviors in society. Each one of us has his own life, convictions, and principles and we have nothing to do with others’ affairs. Let us protect our children, spouses, and homes from these social gatherings that could undermine our morals. Let us and our family members make friends with the kind of people that we can learn from, the kind we can use as an example of good manners. These are the kind of people who, when they gather together, can increase our morals rather than negatively affecting them.

Many verses in the Bible tackle the manner of turning away, including:

**“Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,”** (II Timothy 2:22-24).

**“But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition,”** (Titus 3:9-10).

**“Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them,”** (Romans 16:17).

**“Having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”** (II Timothy 3:5).

**“Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful,”** (Psalms 1:1).

Learn to say no, because it may spare you many troubles if you say it at the right time to preserve your respect. Let us realize that “no” is an act that could prevent you from blindly following others and sliding into error. Let us teach it to our children to motivate them not to be ashamed of saying it as long as it is said in the right time. This is the best protection for them.

## **24- Giving Others Their Rights, with Respect**

It is a good manner to give other people their rights, or what is owed to them, and to do so in a respectful way, and to say kind words that satisfy others.

When you do this, you consider two things:

First, do not commit the sin of rebuffing the one who is asking, as is indicated in the Quranic verse: **“And as for the petitioner, do not repel [him],”** (Ad-Dhuha 93:10). This means we should not tell the petitioner anything that would anger or embarrass them. The petitioner has a right to make their request without being repelled or hurt by a word from the giver.

Second, do not commit the sin of “oppressing” people. Allah has prohibited oppression in many verses of the Quran, including: **“So as for the orphan, do not oppress [him],”** (Ad-Dhuha 93:9). The person who follows this moral is keen to give people their due rights. This person neither accepts oppression nor humiliation for people from anyone. If this happens, this person steps in to support them.

The Bible says:

**“Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor,”** (Romans 13:7).

**“Do not keep over until the next day the wages of those who work for you, but pay them at once,”** (Tobit 4:14).

**“Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to the Lord, and it be sin to you,”** (Deuteronomy 24:15).

Therefore, the person who observes this conduct renders people their due. This person may even cause themselves some kind of harm in order to support others and to only say good words to them.

This is a moral value that is sorely lacking in many of our relationships these days. The absence of sound religious awareness about the ethics of transactions has led to millions of legal disputes clogging up the courts. Many such lawsuits come about because people are not given their due rights, or their rights are wrongfully gobbled up by others. Allah, Glory be to Him, loves it when people take their full rights while also being satisfied and respected.

Let us render to the people their due. Let us show interest in supporting those who have a right and give them their right without oppression or pushing them away.

Every official who is responsible for people’s affairs should remember this conduct and observe it so that the people’s hearts will be filled with satisfaction and comfort. Support people, so that Allah may support you.

This is not inborn conduct, it is acquired through seeing, learning, practicing, and following up. If this is true, then the state should not leave it to the family to teach its members. Rather, this manner should be included in textbooks that build the Egyptian character, which the state is planning for and taking steps to build.

## 25- Respecting Others

Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, taught us to respect our elders and call one another with the best of names and titles. He used to call his companions with the best of epithets, such as *Al-Siddiq* (a man of truth) for Abu Bakr, *Al-Faruq* (the one who distinguishes truth from falsehood) for Omar ibn al-Khattab, *Tajir al-Rahman* (God's merchant) for Abdul-Rahman ibn Awf, *Saifullah al-Maslul* (Sword of God) for Khalid ibn al-Walid, and so on.

The Quran prohibits mocking anyone, in the verse: **“O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent – then it is those who are the wrongdoers,”** (Al-Hujurat 49:11).

The Bible addresses this subject in many verses, including:

**“That no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother,”** (I Thessalonians 4:6).

**“Mockery and abuse issue from the proud, but vengeance lies in wait for them like a lion,”** (Sirach 27:28).

**“In honor giving preference to one another,”** (Romans 12:10).

Unfortunately, bullying has become rampant among young people today. You can find a group of young people laughing at, verbally abusing, or even beating one of their peers. They might make them

a source of mockery all day long. How ugly this behavior is in the sight of God!

God Almighty loves to see us respecting one another and does not love to see or hear this scornful behavior. The person you laugh at was created by God, and God's creation must be respected, and we should not use any offensive language toward this person or abuse them.

We should be well aware of our relationships, notice our children and their relations, and teach them this good conduct: respect for others.

If we want people to respect us, we should respect them first. Showing respect for others obliges them to use the same behavior in dealing with you. The language of mutual respect can never include mockery or abusive words.

The state should also show good examples in the media. Our children learn from what they watch and listen to. So let the media outlets, through their on-air personalities and guests, use decent language. Otherwise we will have future generations who, God forbid, have learned offensive language from media figures. God Almighty dislikes this and does not accept it.

Meanwhile, this manner also includes respect for the opinions of others, respect for people of other religions, respect for people of different races and skin colors, respect for the disabled, and respect for whoever is different from you in any way. The true Muslim who observes this manner knows that an Arab is no better than a non-Arab except by piety, as Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: **“All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action.”**

Therefore, this person knows that God has made us peoples and tribes that we may know one another. Allah says: **“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted,”** (Al-Hujurat 49:13). In this verse, “knowing one another” means mutual love and respect, as well as peaceful coexistence. There could be common interests amongst us, therefore, having the good manner of respect is one of the foundational manners by which coexistence may progress to its ideal form. The one who respects others and their diversity will also respect law, public morals, and people’s privacy and feelings.

This manner accompanies the one who holds it wherever they go. They are keen to be committed to it, respecting all those around them. They believe in it, take it as a principle in life, and like others to show respect for them as well.

This manner is connected to all aspects of life and coexistence among people. The state should give it priority in school textbooks and formulate laws to protect the community to ensure respect for differences and protect against discrimination and bullying. This is how we can build a better future.

## **26- Helping Those in Distress**

Each of us should take charge of a situation and help those in crisis, and not give up on them. In times of distress, you may find some people saying: “We have nothing to do with this,” or “God will help them,” or “Why should we intervene?” But others may have the courage to help, and this is a moral we must encourage.

The prophet has said: **“The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever.”**

Helping those in need is one of God’s Attributes, since He responds to the distressed. Allah says: **“Is He [not best] who responds to the desperate one when he calls upon Him and removes evil and makes you inheritors of the earth? Is there a deity with Allah? Little do you remember,”** (An-Naml 27:62)

Verses of the Bible also shed light on the merit of helping those in need, such as:

**“Everyone helped his neighbor, And said to his brother, ‘Be of good courage!’”** (Isaiah 41:6).

**“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all,”** (I Thessalonians 5:14).

It is highly respectable that you observe this manner, which God has commanded us to do. How can someone be well-mannered and yet leave others to perish in a situation where they are in need of urgent

help? This is true even when the person in distress has not made any direct appeals for help. As long as you see or know that someone is in dire need of help, you should provide it.

In our lives, we will see vulnerable people who need help. How then can we abandon them? Isn't it possible that the situation might someday be reversed, and we find ourselves or our children or our loved ones in a desperate position? If you were in distress, wouldn't you hope that God will send someone who loves helping those in need to get you out of your crisis?

Relieving those in need can be seen as an approach to education. We have to be a role model for those who take us as an example. Let us take care of our neighbors, family, friends, and those around us, for they may need our help in a crisis. Thus we will be enacting this good manner of helping the distressed.

We have seen news of natural disasters, civil wars, and other calamities that have resulted in the displacement of thousands of families. We see how those people have become homeless. What action are we taking in relation to these humanitarian disasters? Any action at all? We will be held accountable for this on the Day of Judgment. How can we continue our daily routine after hearing about or seeing such calamities and yet failing to take any positive move to help?

As the saying goes, "What goes around comes around," and God Almighty loves to see us practicing kindness and compassion amongst each other. Helping the distressed is but one kind of affection and fellowship.

How beautiful and great this manner is! Observe how the prophet, peace be upon him, said:

**“He who removes from a believer one of his difficulties of this world, Allah will remove one of his troubles on the Day**

**of Resurrection; and he who finds relief for a hard-pressed person, Allah will make things easy for him on the Day of Resurrection; he who covers up (the faults and sins) of a Muslim, Allah will cover up (his faults and sins) in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah supports His slave as long as the slave is supportive of his brother.”**

This manner creates distinguished people with morality and honors. Nations with a solid outlook work on building the characteristics of the personality from the early stages of education and upbringing, thus providing the logical premises that could lead to good results in the future. Congratulations to those who learn and observe the manner of coming to the aid of others.

## **27- Making Space for Others**

Making space for others is a good manner, one that is mentioned in this noble verse of the Quran:

**“O you who have believed, when you are told, ‘Space yourselves’ in assemblies, then make space; Allah will make space for you. And when you are told, ‘Arise,’ then arise; Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is Acquainted with what you do,”** (Al-Mujadila 58:11).

We all must make room for others in our gatherings, roads, sidewalks, or anywhere at all. Do not do something when it is not your turn, but instead let others take their turn, and in some contexts, allowing them their chance will let them demonstrate the fruit of their labors.

If you are at an open buffet, give preference to others; if you are in a line, give preference to those who are tired; and if you are in public transportation, give up your seat to the elderly or women. Someone who upholds this good manner does not mind stopping their car to allow someone else’s car to pass or to let a pedestrian cross the road. This is the conduct of someone who does not jostle people in general. It is thus the manner of the selfless, those who care about other people more than themselves. They are friendly and treat people kindly, making room for others if they are asked to, or if they find they are duty-bound to do so.

Let us instruct our children to make space for others, particularly for the elderly, those who need help, people with special needs, etc.

It is a good behavior that contains within it the concepts of altruism, gallantry, and wishing for others what we wish for ourselves. The prophet said: **“No one of you shall become a true believer until he desires for his brother what he desires for himself.”** Therefore this is a manner of the believers, and is one of the noble and praiseworthy character traits.

Similarly, the Bible encourages this conduct in some of its verses, such as:

**“And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise,”** (Luke 6:31).

**“You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man,”** (Leviticus 19:32).

## **28- Promoting Greeting (As-Salam)**

*As-Salam* is the word for peace and is a greeting in Arabic; it is also one of Allah's Names. Allah says:

**“Allah is He, other than Whom there is no other god; the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme: Glory to Allah! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him,”** (Al-Hashr 59:23).

*Salam* is the greeting of the dwellers of Paradise. Allah says:

**“Their call therein will be, ‘Exalted are You, O Allah,’ and their greeting therein will be, ‘Peace.’ And the last of their call will be, ‘Praise to Allah, Lord of the worlds!’”** (Yunus 10:10).

**“And those who believed and did righteous deeds will be admitted to gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding eternally therein by permission of their Lord; and their greeting therein will be, ‘Peace!’”** (Ibrahim 14:23).

We are commanded to send greetings (*Salam* or “Peace”) to those around us. It is also a greeting from the Quran, which states:

**“Say, [O Muhammad], ‘Praise be to Allah, and peace upon His servants whom He has chosen,’”** (An-Naml 27:59).

**“And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace,”** (Al-Furqan 25:63).

All these verses instruct us that *Salam* is the greeting of Islam.

Some verses of the Bible also speak about this topic, including:

**“But whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house,’”**  
(Luke 10:5).

**“Greet one another with a holy kiss,”** (I Corinthians 16:20 and II Corinthians 13:12).

**“Live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you,”**  
(II Corinthians 13:11).

**“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men,”** (Romans 12:18).

*Salam* denotes security, peace, and reassurance. We find this meaning in many Quranic verses, including:

**“Peace upon Noah among the worlds”** (As-Saffat 37:79).

When Jesus (peace be upon him) spoke to the people in the cradle, he said: **“And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the day I am raised alive,”** (Mariam 19:33).

Entering Paradise will be with peace: **“Enter it in peace. This is the Day of Eternity,”** (Qaf 50:34).

Regarding the revered Night of Decree (*Lailat-ul-Qadr*) in Ramadan, which is better than a thousand months, Allah says: **“Peace it is until the emergence of dawn,”** (Al-Qadr 97:5).

Many verses speak about the Islamic greeting of *Salam*. When a Muslim meets someone or enters a house, they say *“As-salamu alykum,”* which is usually translated as “Peace be upon you,” and connotes a feeling of reassurance and security, that is to say “I’ve come to you peacefully.” This is the core of faith and a name for Allah, Exalted be He.

When I was young, I used to spend my annual summer vacation in my village of Shubra Shehab, located to the north of Cairo in al-Qanater al-Khayriya, Qalubiya. There, I saw that not a single person would meet or pass by another without greeting them with “*Salam.*” And the other person would respond with a better greeting. This is one of the moral values of people in the countryside. Unfortunately, this value is missing in the city, even though it is a duty and manner that God likes us to do.

Let us make it a habit to give our greetings to other people and smile in their faces.

Based on everything I have laid out above, I am fairly certain that greeting others is a manner stressed by all divine religions, even if the specific words used may vary. For example, Muslims use the specific word *Salam*, whereas Christianity encourages greeting others without specifying certain phrases.

Simply to smile in the faces of others is an expression of love, appreciation, and good feelings. This is the meaning and message of this moral value.

## **29- Giving to and Respecting the Petitioner**

It is a good Islamic conduct to help someone who comes to you in need and is asking or petitioning you for aid, and this is something our prophet (peace be upon him) taught us. God Almighty orders us to respect the petitioner.

God tells us first and foremost that we are not actually giving to a petitioner from assets that are ours, rather, this money is the petitioner's due and they have a right to it, because this money comes from God to us. So would it make sense for us to disrespect, rebuff, or verbally abuse the person who comes to claim their right? The one who has a right must be honored and they must collect their right in full.

Allah says: **“And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived,”** (Adh-Dhariyat 51:19). Then there is the verse **“And as for the petitioner, do not repel [him],”** (Ad-Dhuha 93:10), which instructs us not to hurt the petitioner verbally, nor to be harsh with them – not even a little! Rather, we must give to them if we can, or at least be kind if we cannot give. Do not blame or reproach them, but speak to them in an appropriate way.

In this regard, I cite the following verses from the Bible:

**“Do not say to your neighbor, ‘Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it,’ When you have it with you,”** (Proverbs 3:28).

**“He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, And He will pay back what he has given,”** (Proverbs 19:17).

**“He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy,”** (Proverbs 14:31).

**“Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king,”** (I Peter 2:17).

Many people may not be aware of this behavior and might be unfriendly toward someone asking for aid. So let us speak properly, and instruct our children how to respect and honor the petitioner and be kind to them in words, and if possible with money, food, clothing, etc. In this way, they can observe this good conduct.

The first thing is that you must always keep in mind is that the assets from which you give are not yours. Rather, we are made “successors” to it, as the Quran states (Al-Hadid 57:7), meaning we have been given the authority to dispose of it. So you are in fact giving charity to the one who has a right to your money, because Allah has bestowed this money on you to give from it to the one who has a right to it. This understanding drives us to give charity, corrects other misconceptions, and corrects our way of spending so that it is always accompanied by an appropriate way of speaking. This is the kind of good conduct we need in our lives.

### 30- Honoring Orphans

Honoring orphans is something kindhearted people do, and people who are generous with children who have lost their parents will honor and compensate these orphans with sympathy, good words, and care.

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was an orphan. His father died first and then his mother followed, so he experienced the feeling of being an orphan and showed sympathy toward orphans. He instructed Muslims to care for orphans, as is stated in this well-known *hadith*: **“I will be like this in the Garden with the person who takes care of an orphan. And the Messenger of Allah raised his forefinger and middle finger by way of illustration.”** This indicates how great God’s reward for those who look after orphans is. The person who takes care of an orphan will be at the same level in Paradise with the prophet, peace be upon him. It is a great and wonderful secret for attaining the highest levels of the Garden of Paradise.

The one who observes this manner knows and understands this secret, and therefore has decided that it is their path to Paradise. This is because not all people can provide full guardianship to an orphan. Sympathy, kindness, and honor are the least we can do. Many Quranic verses speak about the merits of honoring orphans, prohibit abusing them, and urge preserving their property. This gives us an impression of the extent of God’s love of orphans and their guardians. From among these verses, we have: **“Did He not find you an orphan and give [you] refuge?”** (Ad-Dhuha 93:6), and another in the same *Surah* that prohibits mistreatment of orphans: **“So as for the orphan, do not oppress [him],”** as well as: **“Have**

**you seen the one who denies the Recompense? For that is the one who drives away the orphan,”** (Al-Ma’un 107:1-2).

The Quran is not only against taunting, oppressing, and abusing orphans, but urges us to honor them with kind words and good treatment as well. It criticizes those who do not take this approach in dealing with orphans. Allah says: **“No! But you do not honor the orphan,”** (Al-Fajr 89:17).

The worst form of abuse that people commonly do to orphans is to take their property while they are still young, when they do not yet know how to keep it safe. Allah, Exalted be He, prohibits us from doing this: **“And do not approach the orphan’s property except in a way that is best until he reaches maturity,”** (Al-An’am 6:152), and warns us against consuming the orphan’s property unjustly: **“Indeed, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly are only consuming into their bellies fire. And they will be burned in a Blaze,”** (An-Nisa 4:10).

Allah also enjoins us to treat orphans with kindness: **“And they ask you about orphans. Say, ‘Improvement for them is best. And if you mix your affairs with theirs – they are your brothers,’”** (Al-Baqara 2:220), and also encourages us to look after and pay due attention to orphans: **“And give to the orphans their properties and do not substitute the defective [of your own] for the good [of theirs]. And do not consume their properties into your own. Indeed, that is ever a great sin,”** (An-Nisa 4:2).

You should prioritize the orphan when it comes to giving food, because they are young and no longer have a parent to be the breadwinner, and the orphan may be embarrassed to ask for food. Allah says: **“Or feeding on a day of severe hunger. An orphan of near relationship,”** (Al-Balad 90:14-15).

In this regard, I mention verses from the Bible that seem to very similar to the above Quranic ones, such as:

**“Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, The alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart Against his brother,”** (Zechariah 7:10).

**“A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, Is God in His holy habitation,”** (Psalms 68:5).

**“Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due the stranger, the fatherless, and widow.’ ‘And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’”** (Deuteronomy 27:19).

Starting now, let us begin a token guardianship, that is, to donate to orphanages and visit the orphans who live there, play with them, and distribute toys to them. Then if you would like to ascend to a higher level you can provide full guardianship, that is, to bring up an orphan like your own child. This is a high level which Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) spoke about.

Observing this manner is a secret of Paradise and a way to accompany the prophet on the Day of Resurrection.

So what will you do next, now that you have learned this? Are you still hesitant? Let us hurry to honor and sponsor the orphan.

## 31- Amity

The word in Arabic meaning amity, *ulfah*, is when you bring two things into harmony, and the word can also connote familiarity, harmony, friendship, love, affection, and concord.

To the best of my understanding, when you describe someone as *aleef* (the adjective form of *ulfah*) you mean that they are kind and simple, and people like their friendship and do not avoid them. When you describe a cat as *aleef*, you mean it is tamed and you do not fear it or worry that there will be any sudden change in its behavior. Likewise, if someone is *aleef* you feel safe and comfortable for their calmness, behaviors, controlled reactions, and good friendship.

We are all born with an original, natural disposition (*fitra*) of having our hearts brought together in harmony. As time passes, some people's behavior may change either because they move away from sound, proper relationships with other people, or because they lack good conduct, or for a number of other reasons.

Allah says: **“But if they intend to deceive you – then sufficient for you is Allah. It is He who supported you with His help and with the believers. And brought together their hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have brought their hearts together; but Allah brought them together. Indeed, He is Exalted in Might and Wise,”** (Al-Anfal 8:62-63)

Many verses in the Bible call for amity, including:

**“Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is**

**knowledge, it will vanish away,”** (I Corinthians 13:8).

**“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you,”** (John 15:12).

**“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up,”** (I Corinthians 13:4).

**“And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him,”** (I John 4:16).

**“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul,”** (Acts 4:32).

**“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,”** (Philippians 2:1).

Amity (*ulfah*) also includes your efforts to bring people together and not come between them. If you find two friends having a disagreement, try to reunite them. If you find a husband having a dispute with his wife, and you can find a way to settle things between them, do so. *Ulfah* is about bringing people together, not dispersing them.

Let every one of us desire to be as kind as possible, to steer away from anything that could sow disagreement and tension, and to be a person who is moderate and reasonable, and who can wisely and intelligently reunite those who are in discord.

Friendships, relationships, and marriages are made good through amity. Allah has enjoined us to give to *al-mu'allafati qulubuhum* (those whose hearts are inclined to Islam) from *zakah* (compulsory charity) to encourage them to embrace Islam, thank God for this, and maintain this path.

Allah says: “***Zakah*** expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect [*zakah*] and for bringing hearts together [for Islam] and for freeing captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the [stranded] traveler – an obligation [imposed] by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise,” (At-Tawba 9:60).

So let amity be our manner with all due seriousness. Do not think this is an inborn behavior. It requires you to restrain your anger, to forgive, and be tolerant so that you can reach amity with those around you.

Let us be amicable to one another, not out of weakness but out of humility, sensibility, and by giving everyone a chance.

## 32- Trustworthiness

What I mean by trustworthiness (*amanah* in Arabic) is to be truthful with others, to keep safe what others have entrusted you, whether it be money, information, secrets, etc., and do not stop keeping this trust unless you have been given permission by the one who charged you with the task. So if you have something, you will keep it safe without any fear of losing it. In general, we describe someone as *amin* (trustworthy) if they keep safe what another has entrusted them with.

Trustworthiness is a manner that all of God's prophets and messengers possess. What follows are examples from the Quran.

One of the two women whom Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) met in Madyan described him as trustworthy: **“One of the women said, ‘O my father, hire him. Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong and the trustworthy,’”** (Al-Qasas 28:26). Prophet Moses also describes himself as trustworthy in another verse: **“[Saying], ‘Render to me the servants of Allah. Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy messenger,’”** (Ad-Dukhan 44:18).

Prophet Hud (peace be upon him) said: **“I convey to you the messages of my Lord, and I am to you a trustworthy adviser,”** (Al-A'raf 7:68).

Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) said: **“Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy messenger,”** (Ash-Shu'ara 26:143).

From this, we can see that trustworthiness is one of the noble character traits that the prophets and messengers of Allah had, and they were role models of good manners.

Allah, Exalted be He, orders us to render trust to whom it is due:

**“Then let him who is entrusted discharge his trust [faithfully] and let him fear Allah, his Lord,”** (Al-Baqara 2:283).

**“And they who are to their trusts and their promises attentive,”** (Al-Mu’minun 23:8).

**“O you who have believed, do not betray Allah and the Messenger or betray your trusts while you know [the consequence],”** (Al-Anfal 8:27).

**“Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due,”** (An-Nisa 4:58).

Other Quranic verses mention trustworthiness as a moral value that Allah likes to see His servants observing.

Many verses in the Bible also tackle the manner of trustworthiness, including:

**“A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished,”** (Proverbs 28:20).

**“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things,”** (Matthew 25:21).

**“He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much,”** (Luke 16:10).

**“Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful,”** (I Corinthians 4:2).

**“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life,”** (Revelation 2:10).

Trustworthiness keeps transactions and relationships stable. It leads to communal and familial peace because the breach or loss of trust is the main reason for conflicts, confrontations, and litigation. That is why all the divine messages have been keen to teach people to be trustworthy and faithful.

Let every one of us have trustworthiness as the most prominent characteristic of our personality. However, that being said, it requires practice. The parent and the employer should be an example to those around them. Let friends also take good care and preserve that which they have been entrusted by their friends.

A trustworthy person is keen to render trust to whom it is due. But if the trustworthy person is not confident enough in their ability, or feels that they are no longer able to render it the way they used to and in the manner that pleases God, they must not render that trust. This is because this person knows that Allah says: **“Indeed, we offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant,”** (Al-Ahzab 33:72).

Trustworthiness is a manner that we need to learn for ourselves in order to know when someone else is trustworthy, and to be able to tell if others have remained trustworthy or have betrayed what was entrusted to them. It is also important in order to know how to motivate other people to become trustworthy.

### **33- Compliance (with God's Commands)**

The person who has this manner feels happy to comply with God's commands and responds quickly to them, because they know what Allah's Book invites us to.

Here I will provide some Quranic verses in this respect, including:

**“It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error,”** (Al-Ahzab 33:36).

**“But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muhammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission,”** (An-Nisa 4:65).

**“And whoever submits his face to Allah while he is a doer of good – then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold. And to Allah will be the outcome of [all] matters,”** (Luqman 31:22). The one who complies with God's commands is pleased by the idea that God sees them, and they like to quickly comply with God's orders, knowing they are being seen doing so.

The compliant person has learned from the Quran's parables how God's messengers and the righteous people submitted to their Lord, knowing that these parables are meant to explain the merit of

compliance in the sight of Allah. They have opted for compliance as a manner, in order to stand firm.

One of these parables describes how Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim in Arabic), peace be upon him, told his son Ishmael (Ismail) that he had seen in a dream that he must sacrifice him. Ishmael, peace be upon him, complied. Allah says: **“And when he reached with him [the age of] exertion, he said, ‘O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think.’ He said, ‘O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, of the steadfast,’”** (As-Saffat 37:102).

The parable of the mother of Moses (peace be upon him) also reveals how she complied with how Allah had inspired her to throw her baby into the river. Her compliance led the baby to survive until God returned him to her. Allah says: **“And We inspired to the mother of Moses, ‘Suckle him; but when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear and do not grieve. Indeed, We will return him to you and will make him [one] of the messengers.’ And the family of Pharaoh picked him up [out of the river] so that he would become to them an enemy and a [cause of] grief. Indeed, Pharaoh and Haman and their soldiers were deliberate sinners,”** (Al-Qasas 28:7-8). The Quran has many other parables that imply this good manner of compliance with God’s commands.

In the Bible, we find the following verses that address compliance:

**“Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme,”** (I Peter 2:13).

**“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches,”** (Revelation 3:6).

**“Be quick to hear, but deliberate in answering,”** (Sirach 5:11).

**“My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother,”** (Proverbs 1:8).

The one who observes this manner is distinguished in their worship by submission to God’s commandments without argument or trying to avoid compliance. For example, a Muslim woman who wears a hijab (headscarf) should wear it in submission to God’s ordinance. And the ones who lower their gaze, guard their private parts, and refrain from drinking alcohol, they should do so in submission to God’s ordinance. So the important thing here is that there is a great difference between someone who performs the acts of worship because they were instructed to do so, and someone who performs them out of compliance and submission to God’s orders.

Those who served in the army know that carrying out your commander’s orders is crucial for military discipline, so what about compliance and submission to God’s commands?

May Allah make us love compliance with His ordinances!

## 34- Achievement

Should we consider achievement (*injaz* in Arabic) to be a moral value?

To answer this question, let us assume that, if someone who impedes other people's interests is a person of bad conduct, then therefore someone who carries out their interests is a person of good conduct. We can describe them as a person of achievement. In this sense, achievement is a moral value.

What I mean is that we as people should be gallant. If you are tasked with something, you have to achieve it. You should maintain this as a lifelong practice – whether in your relationship with God or your worldly affairs. So you should perform prayer when the time for it has arrived. If you are a student, you should complete your assignments promptly. If you are an employee, you should achieve what your boss has demanded you do in a certain manner. If you are a bureaucrat and someone has come to you to complete something for them, and you are in charge, you should perform your job quickly and positively. This is because carrying out the interests of the people is a form of trust, and making this easy is a form of good conduct that an official should observe.

The Quran urges people to achieve what they should do without delay. Allah says: **“O you who have believed, when [the *adhan*] is called for the prayer on the day of *Jumu'ah* [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew,”** (Al-Jumu'ah 62:9). It is a call to leave all that preoccupies us and go quickly to perform the Friday prayer.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, one of Prophet Muhammad's companions, said: **"I asked the Prophet, 'Which deed is the dearest to Allah?' He replied, 'To offer the prayers at their early stated fixed times.' I asked, 'What is the next (in goodness)?' He replied, 'To be good and dutiful to your parents.' I again asked, 'What is the next (in goodness)?' He replied, 'To participate in *Jihad* (religious fighting) in Allah's cause.' Abdullah added, 'He told me about these things. If I had asked him to tell me more, he would have told me more.'"**

This is the best evidence that the vigilant person who performs their prayers at their proper times is one who has noble character traits, in that they do those deeds that are dearest to God Almighty.

The verse **"O mankind, indeed you are laboring toward your Lord with [great] exertion and will meet it,"** (Al-Inshiqaq 84:6) indicates that every person laboring and exerting efforts in their work will be rewarded for their deeds on the Day of Judgement, each one according to their toil. Only those who display the good manner of achievement will be able to labor and carry out hard work.

The more a person is keen to achieve the work they are tasked with, the more they will have a good status in the Hereafter. In the Quranic verse **"But whoever desires the Hereafter and exerts the effort due to it while he is a believer – it is those whose effort is ever appreciated [by Allah],"** (Al-Isra 17:19), the phrase **"and exerts the effort due to it"** indicates that people vary in their love for exerting efforts and also in their intentions.

Prophet Muhammad is reported to have instructed someone, saying: **"Take advantage of five before [the arrival of] five [others]: Your youth before your old age, your health before your illness, your riches before your poverty, your free time before your work, and your life before your death."** All of these are stages of achievement that people go through.

I also found some verses of the Bible speaking about the same subject, including:

**“Nor did we eat anyone’s bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you,”** (II Thessalonians 3:8).

**“For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God,”** (I Thessalonians 2:9).

**“Be strong and of good courage, and do it; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord God – my God – will be with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord,”** (I Chronicles 28:20).

**“Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it diligently be done for the house of the God of heaven,”** (Ezra 7:23).

**“In weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness,”** (II Corinthians 11:27).

One of the most dangerous maladies in our society is the failure to educate young people on how to accomplish their work; instead, they only care about when the weekend will come in order to sleep and rest, without having garnered any achievements.

To my understanding, achievement needs to be part of the graduation standards in our schools and universities, so that students learn how to achieve their tasks and how to organize their life. For a nation that seeks advancement and progress, its citizens must grow up having learned the ways of achievement and morals.

### 35- Warning

Warning (*indhar*) is a form of good conduct that Prophet Muhammad was sent with. It is a divine way, one that God Almighty wants us to learn. It is not an optional manner, but rather compulsory. Allah has warned humankind in order that they may know what is lawful and what is unlawful, and what pleases Him and what displeases Him, before the Day of Reckoning.

The Quran mentions clearly that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a “warner.” Allah says: **“Indeed, We have sent you, [O Muhammad], with the truth as a bringer of good tidings and a warner, and you will not be asked about the companions of Hellfire,”** (Al-Baqara 2:119).

**“Alif, Lam, Ra. [This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise and Acquainted. [Through a messenger, saying], ‘Do not worship except Allah. Indeed, I am to you from Him a warner and a bringer of good tidings,’”** (Hud 11:1-2).

Allah also informs us that He has sent the messengers to warn, saying: **“And We send not the messengers except as bringers of good tidings and warners. And those who disbelieve dispute by [using] falsehood to [attempt to] invalidate thereby the truth and have taken My verses, and that of which they are warned, in ridicule,”** (Al-Kahf 18:56).

Therefore, from these verses we can see that warning is indeed a main part of the divine messages.

Allah says: **“And We did not give Prophet Muhammad, knowledge of poetry, nor is it befitting for him. It is not but a message and a clear Qur’an. To warn whoever is alive and justify the word against the disbelievers,”** (Ya-Sin 36:69-70).

Many verses of the Bible also described warning to be a good manner, including:

**“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all,”** (I Thessalonians 5:14).

**“Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother,”** (II Thessalonians 3:15).

**“Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),”** (II Peter 3:1).

But the question remains: Is “warning” a manner? I say yes, because it is an important principle in relationships. People will be held accountable in the Hereafter after they have been warned in their lifetime. Therefore, the one who observes this manner understands that they should first give a warning to someone whom they are going to take an action against. For example, a parent could warn their child that if they continue to do something, they will be deprived of their monthly pocket money. This allows the other side to return to the right track and comply. If they respond positively, the one who warns should put off their action.

We can see that warning is not a savage behavior; quite the opposite, it is an approach that gives the other side more time to reconsider their position and respond. It requires the warner to explain clearly what is needed so that the warned party can be aware of the issue.

If we adhere to this ethical principle, we can avoid many crises and problems in our life. A husband, for example, may get angry with his

wife and divorce her, destroying the family and children. It would have been better for him, according to this value, to talk to her, make her understand his view, give her time and warn her, trying to avoid divorce. This approach can be successful.

I'm sure you can think of many more examples in our lives where problems arise due to the lack of a warning, including severing relationships, quarreling, etc. We sometimes fail to warn the other side before we give up on the situation entirely. Even at work, we have to notify and warn before taking any action that could make things more complicated or end up in legal arbitration.

Now that we understand how warning is an approach laid out in the Quran and the Bible, and that it was the role of all God's prophets and messengers, let us learn not to take any decisive measure without first giving at least one warning. Let us take up warning as a manner, adhere to it, advise one another to it, and teach it to our children.

Similarly, the Islamic principle of "prevention of vice" (*al-nahy 'an al-munkar*) is a kind of warning or alert. It follows up on the path of God's messengers (peace be upon them) in warning people not to commit something unlawful that could lead them to Hell, as well as warning them in a kind, gentle way to stop doing something wrong and do what God and His messenger love.

Warning is a good manner practiced only by those who love to do good to people.

### **36- Listening and Paying Attention**

Listening is a noble character trait. Allah, Glory be to Him, orders us to listen and pay attention. This came in His request for us to listen attentively to the Quran: **“So when the Qur’an is recited, then listen to it and pay attention that you may receive mercy,”** (Al-A’raf 7:204).

Through this manner, God disciplines us and invites us to attentively listen, and understand through our intuition what is said. This helps us to understand more clearly and build information, which in turn enables us to move toward that which is better.

Listening and paying attention is the conduct of mature people who are not interested in idle chatter, have self-confidence, and see no need to show off by speaking a lot. They are self-composed and listen carefully. Attentive listening is a tool for better reception and analysis of information. The one who talks less and listens a great deal rarely makes mistakes. But the one who talks a lot and listens less makes many mistakes. That is why the judge speaks little, because he refutes, analyzes, and searches for the truth. So he is pleased to listen, pay attention, and give the defense and the prosecutor their chance to speak while he is analyzing what he hears, in order to reach the truth and deliver a satisfactory judgment.

Talking a lot implies making a great deal of mistakes. For this the prophet told his companion Muadh ibn Jabal:

**“Shall I not inform you of the head of the matter, its pillar and its peak?” I said, ‘Yes, O Messenger of Allah.’ He said, ‘The head of the matter is Islam, its pillar is the prayer and its peak is**

**jihad.’ Then he said, ‘Shall I not tell you of the foundation of all of that?’ I said, ‘Yes, O Messenger of Allah.’ So he took hold of his tongue and said, ‘Restrain this.’ I said, ‘O Prophet of Allah, will we be taken to account for what we say with it?’ He said, ‘May your mother be bereaved of you, O Muadh! Is there anything that throws people into the Hellfire upon their faces – or on their noses – except the harvests of their tongues?’”**

We are also prohibited to do three things while being in *ihram* (the ritual state for the Hajj pilgrimage or *Umrah*, the minor pilgrimage). Allah says: **“So whoever has made Hajj obligatory upon himself therein [by entering the state of *ihram*], there is [to be for him] no sexual relations and no disobedience and no disputing during Hajj,”** (Al-Baqara 2:197). “Disputing” here refers to doing a lot of talking in disagreements and frivolous arguments, because once the pilgrim enters the state of *ihram* for Hajj or *Umrah*, they are not permitted to dispute. Thus, God instructs us that goodness is in silence, calmness, listening, and talking less. And if we speak, we speak constructively and not just to talk for the sake of talking.

Many verses of the Bible confirm this concept, including:

**“Oh, that you would be silent, And it would be your wisdom!”**  
(Job 13:5).

**“There is a rebuke that is untimely, and there is the person who is wise enough to keep silent,”** (Sirach 20:1).

**“But a man of understanding holds his peace,”** (Proverbs 11:12).

**“In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise,”** (Proverbs 10:19).

**“Be quick to hear, but deliberate in answering,”** (Sirach 5:11).

The merit of speaking in a good way is immense, as stated in many Quranic verses, such as:

**“And speak to people good [words],”** (Al-Baqara 2:83).

**“And tell My servants to say that which is best,”** (Al-Isra 17:53).

The last verse includes instruction from Allah to us to speak good words or to keep silent. This meaning has also been confirmed by the prophet, who said: **“He who believes in Allah and the Last Day must either speak good or remain silent.”**

Let us instruct ourselves and those around us on the merit of maintaining silence, listening, speaking less, and only making constructive interventions. By talking a lot, people commit backbiting and slandering and the like. But speaking less is a virtue that man could possess, for as the proverb says: “If speech is silver, silence is gold.”

So listening attentively, talking less, and speaking good words are all good conduct we are invited to practice. Every one of us should do their best to get better at this manner.

In our contemporary life, the rise of social media means that the concepts of speech and listening can take place in a way that does not include actually using our mouths and ears. There is now a great deal of chatting, posting, and media consumption taking place on a number of platforms. How is it that people can share posts without verifying their authenticity, or share inappropriate content? Surely anyone who receives messages and reads posts but does not constantly feel the need to share them or engage in idle chatting is in a better position. If we take as an approach the good manner of listening carefully and speaking less, then each one of us should only share what they would

like to say or what they really mean, and should not send messages or write posts merely for the sake of meaningless gossip.

Social media, like any other thing, can be used positively. We can benefit from it and use it to advise one another. But it can also be used negatively and transform into something that continues to pile sin after sin upon us, in a way that causes harm to us because of our uncontrollable indulgence.

Listening and paying attention is better than talking a great deal. This is a noble character trait.

If the prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, has been sent to teach us high moral values, we should not assume that this conduct will happen without any effort on our part when we are bringing up our children. We must instruct them on how to practice it. We must be an example for them, guiding and correcting them to attain this moral value.

## 37- Altruism

God has described the believers as those who like to see goodness for those around them and even those who had come before them. This is evident in the verse: **“And [also for] those who were settled in al-Madinah and [adopted] the faith before them. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what the emigrants were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul – it is those who will be the successful,”** (Al-Hashr 59:9). This is a good manner of altruism. The one who has this manner is not selfish or greedy but rather gives preference to others, even at their own expense, even if they deprive themselves in order to give to others. They like to see goodness for those around them. They may be pleased to deprive themselves and give to others.

On the subject of altruism, the Bible says:

**“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another,”** (Romans 12:10).

**“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up, does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil,”** (I Corinthians 13:4-5).

**“Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others,”** (Philippians 2:4).

Altruism comes in levels or degrees, and the altruistic person can reach a high level of righteousness when they give that which is dear

to their heart in charity, and they prefer to give it to others. This is the peak of altruism.

Examples of altruism are many. In football, for example, a player may advance with the ball right up until he is in front of the goalkeeper, but then pass to his teammate so that the team can score a goal; what's more, it could even be the case that, if he had scored himself, he would have achieved the title of top scorer. This player is practicing altruism.

Here is another example. Now-retired judo athlete Mohammed Rashwan represented Egypt in the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. He made it to the final against a Japanese athlete. When Rashwan noticed that the Japanese competitor's foot was injured, he refused to strike him in the injured leg. He preferred not to do so, in order not to harm him. In the end, Rashwan lost the final and took home the silver medal because he gave preference to the Japanese player. However, Rashwan has since come to be treated like a champion in sports events and is presented as a model of altruism. This is because he has a well-mannered character and displayed an admirable example of altruism.

We have to ask ourselves: Do we give preference to others in some situations of our lives, or are we always looking to take whatever we can first? Have you left a meal that was available to you, and given it to someone who is hungry, giving them preference over yourself?

If you are in a line, do you give your turn to someone who you notice is having difficulty standing, someone who is perhaps elderly or infirm? There are many more situations that I'm sure you can think of.

If we want to be among those whom Allah described in the verse **“but give [them] preference over themselves,”** we should not forget that this is the conduct of benevolent people.

You have to practice altruism every day in your life, giving others preference over yourselves in a bid to draw closer to God Almighty. Undoubtedly, you will be rewarded by God for this good conduct. Leave a space for your elderly neighbor to park his car. Don't sit in the seats in the first row of a classroom, leaving them for short-sighted students. Be kind to people. Be an example in your behavior. Let others wonder about your good conduct and altruism, and let them know that you have learned this from the Quran or the Bible, and that you do this to come closer to God. In this way, you will make people love this manner.

Be a role model to your children and those around you. How can you ask your children to observe the manner of altruism, while you are practicing selfishness and greed? Attain altruism and be aware that if you fail to practice it, you will not only harm yourself but those who take you as an example as well.

A nation that observes altruism is one that God loves, it is a nation that must certainly make progress. This is because altruism engenders mutual respect, love, and cooperation. And this is the typical environment for progress and wellbeing.

### **38- Righteousness**

The word for righteousness in Arabic, *birr*, denotes truthfulness, maintaining bonds of kinship, obedience (to God), and anything that includes acts of goodness.

Many verses of the Bible address the idea of righteousness, including:

**“The righteousness of the blameless will direct his way aright, But the wicked will fall by his own wickedness. The righteousness of the upright will deliver them, But the unfaithful will be caught by their lust. When a wicked man dies, his expectation will perish, And the hope of the unjust perishes. The righteous is delivered from trouble, And it comes to the wicked instead,”** (Proverbs 11:5-8).

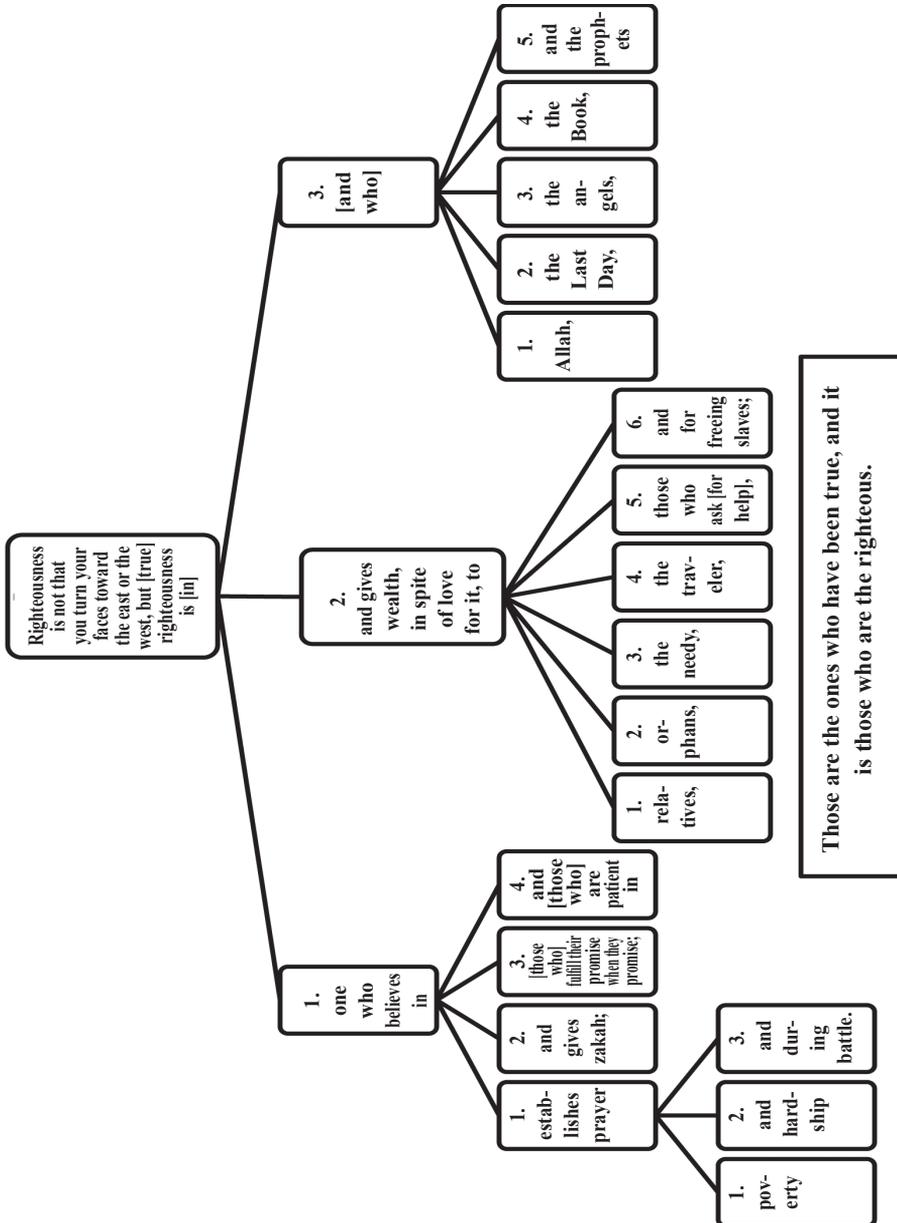
**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,”** (Galatians 5:22).

**“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God,”** (Philippians 1:11).

In the Quran, this noble verse says: **“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives *zakah*; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous,”** (Al-Baqara 2:177).

Therefore, righteousness is a manner that encompasses all of the above.

The following diagram illustrates this verse:



Based on the above, righteousness is one of the greatest manners, because it includes concepts of faith, spending in charity, commitment to acts of worship, fulfilling pledges, and patience. How great these moral values are!

Righteousness can also be from children to their parents. Allah says: **“And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], ‘uff,’ and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word. And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, ‘My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small,’”** (Al-Isra 17:23-24). The verse demonstrates many aspects of righteousness and dutifulness to the parents.

The righteous person is the one who remembers all this. The faithful child is the one who feels happy to serve and care for their parents, and not to shun, abuse, or put them a nursing home in order to free themselves from responsibility. This is far from righteousness.

God Almighty has also set a condition for attaining righteousness in the verse: **“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend – indeed, Allah is Knowing of it,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:92), meaning the path to righteousness passes through spending in charity from that which we love and to spend much. Righteousness is also accompanied with patience when dealing with all of life’s situations, as indicated above.

Righteousness is a noble character trait. We can be a role model for our children when they see us looking after their grandparents. This is how they can learn from us how to be righteous. Let us spend from that which we love so that our children can learn that this is the greatest thing humankind can do. Let us teach them to be patient in all their affairs.

Do you not want to be righteous? Let us learn it and act upon it.

### **39- Duty to Parents**

God Almighty and His messenger have enjoined us to be dutiful to our parents. It is the behavior of a faithful, benevolent, and merciful person; someone who returns a favor that is done for them. This is the moral value of dutifulness to parents.

The utterance *uff* (ugh) is considered the most unkind objection, and it is forbidden to say it to your parents. Full obedience is always required. If you have a young son and an older father, for instance, you should treat them with the same affection and genuine desire to take care of them. There are several verses in the Quran urging honoring parents, including:

**“And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], ‘uff,’ and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word,”** (Al-Isra 17:23).

**“And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination,”** (Luqman 31:14).

The Bible has several verses in this regard, including:

**“Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,”** (Matthew 19:19).

**“Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be**

**well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you,”**  
(Deuteronomy 5:16).

**“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you,”**  
(Exodus 20:12).

**“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right,”**  
(Ephesians 6:1).

**“Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord,”** (Colossians 3:20).

**“Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old,”** (Proverbs 23:22).

Honoring the parents is not limited to the time when they are alive. This can also be done after their death through many things. For example, you can:

- Pray for them, as the prophet said: **“When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things: *sadaqah jariyah* (unending/continuing charity); a knowledge which is beneficial, or a virtuous descendant who prays for him (the deceased).”**
- Do Hajj pilgrimage for them if they did not perform it during their lifetime, and if you can afford it yourself or authorize someone else to do it.
- Do something for charity in their name, that is, you ask God to give them the reward of your charity to be in their Scale of Good Deeds (*Mizan al-Hasanat*) in the Hereafter.
- Honor and keep in touch with their family and friends.

- Be as they wanted you to be during their lifetime, and whenever you do something that they once wished for you, do so in their name.
- Speak positively about them with your children.
- Keep praying for them.
- Visit their tombs and pray for God's mercy on their souls.

These are just examples. The goodness of dutiful children to their parents is ceaseless.

## **40- Following Excellent Patterns**

By this manner, I mean to imitate the honorable and luminous examples. God Almighty has asked us in His holy Book to follow the good examples of those who came before us (that is, to follow them and do like them), or to take them as a role model and learn lessons from those who can be an example for us. Let's look at this verse:

**“There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, ‘Indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allah. We have denied you, and there has appeared between us and you animosity and hatred forever until you believe in Allah alone,’ except for the saying of Abraham to his father, ‘I will surely ask forgiveness for you, but I have not [power to do] for you anything against Allah. Our Lord, upon You we have relied, and to You we have returned, and to You is the destination. Our Lord, make us not [objects of] torment for the disbelievers and forgive us, our Lord. Indeed, it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.’ There has certainly been for you in them an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day. And whoever turns away – then indeed, Allah is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy,”** (Al-Mumtahana 60:4-6).

Here, God instructs us to follow the pattern of the prophets, saints, and those who preceded us in faith.

Several verses in the Bible tackle this manner, including:

**“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity,”** (I Timothy 4:12).

**“So that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe,”** (I Thessalonians 1:7).

**“But to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us,”** (II Thessalonians 3:9).

**“In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,”** (Titus 2:7).

**“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity,”** (I Timothy 4:12).

**“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct,”** (Hebrews 13:7).

Nowadays, there are a number of elements regarding taking others as a model for your behavior. First, the community has to give prominence to role models and shine a spotlight on real role models. In this regard, I see that the media is seriously failing to present these examples to their audiences, thus giving the impression that there are no role models in society. But this is not true. In fact, in every field, there are good examples for the younger generations to follow in their footsteps. Perhaps because the media does not present these examples, young people search for other role models in the world. But the vast distance between the youth and us adults makes it difficult for the youth to actually accomplish their sincere goal of finding a good role model.

Second, young people themselves should also work harder to seek out good role models that can lead them to the right path and good morals. Some of the role models presented in society are good examples, but some others are not. The good manner of following

excellent patterns teaches young people how to pick and choose their examples after careful consideration, and they will then be able to discern who is a good example that can lead them to good morals, and who turns them away from the right path.

Third, governments must set an example for their citizens to follow by complying with the law and fulfilling contracts. This way, the government can play an enlightened role for its citizens, who can see an example in what their rulers are doing.

Fourth, parents are the most immediately visible role models for their children to learn from, both in words and behavior. Parents need to pay attention to their own behavior, since their children are watching and will imitate them.

A school teacher must also know that they are an example for their students, so they must be a role model. A team captain is also a model for their teammates, as is a coach for the entire team.

Fifth, you are an example for those around you. Enjoin them to do good and keep away from evil, so they can try to follow your pattern. God will give you a great reward for this.

Based on all that, this manner requires us to set ourselves as an example for others by being committed and well-mannered. Likewise, we have to follow the good examples of those who we can benefit from and who can take us to higher levels of good morals.

## **41- Deliberateness**

Deliberateness is the behavior of someone who is measured and considered in their actions, and avoids haste. It is one of the good manners that our Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, commanded us in his *hadith*: **“Deliberateness is from Allah, and haste is from Satan.”** The prophet also said: **“The supplication of any of you is answered as long as he does not get impatient and say, ‘I made supplication and was not answered.’”**

Some verses of the Quran enjoin us to this manner, such as:

**“Move not your tongue with it, [O Muhammad], to hasten with recitation of the Qur’an,”** (Al-Qiyama 75:16).

**“So high [above all] is Allah, the Sovereign, the Truth. And, [O Muhammad], do not hasten with [recitation of] the Qur’an before its revelation is completed to you, and say, ‘My Lord, increase me in knowledge,’”** (Ta-Ha 20:114).

There are also verses in the Bible to this effect, including:

**“But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children,”** (I Thessalonians 2:7).

**“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,”** (II Timothy 2:24).

**“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things,”** (I Corinthians 13:4-7).

I remember when I was young, they used to teach us that if someone did something that made us mad, we should practice deliberateness and count from one to ten before responding, which would give us time to think carefully before reacting and to help us avoid uncalculated, emotional reactions to the offense. If we did respond right away, we would be dragged into making mistakes, while the truth is that no one should push us to do something we do not like.

Deliberateness is a manner that protects the person from sliding into error. It could even protect someone's life and those around them – for example, you must be deliberate when you are driving your car.

A deliberate person often takes sound decisions. They do not make rushed decisions without scrutiny. Rather, deliberateness gives them more time to carefully study every aspect of the matter in question until they reach what they view as the sound decision.

Many cases of divorce result in family breakdowns and all the associated negative consequences for millions of children. This happens because the good manner of deliberateness is absent. A man may say he is divorcing his wife hastily. If he gives himself more time to reconsider his position, he could back away from his decision. The price of divorce is usually exorbitant, yet avoiding it is not difficult – it only needs us to have the desire to draw closer to God Almighty through observing this manner, which could protect us, our family, our interests, and maybe even our nation as a whole.

Let us bring up our children in this manner. Let us reconsider our positions and try to count from one to ten before responding to anyone. Do not take a decisive decision unless you are emotionally calm, and not in haste.

## 42w- Smiling

A smile should be the expression that appears on your face when you deal with anyone. The opposite is frowning.

Prophet Muhammad urged us to smile in people's faces, saying:

**“Your smiling in the face of your brother is charity.”**

**“Do not disdain a good deed, (no matter how small it may seem) even if it is your meeting with your brother with a cheerful face.”**

Allah describes the faces of the dwellers of Paradise as laughing and rejoicing: “[Some] faces, that Day, will be bright; Laughing, rejoicing at good news,” (Abasa 80:38-39).

We see this manner in societies whose people might not be adherents of the heavenly religions. Nevertheless, they have realized that promoting warm greetings and smiling can dissolve disputes among people, and that greeting and receiving one another in a good way is a basis for building various relationships in a positive manner.

Remarkably, the simple act of smiling is deemed to be charity for anyone who cannot give alms. This explanation comes from the prophet to indicate the merit of this manner, as well as its beautiful outcome regarding relationships among people.

We should smile when we see or pass by someone. Smile warmly in people's faces. God Almighty also enjoins us to do so: **“And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet [in return] with one better than it or [at least] return it [in a like manner]. Indeed, Allah is ever, over all things, an Accountant,”** (An-Nisa 4:86).

In this respect, I mention the following verses from the Bible:

**“Then our mouth was filled with laughter, And our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, ‘The Lord has done great things for them,’”** (Psalms 126:2).

**“For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me,”** (Philippians 2:18).

**“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”** (Philippians 4:4).

**“Rejoice always,”** (I Thessalonians 5:16).

**“A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken,”** (Proverbs 15:13).

Let us instruct ourselves and our children to greet others with the best of greetings, smile in their faces, and warmly welcome people. This is a great manner for which God rewards us dearly, and we can increase our balance of charity with the least effort. It is a door to increasing one’s good deeds. So smile in the faces of those around you.

## **43- Bringing Glad Tidings**

God Almighty has sent His messengers to bring glad tidings and warn people. Allah says: **“Indeed, We have sent you, [O Muhammad], with the truth as a bringer of good tidings and a warner, and you will not be asked about the companions of Hellfire,”** (Al-Baqara 2:119).

Giving glad tidings are a form of motivating people to do good things, and could conversely be a way of forbidding what is wrong. So there is a motivation for bringing glad tidings, as is in Allah’s saying: **“Indeed, this Qur’an guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward,”** (Al-Isra 17:9). While forbidding what is wrong, Allah also enjoins us to give tidings to those who disobey the divine instruction that God has a severe penalty and that their behavior will lead them to Hellfire. This is indicated in the verse: **“Give tidings to the hypocrites that there is for them a painful punishment,”** (An-Nisa 4:138).

The Bible also says something similar: **“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!”** (Romans 10:15).

Therefore, the one who observes this manner believes in God, is faithful to those around, and brings glad tidings to those in the right path that they will enter Paradise. Warning about the opposite of all this is also true, following the Quranic principle of “advising each other to truth.”

This manner can also apply to many other situations and examples in our life. A diligent, hardworking student should be given glad tidings

of success. A player who shows extreme interest in their training should be given glad tidings of championships. A vigilant worker should be given glad tidings of a promotion or bonuses. The opposite is also true, that is to say, the careless student should be given ill tidings that they are bound for failure and the undisciplined worker should to be warned that they might be laid off, and so on.

So the one who observes this manner likes to motivate people to do good, because they love good for others. This person also likes to warn people against evil, again because they love good for others. This kind of person likes for other people what they like for themselves. Giving glad tidings is a truly excellent manner.

## 44- Investigation

By this manner, I mean we should investigate and then carefully and reasonably verify all that we hear or are told before taking any decision. Allah says: **“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful,”** (Al-Hujurat 49:6). We should always start by looking into things thoroughly, so that we do not end up following misleading opinions or baseless claims. What is required here is to prevent harm to ourselves or others that would come from hastily judging something without investigating the truth. After digging a little deeper, we may change our initial judgement to its complete opposite.

This moral also applies to aspects of our daily life. We must distinguish between what is permissible and what is forbidden, right from wrong, and rationality from foolishness. Before doing anything, we have to ask ourselves: Have we investigated whether this thing could offend us, or benefit us?

We have to ask such kinds of questions, which represent our balance in life, if we want to please God and His messenger with our manners and benefit from our actions, both in our worldly life and the Hereafter.

In this respect, the Bible states:

**“So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.’ And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even**

**to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, ‘Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?’”** (John 8:7-10).

**“Do not find fault before you investigate; examine first, and then criticize,”** (Sirach 11:7).

Investigation needs training, qualification, and knowledge. We have to start instructing our children by giving them the power and permission to make decisions for themselves, and then guide them in regards to how to distinguish right from wrong. Then we leave them to make their own choices. This can be done through training them in decision-making, and if they succeed we will encourage them, while if they fail we will give them feedback and further advice on what they could have done differently, or where they went wrong.

We have to know that children will not continue living under our care forever. They will go out and come in contact with other people. How will we guide them when they are out in the world? We must lay the groundwork so that when the time comes they have all the tools they need to distinguish what is forbidden from what is lawful, what is good from what is bad, to investigate and verify what they hear from others and take this as an approach in life. The better they are at this, the more they will be able to succeed in life and overcome any obstacles.

Investigating also distances us from oppression, because judging by appearance without investigation invites us to stumble into oppression. Allah, Glory be to Him, forbids oppression, saying: **“And Allah wants no injustice for [His] servants,”** (Ghafir 40:46) and **“And your Lord is not ever unjust to [His] servants,”** (Fussilat 41:46). The prophet also said in a *Hadith Qudsy* (revelation from

Allah in the prophet's words): **“O My servants, I have forbidden oppression for Myself and have made it forbidden amongst you, so do not oppress one another.”**

Therefore, the good manner of investigation produces a personality that does not step outside the limits set by Allah and accepted by society. Through investigation, one reconsiders one's opinion. It is ultimately a positive manner that boosts one's character so that they become respected by everyone, and also makes Allah pleased with this person.

Let us promote this manner to the top of our school curricula, media programs, and religious discourse. Let us train ourselves in it from now on, so that Allah and His messenger will be pleased with all that we do. This will also boost our morals and behaviors.

God has described to us how to conduct one certain type of investigation, and from this detailed approach to the matter we can see how an investigation is not a quick or simple endeavor. It requires a lot of effort and scrutiny and searching to reach certainty before any final judgment is made. Allah orders us to bring four witnesses concerning fornication to prove that the incident has taken place, saying: **“Why did they [who slandered] not produce for it four witnesses? And when they do not produce the witnesses, then it is they, in the sight of Allah, who are the liars,”** (An-Nur 24:13). Here, Allah does not ask us to bring only two or three witnesses but rather stipulates four witnesses; this indicates how dangerous the accusation is. Allah also requests certain conditions in the testimony given by the witnesses, so that the judge can reach the level of certainty.

So the above verse and others order us to do an investigation before making our judgment and not to be hasty. This is meant to establish certainty that a crime or mistake has taken place. The

prophet himself advised us to avoid handing down legal penalties based on suspicious proofs.

There have been more frequent judgments from Egypt's Court of Cassation to confirm the above prophetic principle (that is, investigation). Based on this, there has been a judicial principle stating that "exonerating a thousand guilty persons is better than indicting one innocent person."

If we have to bring to court impartial witnesses whose testimony and claims we trust, we need something similar in our daily life. While discerning right from wrong and the permissible from the impermissible, we need to seek a true friend to help us obey God Almighty and guide us to the right path. This friend will support us in discerning right from wrong, while a bad friend will be happy if we make mistakes. A good friend helps us to move forward in the right direction.

God Almighty has enjoined us not to accept any statement at face value, simply as it has been reported to us. Rather, we should consider it to be untrue until proven otherwise. We should not trust whoever accuses anyone of anything until we investigate their claims and until we are certain about their truthfulness. Otherwise, we will be among the oppressors, and we know the painful punishment that awaits them in the Hereafter.

In our contemporary life, we see all kinds of posts on social media and receive messages from friends. We sometimes forward these posts and messages to our friends without verifying the authenticity of their content, or repost them ourselves without verifying it, or comment on something that has been shared without first getting a full picture of the facts at hand. It is a grave mistake for us to make potentially false claims against someone when we share information or reports about

them without investigating whether these things are true! So we must investigate and verify anything we share on social media, in order not to wrong anyone, or even ourselves.

Therefore, the good manner of investigation should be a way of life. It is a manner that protects us from committing an act or judgment against someone in a way that does not please Allah and His messenger. We have to arm ourselves with this manner because it is the best shield to prevent us from making a hasty judgment about something or wronging someone.

## 45- Motivation

The motivated person knows that God Almighty has built His religion and messages on wisdom and good instruction. God knows well the nature of the human spirit and that it needs motivation to obey Him and His messengers. Hence Paradise and its pleasures, in addition to many worldly affairs such as God's provision, are motivations for people.

God has based His relationship with a committed person on the win-win principle – that is, God likes to see His servant obedient and committed, and the servant likes to see that God is satisfied with them in the world and the Hereafter. Therefore, the person who practices motivation has decided to follow what we can call the divine approach of motivation. They can attain this by motivating the people they work with, their family, and those they deal with, as well as through fulfilling promises. So by adopting this value of motivation, they will be following God's Book and messenger, as well as the what we can consider the motivation approach stated in the divine books. When the motivated person fulfills their promise, they will be among “[those who] fulfill their promise,” and both fulfilling one's promise and motivation are among the good manners. How beautiful it is, when someone holds this manner.

God granted me success in 2019 to write a two-volume book entitled *The Way God Motivates Us*, in which I tried to explore some aspects of the divine motivation for man to obey the Lord. I would say here that for every act of worship, manner, or divine order there is a kind of motivation. The outcome is that God has different ways of motivation to encourage humankind to obey His commands. In our life and as

we deal with one another, we have to practice motivation, because it provides a true understanding of how to deal with those around in wisdom and good instruction.

The Bible refers to the manner of motivation in the verse: **“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it,”** (I Corinthians 9:24).

So the one who observes this manner understands the nature of the human spirit, and that by motivation, people can be highly responsive to instructions.

Let us use motivation to create more hope, and study motivation carefully so it can be used in the management of people, organizations, and society as a whole.

## **46- Satisfaction**

Satisfaction is a highly important manner, in the sense that it means someone feels satisfied with what God has allotted for them and it will serve as evidence of their certainty and faith that this is what is destined for them by Allah, Who says:

**“It is He who made the earth tame for you – so walk among its slopes and eat of His provision – and to Him is the resurrection,”** (Al-Mulk 67:15).

**“And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allah is its provision, and He knows its place of dwelling and place of storage. All is in a clear register,”** (Hud 11:6).

A satisfied person knows the path to happiness because they have recognized and are satisfied with Allah’s favor, so they look at those around and wish for good things for them. The satisfied person does not envy anyone, because they are satisfied with what Allah has ordained for them.

For satisfaction, God Almighty promises great reward: gardens beneath which rivers flow.

Allah says: **“And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the *Muhajireen* and the *Ansar* and those who followed them with good conduct – Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment,”** (At-Tawba 9:100). If someone likes that God is satisfied with them, they must also satisfy others. Allah says: **“Is the reward for good [anything] but good?”** (Ar-Rahman 55:60).

Feeling contented does not only relate to financial provision, but everything as well, such as health, family, offspring, and all our affairs.

God Almighty has ordered us to satisfy others in everything, by such things as spending in charity and giving others preference over ourselves. Even in business, Allah says: **“O you who have believed, do not consume one another’s wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful,”** (An-Nisa 4:29). The kind of business that Allah orders us to have is one where the two parties have mutual consent, meaning the business does not involve any fraud or oppression by one partner against the other. Rather, justice must prevail and all things should be approved by both sides. This is known as a win-win situation where all the parties involved are deemed winners.

Several verses of the Bible have tackled this concept, including:

**“Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison,”** (Matthew 5:25).

**“Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification,”** (Romans 15:2).

**“Be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you,’”** (Hebrews 13:5).

**“Now godliness with contentment is great gain,”** (I Timothy 6:6).

I think that the divine order of satisfying people is at the core of being in business or commerce. I believe it is a way of dealing with people. The person who observes this manner tries to satisfy whoever they deal with. Depending on the situation, they will do so through

good words, tolerance, respect, and fulfilling their commitments, and in some circumstances by directly taking care of others' affairs. The approach they adopt in life is to satisfy people in everything.

This is how the manner of satisfaction is mentioned in the Quran, and is what Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has instructed us to do. So we have to be an example for our children by showing satisfaction. They imitate us in everything: behaviors, words, and actions.

There are certain exclamations that we should never say, such as “*uff*” (ugh), “Why, Lord?” and “Why did this happen to me in particular?” These utterances are evidence of this person's dissatisfaction and failure to submit to God. While these and other expressions may nevertheless be said by someone who is aware that Allah hears them, still, let us be careful in all our words and actions.

Our behaviors toward others in front of our children, our endeavors to satisfy people such as the poor or those seeking something, and our relationship with our kin and in-laws are lessons for the young generations to learn from, so that they will be among those whom God is pleased with. Let us reconsider our behavior and ask ourselves: Are we really satisfied? Do we thank God for His favors? Do we thank Him with our tongue and yet do not feel it? Let us reassess our actions and know that satisfaction is a manner only observed by those who know the meaning of true belief in God and submit to His command.

The one who observes this manner cannot be depressed or sad. Rather, this character engenders happiness and peace of mind. Don't we like being happy? Surely, we all strive to experience happiness. So we have to have satisfaction from within, convinced that it is one of the finest manners.

## **47- Taking Adornment**

God Almighty and His messenger have ordered us to adorn ourselves and to make this a way of behaving, and we are to do so by taking care of, preserving, and displaying the beauty of God's favor and creation. Allah says: **“O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid,”** (Al-A'raf 7:31), and **“Say, ‘Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has produced for His servants and the good [lawful] things of provision?’”** (Al-A'raf 7:32).

The prophet said: **“In this world, women and perfume have been made dear to me, and my comfort has been provided in prayer.”** Wearing perfume is a kind of adornment. The prophet also said: **“He who has hair should honor it.”**

In the Bible, the subject is also discussed:

**“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward – arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel – rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God,”** (I Peter 3:1-4).

The Bible also pays attention to the fact that inner beauty does not grow old by time: **“The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, If it is found in the way of righteousness,”** (Proverbs 16:31).

Therefore, it is important to always remember that adornment must be done without exaggeration and excess, otherwise it will be the kind that is not approved of, like using heavy make-up. Moderation is needed and is the best method for handling everything. One should maintain a balance – that is, neither neglecting nor exaggerating one's appearance and attire. So it is important to know that this manner includes respect for others and better enjoying God's favors.

## 48- Consultation

By consultation, I mean that someone should be tolerant when it comes to listening and respecting the opinions of others. This is exactly what God Almighty had ordered Prophet Muhammad to do, as this verse indicates:

**“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him],”** (Al-i-Imran 3:159).

God also deems consultation as one of the main manners of the believers, when He describes them: **“And those who have responded to their lord and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves, and from what We have provided them, they spend,”** (Ash-Shura 42:38).

The life of the prophet has many lessons that deal with the concept of consultation. He can serve as an excellent example of this good manner.

In this respect, we remember the Battle of Badr, when the prophet advanced to a place called Badr near the area where the battle took place. When the Muslim army wanted to camp near a well in Badr, Al-Hubab ibn al-Mundhir, one of the prophet’s companions, advised the prophet to choose another site.

Al-Hubab said: **“O Messenger of Allah, this place where we now are – is this a place that was ordained by Allah that we should**

**not either advance or retreat from it, or it is opinion, war tactics, and plots?’ The prophet said: ‘It is opinion, war tactics and plots.’ Al-Hubab said: ‘This is not the [right] place to camp, but take us on, O Messenger of Allah, until we come to one of the large wells which is nearest the enemy. Let us halt there and stop up the wells that lie beyond it and make for ourselves a cistern. Then we will fight the enemy, and all the water will be ours to drink, and they will have none.’ The prophet at once agreed and encouraged Al-Hubab saying: ‘You gave the right opinion.’”**

There are several verses in the Bible speaking about the significance of consultation, including:

**“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise,”** (Proverbs 12:15);

**“Listen to counsel and receive instruction, That you may be wise in your latter days,”** (Proverbs 19:20);

**“Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety,”** (Proverbs 11:14).

**“Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,”** (Psalms 1:1).

The good manner of consultation has three aspects:

First, we have to consult those around us about what we should do. If people across the world today are discussing concepts such as democracy and respecting the opinions of others, we can make the case that these are actually manners that the prophet taught us. God Almighty even ordered His prophet, when presenting God’s message to the people, to invite people to the way of God by using wisdom and good instruction, as well as to consult others. And the messenger of Allah did just that, and we can see how it bore good results.

Therefore, consulting with those around us is a religious duty, and not merely a favor that one person does for another. Consultation is a manner that we should adopt as an approach in life – at home, at work, with friends, and in many other situations. It is the manner of the believers, as God has described in the above verses.

The second aspect I would like to discuss is that you should make sure you have a good style of presenting your opinion as well as a strong understanding of the ethics of disagreement. If your opinion is met with approval, you should present your point of view without bias. This is because consultation requires that you understand that you must present your view properly, and with respect for others. They must also understand that they have to respect the final view that will be adopted after consultation.

The third aspect is that if someone consults you, you must be faithful to them. Otherwise, remain silent if you do not have a proper view, lest you harm them. Unfortunately, I notice in our society that very few people, if asked, would say: “I don’t know.” People always rushing to give their opinion. Yet we have to be careful because just as we are ordered to consult with others, we are also enjoined to be faithful in what we say, and to say only what we know. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: **“He who believes in Allah and the Last Day must either speak good or remain silent.”**

Let us instruct our children to practice this manner. Let schools provide examples on the proper ways to engage in consultation. Let consultation flourish as a part of our culture, so that we will all have a manner that is liked by Allah and His messenger.

## **49- Knowing One Another**

It is important that we, as humans, get to know one another as best we can, because we are all different and we all have things that make us unique. Allah says: **“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted,”** (Al-Hujurat 49:13).

Knowing one another, rather than withdrawing away from others, is the foundation of what it means to be a human being, as well as a foundation for our development. Through knowing one another, families are established, communities develop, trade and commerce prosper, and economies and wealth are built. Conflicts and wars can be avoided, and bonds of love and fraternity can be created. It is a good manner. We have been created with differences so that we can know one another.

As we endeavor to know one other more, we also must work to improve our personal relationships. We have to see which people we can befriend, so that they will make a good addition to our circle of acquaintances and not a burdensome person that will drag us into troubles. Therefore, we have to monitor and investigate our children’s friends and to intervene in a positive way in order to keep away whoever is not suitable for becoming their friend. By doing so, we can prevent our children from being drawn into unfavorable behavior. The prophet has advised us about making friends, saying: **“A man follows the religion of his friend; so each one should consider whom he makes his friend.”**

In the Bible, we find the following verses on the subject:

**“Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous,”** (I Peter 3:8).

**“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!”** (Psalms 133:1).

**“Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss,”** (I Thessalonians 5:26).

**“Kindred and helpers are for a time of trouble, but almsgiving rescues better than either,”** (Sirach 40:24).

**“Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you,”** (II Corinthians 13:11).

**“But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more,”** (I Thessalonians 4:10).

Social media and the Internet have opened up a modern form of getting to know one another, and it remains a good manner whether online or offline. Yet we have to be very cautious about who we and our children interact with online. It is sometimes positive, but often negative. Just as there are devils among both mankind and *jinn*, there are also devils on the Internet. So we must keep a watchful eye on our children as they continue to spend more and more time online. And in the same way that we have to monitor their friends in the real world, we must monitor their virtual friends, who could cause a great deal of catastrophes. The examples are countless. Be careful.

Knowing one another is a good manner that has many benefits. Yet we have to be mindful and vigilant in choosing who can benefit us, and not do us harm.

## 50- Cooperation

Cooperation is all about helping one another. As we are now discussing the subject of good manners, what is meant here is cooperation in doing good deeds and not impermissible acts or things that could hurt others. God Almighty is the Greatest Helper and He asked us to ask Him for help, as stated in opening chapter of the Quran: **“It is You we worship and You we ask for help,”** (Al-Fatiha 1:5). If this refers to someone seeking help from their Lord, it also has another side that is present in our daily lives, which is when someone asks their fellow brother or sister for help. So the one who is sought for help should be cooperative, and not the opposite, as long as they are sought for help in something good. Allah says: **“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty,”** (Al-Ma’ida 5:2)

Here are some verses from the Bible regarding this manner:

**“That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another,”** (I Corinthians 12:25).

**“Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind,”** (Philippians 2:2).

**“I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord,”** (Philippians 4:2).

**“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all,”** (I Thessalonians 5:14).

**“Kindred and helpers are for a time of trouble,”** (Sirach 40:24).

If we say, for example, that a sports player is known among his teammates for being good at cooperation, we can say that he is well-mannered. Good sportsmanship, especially in team sports, is based on cooperation and not individualism. Cooperation boosts the team's spirit. It involves concepts of altruism and giving preference to others.

It is also unimaginable that an army could achieve victory unless there is cooperation among the troops to complete their mission successfully.

It can also include cooperation among a surgical team inside an operating theater, or cooperation among a research team working to invent something new.

All these and many others are forms of constructive cooperation. It is carried out by unselfish people who wish good for others and love that their brothers and sisters may have that which they love for themselves, bearing in mind that life is one day you win, the next day you lose. So they have to do their job in cooperation with others.

Therefore, cooperation is good conduct. A well-mannered person should be cooperative. But how can someone be well-mannered and yet at the same time not lend a helping hand to whoever needs it, as long as they are able? They cannot.

Cooperation requires qualification, education, and training. This should start with cooperation among siblings in the home, and move onward to the classroom, sports, life, and work. Companies often spend a lot of money on training programs to boost cooperation and team spirit among their staff. The outcome is positive results in all cases. This is because God Almighty wants success for us. He has enjoined us to cooperate in righteousness, knowing that this is better for us. In my view, I think the congregational prayer is a form of cooperation to attain a greater reward and it is better than performing it individually.

Let us instruct our children on accepting cooperation as a general principle in their life, and train them in this good manner.

Finally, cooperation could include the help you extend to someone. The most prominent example in the Quran is in the parable of Prophet Joseph (Yusuf), peace be upon him, when he asked his companion in prison who was about to be freed to mention him before the king: **“And he said to the one whom he knew would go free, ‘Mention me before your master,’”** (Yusuf 12:42). This was a kind of cooperation to show that he was innocent and to get out of his distress. Time passed, and the king had a dream and wanted someone to interpret it. Here, Joseph’s former companion in prison remembered Joseph’s request and told the king that Joseph had the knowledge and ability to interpret dreams. This was the way Prophet Joseph was released from prison, and how he became empowered later on. This was a sort of cooperation to relieve distress and end a crisis.

We have to cooperate to defend everyone’s rights and help the weak until they become capable, and the oppressed until God relieves their distress or calamity.

## **51- Honoring the Sacred Ordinance of God**

Allah says: **“That [has been commanded], and whoever honors the sacred ordinances of Allah – it is best for him in the sight of his Lord. And permitted to you are the grazing livestock, except what is recited to you. So avoid the uncleanness of idols and avoid false statement, Inclining [only] to Allah, not associating [anything] with Him. And he who associates with Allah – it is as though he had fallen from the sky and was snatched by the birds or the wind carried him down into a remote place. That [is so]. And whoever honors the symbols of Allah – indeed, it is from the piety of hearts,”** (Al-Hajj 22:30-32).

These verses speak about a unique manner. It is unique because you may only find a few people who honor the sacred ordinance of God, for fear of Him, and in compliance with what He wills. They not only avoid committing bad deeds, but they avoid merely coming closer to them. They are keen not to commit anything wrong, and they accomplish this by seeing how doing wrong is a truly grave error. So they avoid approaching it. This is like the “Do not approach. No photo,” sign you might see on sensitive facilities in Egypt warning people not to come closer or take pictures. If this is the case with sensitive buildings, what about God’s orders and prohibitions?

Many verses of the Bible have this meaning as well, including:

**“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success,”** (Joshua 1:8).

**“My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands; For length of days and long life And peace they will add to you,”** (Proverbs 3:1-2).

**“But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness,”** (II Timothy 2:16).

**“Do not kindle the coals of sinners, or you may be burned in their flaming fire,”** (Sirach 8:10).

**“Alas, sinful nation,”** (Isaiah 1:4).

From another perspective, the one who honors the sacred ordinance of God perfects their prayers, the circumambulation (*tawaf*) of the Kaaba in Mecca, and other rituals, believing that they cannot do less when it comes to anything commanded by God. Rather, they seek compliance, obedience, and the best performance.

It is a kind of perfection. The one who holds fast to this manner does not like to attain the ordinary, but instead wants to reach the distinguished levels, bearing in mind that Paradise is in levels, and they want to reach the highest.

We learn from this manner to perfect anything, even in our day-to-day life and at work. We are required to perfect and maximize output. All these things are the product of someone who holds the manner of perfection and respects the tasks assigned to them, someone who regards any tiny mistake as a grave one. They do this both in order to avoid such mistakes, and as a way to honor the importance of complying with the command to dedicate themselves to it.

## 52- Condoning

What I mean here is that nitpicking and concentrating on every mistake is not favorable. One should sometimes condone some small mistakes, unless one has to step in and intervene. Intense concentration and focusing on minor slips-ups can actually lead to an adverse reaction. Often you may find that others can work things out for themselves if given some leeway or autonomy.

What I mean is that if someone is responsible for others – family members, a company, siblings, or companions – and wants to give advice when they see something wrong, there should be wisdom and good instruction when it comes to giving that advice. God Almighty ordered His prophet to exercise this conduct, saying: **“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best,”** (An-Nahl 16:125).

We have to exercise wisdom to be able to choose when to appear like we have not noticed something awry. If we show that we are aware of the issue, we will have to intervene. This is the art of overlooking minor slips-ups, meaning we should not concentrate on tiny things. You can intervene in significant matters, if it reaches that point.

If a husband or wife concentrates on their spouse’s every word or act, the family could break up. We have to let some things go. If a parent concentrates too much on every little thing their child does, the child could grow to resent this behavior, because it does not give them any room to move.

Condoning things, when done in a positive way, is like the tiny bit of steam that comes out of a pressure cooker. This small bit of escaping

steam allows the steam inside to build up, but without exploding, and by doing so this cooks the meal to perfection. So too the pressures of life should be contained in a similar way, but also we must allow a little bit to slip by. We must overlook, or else we run the risk of “keeping the lid on too tight.” The one who is in charge has to condone things, because it is not reasonable for someone to concentrate on every critical word or act, especially the small insignificant issues.

We have to understand that we deal with humans who make mistakes. We have to condone insignificant mistakes, hoping that ours too will one day be forgiven.

The Bible states:

**“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse,”**  
(Romans 12:14).

**“Let him turn away from evil and do good,”** (I Peter 3:11).

**“A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, But the simple pass on and are punished,”** (Proverbs 22:3). This is a type of overlooking something that is evil until it is properly investigated and considered.

The manner of condoning reveals prudence and wisdom. Let us work to possess it.

## 53- Relieving Hardships

In Arabic, the word *karb* means sadness and grief that exhausts the soul. It is hardship and distress. God grants a great reward for relieving distress or hardship. Many noble verses in the Quran encourage us to relieve the distress of people.

Allah says: **“(Remember) Noah, when he cried (to Us) aforetime: We listened to his (prayer) and delivered him and his family from great distress. We helped him against people who rejected Our Signs: truly they were a people given to Evil: so We drowned them (in the Flood) all together,”** (Al-Anbiya 21:76-77).

**“And We did certainly confer favor upon Moses and Aaron. And We saved them and their people from the great affliction, And We supported them so it was they who overcame,”** (As-Saffat 37:114-116).

**“Say, ‘Who rescues you from the darkneses of the land and sea [when] you call upon Him imploring [aloud] and privately, ‘If He should save us from this [crisis], we will surely be among the thankful.’ Say, ‘It is Allah who saves you from it and from every distress; then you [still] associate others with Him,’”** (Al-An’am 6:63-64).

All these verses and many others teach us that God Almighty rescues His creation, lifts His wrath from them, and relieves distress.

The question is: Is it possible for human beings to do the same? Does a person who exerts effort to relieve hardships have this manner? The answer is yes.

How great it is when someone has this manner! This person finds pleasure in getting people out of their crises – personal, financial, or otherwise. This person helps others to overcome their troubles and problems. People everywhere are dealing with hardships these days, and they need to have this spirit.

Look at the thousands of debt prisoners in this country who have been jailed after they failed to repay, for example, the installments on their daughter's bridal trousseau. Repaying their debt so that they can go free and return to their families and their careers is the best kind of relieving distress.

While buying medicine from a pharmacy, you might see a poor person. You can pay for their medicine. How beautiful the relieving of distress is! Pay the school fees for those who you know cannot afford it, or pay for their medical treatment, or their children's clothes. It is a form of relieving hardship. Defending an innocent person to free them is a form of relieving hardship. Helping the weak to restore their rights is a form of relieving hardship.

The prophet, peace be upon him, explained the merit of this manner. He said: **“He who likes Allah to deliver him from the calamities of the Day of Resurrection, let him either give respite to a debtor or grant him remission (of loans) in straitened circumstances.”**

In another *hadith*, he said: **“A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim. So he should not oppress him nor should he hand him over to (his satan or to his self which is inclined to evil). Whoever fulfills the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs; whoever removes the troubles of his brother, Allah will remove one of his troubles on the Day of Resurrection; and whoever covers up the fault of a Muslim, Allah will cover up his fault on the Day of Resurrection.”**

He also said: **“He who wants to have his prayer answered and his hardship relieved should give respite to a debtor.”**

Therefore, the person who relieves hardships is not rewarded for their favors, charity, compassion, and sympathy only. It is obvious. This person protects themselves from the evil consequences of hardships because the prophet taught us that God relieves the hardships of those who relieve the distress of people. Allah says: **“Is the reward for good [anything] but good?”** (Ar-Rahman 55:60).

Here are some verses from the Bible on the benefits of relieving hardships:

**“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink,”** (Romans 12:20).

**“One’s almsgiving is like a signet ring with the Lord, and he will keep a person’s kindness like the apple of his eye,”** (Sirach 17:22).

**“Therefore comfort one another with these words,”** (I Thessalonians 4:18).

**“Therefore comfort each other and edify one another,”** (I Thessalonians 5:11).

As the saying goes, “No man is an island.” We live in a society that includes needy, troubled, and oppressed people. Let us carry this manner with us while dealing with people, leaving no one in need without striving to help them as much as we can. We may be in their place someday and need someone to give to us. What we sow today, we will reap tomorrow. If we plant benevolence, we will reap goodness. Let us teach our children not to fail to help anyone, and to take the initiative helping the needy around them. Then let us reward them for the help they extended to others. This is how we give society

constructive generations who can advance a country, one where the “haves” cherish and delight the “have-nots.”

Ask yourself each day: How many people’s hardships have I relieved? We should not content ourselves unless the answer is that we can say we have done this for at least one person, even if we did the least we could for them. This is Allah’s favor that He has given us, in order to see what His servants will do. The best of us are the ones who benefit people and get them out of their distress. The prophet said: **“The best of humans is he who is most beneficial to them.”** Do we not want God to cover over our faults on the Day of Resurrection?

Let us seek to relieve people’s hardships and take it as a habit and behavior in dealing with others. May God relieve our distress in this life and the Hereafter.

## 54- Bounty (or Graciousness)

*Fadl* (bounty, graciousness, favor, merit, liberality) means an increase in goodness and anything that is above and beyond what is needed. It is the opposite of *naqs* (scarcity, reduction, decreasing). And *fadl* is in the hands of Allah, that He gives to whomever He wills. Allah says: **“Say, ‘Indeed, [all] bounty is in the hand of Allah – He grants it to whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Wise,’”** (Al-i-Imran 3:73).

*Fadl* has several aspects that distinguish gracious people.

Regarding women and divorce, Allah says: **“And if you divorce them before you have touched them and you have already specified for them an obligation, then [give] half of what you specified – unless they forego the right or the one in whose hand is the marriage contract foregoes it. And to forego it is nearer to righteousness. And do not forget graciousness between you. Indeed Allah, of whatever you do, is Seeing,”** (Al-Baqara 2:237). The term “graciousness” here denotes favor, which may take the form of charity.

Allah also says: **“And let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give [aid] to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of Allah,”** (An-Nur 24:22).

*Fadl* has many forms in the Quran and many meanings that change from one verse to another. But for the purposes of our discussion regarding this manner, the relevant point is that one should share God’s favor and bounty with people and with those in need. A doctor can offer free treatment. A lawyer can defend the innocent. A high-profile

official can help people and give them their due rights. A teacher can perform his job honestly in order to educate the children about what God has taught him. A worker can perfect his profession which God has bestowed on him, and so on.

This is the good manner of whoever wants to thank God for His bounty and provision, expressing this thankfulness in a form that reflects God's favor on them, in order to delight people. If you restrain anger, you can go above and beyond by forgiving people. And if you are generous, you can go above and beyond by helping people more. If you give alms, you can go above and beyond by spending more. You should be happy while doing all this, because God Almighty has put you in a position to help. God grants this position to whom He loves.

Several verses of the Bible invite people to this manner, such as:

**“Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it,”** (I Peter 3:11).

**“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,”** (II Peter 1:5).

It is a good manner. It is the behavior of noble people whose hearts Allah has filled with mercy, compassion, gratitude, and benevolence.

May God make us have this good manner.

## 55- Saying “God Willing” (Inshallah)

Saying “God Willing” (*inshallah*) is a good manner we have learned from the holy Quran, as is in the verse: **“And never say of anything, ‘Indeed, I will do that tomorrow,’ Except [when adding], ‘If Allah wills.’ And remember your Lord when you forget [it] and say, ‘Perhaps my Lord will guide me to what is nearer than this to right conduct,’”** (Al-Kahf 18:23-24). The verse instructs us that we should always remember that the universe has only One – Glory be to Him – Who regulates it. When we say to a friend “See you tomorrow,” this could be an impolite act toward God Almighty. The prophet, peace be upon him, instructed us to always say “If God wills it/God willing” (*inshallah* in Arabic) or “by Allah/God’s leave” (*bi’iznillah*). It means: I want to meet you, so may the One Who owns everything allow us to meet. This implies politeness and an understanding of the truth of life. Who can be certain that they will live until the following day to confirm that they will meet again?

Let us be keen to utter *inshallah* or *bi’iznillah* in everything we say. Let us teach our children to follow suit. It is the manner of the one who is polite toward God and loves whoever shows politeness with Him. Politeness is the backbone of worship and the creed, which is to know how to appraise Allah with true appraisal and that our sayings should be consistent with what is in our hearts, attributing everything to the Creator, the One – Glory be Him.

The Bible refers to this in several verses, including:

**“For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise,”** (Hebrews 10:36).

The Bible also chastises those who intend to do something without saying “if Go wills it,” as is the case in this verse: **“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit;’ whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that,’”** (James 4:13-15).

Let us be careful in our speech and say “God willing” in everything. Let us remind those around us to say it if they forget. Let our frequent lesson to our children be, “Say: *inshallah*.”

## 56- Secrecy

Secrecy is truly a very fine manner. I will explain: The one who practices it prefers not to talk too much about certain things, and sometimes conceals them. The reasons for this may differ from one individual to another, and from one situation to another. Perhaps someone has done something wrong, and as we know, God does not like us to speak about evil. So a person would not want to openly declare to people that they have violated God's commands. For example, a father may say in front of his children that he has committed a sin. Yet he does not know that this could embolden them to break God's limits, and they may end up copying their father and committing the same sin. Why not? Their father did it and now he talks about it openly. Therefore, secrecy is a good manner because the person who covers up such things does not want anyone to copy their behavior. A Quranic verse is explicit in this regard: **“Allah does not like the public mention of evil except by one who has been wronged. And ever is Allah Hearing and Knowing,”** (An-Nisa 4:148).

Silence and secrecy could help defuse a dispute between two parties, keep a specific situation calm, and not incite someone against another due to the disclosure of information by one of them. Allah says: **“If [instead] you show [some] good or conceal it or pardon an offense – indeed, Allah is ever Pardoning and Competent,”** (An-Nisa 4:149). It is a prudent person who keeps secrets and knows the consequence if they disclose them. Therefore, they try to avoid this, preferring to keep secret what information they have.

It is a good picture of a person's manners: They are someone who weighs every word before uttering it and knows well what they should keep secret.

Nowadays, I am astonished to see some people committing things that displease God while boasting about it on social media. They talk about what they did in front of their friends and even to other people they do not know. Where is the logic? Where is the reason? Where is the traditional saying: “If you are afflicted with sin, don’t tell about it?”

The Bible warns against encouraging people to do evil, saying:

**“But woe to that man by whom the offense comes!”**  
(Matthew 18:7).

**“He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good,”** (I Peter 3:10-11).

**“There is the person who is wise enough to keep silent,”**  
(Sirach 20:1).

**“Oh, that you would be silent, And it would be your wisdom!”**  
(Job 13:5).

**“Therefore the prudent keep silent at that time, For it is an evil time,”** (Amos 5:13).

**“It is good that one should hope and wait quietly For the salvation of the Lord,”** (Lamentations 3:26).

The question is: Why do we make these things public and let people know our mistakes? What benefit does it do you if people know your unwise behavior, for example drinking alcohol and that kind of thing?

Everyone should be much more aware of what they post on social media and what pictures they share.

Lastly, there is another aspect that is important when we discuss failing to keep secrets. I am talking about the secrets of others, not

just our own. Again, I return to social media to illustrate my point. Some people may make a habit of sharing messages that disclose other people's secrets or are outright abusive toward them, using another person's secrets to wound them. One ought to cover up the faults of others, not share them far and wide, as the prophet has said: **“Whoever covers up the fault of a Muslim, Allah will cover up his fault on the Day of Resurrection.”** We would rather not share such things, whether online or offline, lest we should give up a beautiful manner and fall into the habit of backbiting others. This is far from having a good manner.

Everyone is invited to reassess the things they say. Let everyone know that secrecy is a good manner we have to practice. It is good for us.

## 57- Reasoning

Wisdom is beautiful and reason is the criterion that distinguishes humanity from other creatures. Therefore, God Almighty holds people accountable when they reach the age of *taklif* (meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions). A child under seven years old has not reached the age of discernment, and therefore they should not be held accountable. Also, a person who is mentally disabled is not accountable, but if they recover, they will be held responsible.

Many verses of the Quran urge us to practice reasoning, including:

**“Indeed, We have made it an Arabic Qur’an that you might understand,”** (Az-Zukhruf 43:3).

**“And He has subjected for you the night and day and the sun and moon, and the stars are subjected by His command. Indeed in that are signs for a people who reason,”** (An-Nahl 16:12).

**“And these examples We present to the people, but none will understand them except those of knowledge,”** (Al-Ankabut 29:43).

**“Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?”** (Al-Baqara 2:44).

God Almighty has ordered us to reflect upon the Quran, observe the universe and its organization, and make a distinction between true and false as well as what is lawful and what is unlawful.

Therefore, reasoning is a manner that needs information and experience to enhance one’s ability to distinguish between what God

likes or dislikes. A person who has the good manner of reasoning knows that God distinguishes the wicked from the good.

God says: **“Allah would not leave the believers in that [state] you are in [presently] until He separates the evil from the good,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:179).

This person seeks to do this in their life because they know that God has ordered **“That no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another,”** (An-Najm 53:38). They analyze their relationships with people. They neither hold someone accountable for an inconsequential mistake nor the mistake of someone else. They always distinguish between good and bad deeds, and can reward good actions and punish evil ones. Simply put, they do not mix these things up.

In the Bible, we find the following relevant verses:

**“Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people’s sins; keep yourself pure,”** (I Timothy 5:22).

**“Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good,”** (Romans 12:9).

**“And on some have compassion, making a distinction,”** (Jude 1:22).

**“For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues,”** (I Corinthians 12:8-10).

Being able to reason soundly and well is a good thing for the very reason that it helps you to obey God. All the information you need to make any decision will be laid out in front of you as clear as

glass. If accurate information helps one make the right decision, so reasoning makes one capable of choosing, and perhaps more capable of instructing others with truth and patience.

We are required to instruct our children more and more on how to distinguish between various things, so that we will all be prudent worshipers who know the path to survival and Paradise – God willing.

We are required to instruct our children to distinguish between good and evil, and what is permissible and what is impermissible. We are required to instruct them how to identify who is responsible for something, and to punish only the guilty and reward only the diligent. All future generations must learn how to avoid getting things mixed up, especially in the fast-paced world we live in, and that no one who bears a burden will have to bear the burden of another.

This is a basis for the manner of reasoning, which can be a mental tool for our children to help them achieve success in their lives and enter Paradise – God willing.

## 58- Advising Each Other in Truth

By this, I mean that while advising others we should be sincere about what we consider as true, therefore we will love to advise others in what we think is the right or better way.

The most prominent verse in the Quran in this regard is the short Surah of Al-Asr, which I would like to quote in its entirety: **“By time, Indeed, mankind is in loss, Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience,”** (Al-Asr 103:1-3). In this Surah, Allah swears by time that everyone is in loss, except for a few who exhort one another to hold fast to the truth and patience.

Advising each other in truth is a manner that, when practiced by people, works to create more and more well-mannered people, the kind who love good for others and who love to see others on the path of goodness. It is a practical application of the prophet’s saying: **“No one of you becomes a true believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself.”** Advising each other in truth is the best form of cooperation and team spirit. The one who observes it is not selfish – they want others to succeed.

We need to advise one another in truth when it comes to our children, and this means teaching them good manners, behaviors, and relationships. We have to exert more efforts to surround our children with the kind of people who advise one another in truth, and do not lead them astray. A bad friend will not advise our children in truth, but will instead go with them in error or even urge them to commit it. Therefore, the family is required to keep an eye on their children

and the friends of their children, and select from among them those who can advise each other in truth, so that they will be helpful to our children in what is good. Also, in the workplace, be keen to surround yourself with whoever can help you to perfect your job. In turn, you should also help others and advise them to perfect their job, too. There is no good in us if we see others going astray while we keep watching them and fail to recommend to them that which is true, or provide them with good counsel. This manner produces a cooperative society whose members love each other and seek to succeed, and that have a powerful team spirit that motivates them into action.

School textbooks should include this manner. Religious discourse and the media should instruct us on how to practice it without encroaching on the freedoms and privacy of the others.

It is a testament to the greatness of this manner that the Creator – Glory be Him – knows which things benefit humans, and swears that everyone is in a state of loss except those who join together in the mutual teaching of truth. So you should be keen to attain it from now on. Make it a part of the way you do things, always. Speak gently to the people and advise them to the truth.

But be careful that you do not give advice as though you are an officer giving orders. You simply advise people on the path to goodness with simple words and a tolerant spirit, with wise and gentle language, trying to keep the person away from the path to error.

Several verses of the Bible tackle this manner, including:

**“Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God,”** (III John 1:11).

**“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good,”**  
(Romans 12:21).

**“If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord,”** (I Corinthians 14:37).

**“Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins,”**  
(James 5:20).

I must point out here that while practicing this moral value, we are not required to achieve a result. You can advise others, but your advice could fall on deaf ears. Every one of us will be held accountable before God to what we have done. You are required to exert effort – that is to say, just give advice – but not to achieve a result.

## **59- Humility**

Humility, which means that someone is not proud and does not believe they are better than other people, is one of the good manners for which Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent to teach to us.

The Quranic verses that instruct us in this manner are clear. Allah says:

**“And lower your wing to those who follow you of the believers,”** (Ash-Shu’ara 26:215).

**“And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful,”** (Luqman 31:18).

**“And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace,”** (Al-Furqan 25:63).

**“And do not walk upon the earth exultantly. Indeed, you will never tear the earth [apart], and you will never reach the mountains in height,”** (Al-Isra 17:37).

The same concept is shared in many verses of the Bible, such as:

**“Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall,”** (Proverbs 16:18)

**“The greater you are, the more you must humble yourself; so you will find favor in the sight of the Lord,”** (Sirach 3:18).

**“And be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble,’” (I Peter 5:5).**

**“Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble,” (Proverbs 3:34).**

**“God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble,” (James 4:6).**

People love a humble person, while on the other hand, someone who is haughty is disliked by almost everyone. God wants us to be moderate and gentle with people, and not to be harsh with each other. How beautiful is a wealthy, humble man, or a man with authority who people attest to his humility and simplicity?

Let us look at this Quranic verse: **“Allah has already given you victory in many regions and [even] on the day of *Hunayn*, when your great number pleased you, but it did not avail you at all, and the earth was confining for you with its vastness; then you turned back, fleeing,” (At-Tawba 9:25).** We find it a warning against being pleased with the self, wealth, or power.

Another verse says: **“And present to them an example of two men: We granted to one of them two gardens of grapevines, and We bordered them with palm trees and placed between them [fields of] crops. Each of the two gardens produced its fruit and did not fall short thereof in anything. And We caused to gush forth within them a river. And he had fruit, so he said to his companion while he was conversing with him, ‘I am greater than you in wealth and mightier in [numbers of] men.’ And he entered his garden while he was unjust to himself. He said, ‘I do not think that this will perish – ever. And I do not think the Hour will occur. And even if I should be brought back to my Lord, I will surely find better than this as a return,’” (Al-Kahf 18:32-36).** This verse instructs us not to

be haughty, and not to feel powerful because of what we own in terms of wealth or other things.

We find the peak of humility in Luqman's advice to his son: **“And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful,”** (Luqman 31:18).

Humility is also needed in our familial relationships. We should be under the feet of our parents. If we have succeeded and have become renowned in society, we have to come to our mother to honor and humble ourselves before her. The children learn from our behavior. They see how we behave with the driver, janitor, garbage collector, and domestic workers. Do we speak gently and respectfully with them, and honor them, or not? We unconsciously give them lessons. The morals our children have are but the reflection of the accumulated lessons they have learned from those around them, the most important of which is the family.

Humility is proof of one's confidence in oneself and confidence in one's ability. It shows that your station in life or your wealth has not resulted in arrogance. Instead, the humble person is composed and knows that a high status or material wealth are not eternal. Therefore, the humble person is gentle in dealing with people, especially when they are in a position of power and wealth. We have to be cautious in the way we carry ourselves, the way we walk, speak, behave, and the relationships we have. How ugly haughtiness and arrogance are in the sight of Allah! On the other hand, how great humility and humbleness are. The humble person is someone who obeys and has the manners that are liked by God and His messenger.

Be moderate in your pace. Lower your voice. Do not walk through the earth exaltedly. Be gentle with those around you. Hold fast to this great manner: humility.

## 60- Affection

One of Allah's Noble Names is "the Affectionate," as the Quranic verse says: **"And He is the Forgiving, the Affectionate,"** (Al-Buruj 85:14). Allah tells us in the Quran that He will appoint affection for those who believe and do good deeds, saying: **"Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds – the Most Merciful will appoint for them affection,"** (Maryam 19:96).

Affection (*mawaddah* in Arabic) is the feeling of love, fondness, and kind relationships. It is a foundation of marriage. Allah says: **"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. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought,"** (Ar-Rum 30:21).

The Bible too says:

**"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another,"** (Romans 12:9-10).

Umar ibn al-Khattab, one of the closest companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), identified three things that could increase a friend's affection. He said: **"Three things could purify your brother's affection: To start greeting him when you meet him, make space for him in a gathering, and call him with the best of his names."**

So we are required to practice the manner of affection. We have to be affectionate with our family, friends, kin, and those around us, and

respect everybody. We have to call them with the best of their epithets. This is the opposite of the bad behavior of bullying and mockery. We notice these days that people may call others things they do not like, such as “short,” “fat,” “stupid,” etc. However, the manner of affection requires us to call them only the names they like.

Also, a husband and wife should call each other by the best names and nicknames, such as “darling,” “love,” “dear,” “honey,” etc.

Although these things may seem small, they deepen relationships, defuse disputes, and prepare the atmosphere for a finer relationship.

We also have to be kind to others when we are out in public or in gatherings, giving them preference over ourselves. A man can open the car door for his wife or allow her to pass through a door before him. Someone can give a better seat to their friend.

We have to keep in touch with friends and kin, in times of both ease and adversity. We should not put up barriers to our communications, but instead people should feel that we care for them and like to listen to them, and that we share our joys and our sorrows together.

This, in my opinion, is the manner of affection. Let each one of us practice it with those we love. This is the best way to express a good relationship and foster well-being for all involved.

## **61- Distribution of the Estate**

The Quran has set rules and etiquette for distributing an estate.

First, the estate of a deceased person can never be distributed without first repaying their debts.

Allah says: **“And for you is half of what your wives leave if they have no child. But if they have a child, for you is one fourth of what they leave, after any bequest they [may have] made or debt. And for the wives is one fourth if you leave no child. But if you leave a child, then for them is an eighth of what you leave, after any bequest you [may have] made or debt. And if a man or woman leaves neither ascendants nor descendants but has a brother or a sister, then for each one of them is a sixth. But if they are more than two, they share a third, after any bequest which was made or debt, as long as there is no detriment [caused]. [This is] an ordinance from Allah, and Allah is Knowing and Forbearing,”** (An-Nisa 4:12)

Also, the deferred dowry from the husband to his wife must be repaid to the wife after the husband’s death and before distributing his estate, because it is a debt.

Another verse regulates this process: **“And when [other] relatives and orphans and the needy are present at the [time of] division, then provide for them [something] out of the estate and speak to them words of appropriate kindness,”** (An-Nisa 4:8). God Almighty orders us to give from the estate to the relatives who attend the distribution process, even though they are not entitled to take any portion thereof. Yet surely it is unreasonable that they attend the distribution of the estate without being given something.

It is a kind of empathy, especially with the kin, orphans, and the poor. It is unreasonable that an heir takes their portion of the inheritance without showing sympathy with those who have attended the distribution of the estate.

Several verses of the Bible tackle the etiquette of distributing the estate, calling for sublimity, self-respect, empathy, and preservation of the heirs' rights. This includes the following quote:

**“Someone in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.’ Jesus replied, ‘Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?’ Then he said to them, ‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.’ And he told them this parable: ‘The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, “What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?” So he said, “I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’” But God said to him, “Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?” So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.’” (Luke 12:13-21).**

In the above quote, a man asks Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) to divide the inheritance of a deceased person. He does not refuse. But he refers the man to the Jewish law, which the man follows. However, Jesus adds a spiritual touch by warning against greed, conveying the meaning that money does not give life to a person.

Here are other verses from the Bible on the subject:

**“He who gives to the poor will not lack, But he who hides his eyes will have many curses,”** (Proverbs 28:27).

**“Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy,”** (Psalms 82:3).

**“Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, The alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart Against his brother,”** (Zechariah 7:10).

**“He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing,”** (Deuteronomy 10:18).

It is a good manner that teaches us mercy, compassion, and sharing the feeling of sympathy with the poor, relatives, orphans, and the needy. Of course, this is not confined to the division of inheritance but extends to any other similar cases.

This is how an estate is distributed. Let us be keen and adhere to these rules and etiquette.

## **62- Honoring God's Words**

Displaying zeal for God's words, which have been revealed in His book, is great conduct indeed. Many verses are very clear in this respect, including:

**“And if you ask them, they will surely say, ‘We were only conversing and playing.’ Say, ‘Is it Allah and His verses and His Messenger that you were mocking?’”** (At-Tawba 9:65).

The above verse urges honoring God's verses and to not allow anyone to joke and jest regarding these verses.

Allah says: **“And when you see those who engage in [offensive] discourse concerning Our verses, then turn away from them until they enter into another conversation. And if Satan should cause you to forget, then do not remain after the reminder with the wrongdoing people,”** (Al-An'am 6:68).

Therefore, the good manner here is to honor and respect God's verses. But we still can make an indirect mistake that could result in something objectionable. This may happen if you insult someone and they return it by insulting God. The Quran warns:

**“And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge. Thus We have made pleasing to every community their deeds. Then to their Lord is their return, and He will inform them about what they used to do,”** (Al-An'am 6:108).

Therefore, the one who has the good manner of honoring God's words does not insult anyone, lest they should bring insult to God's verses.

The Bible also deals with this manner in several verses, including:

**“But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God,”** (II Corinthians 4:2).

**“For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ,”** (II Corinthians 2:17).

**“Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You,”** (Psalms 119:11).

**“The law of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of coins of gold and silver,”** (Psalms 119:72).

The one who observes this good manner respects everyone, so that they will be met with the same respect. They display zeal for God’s words, allowing no one to offend these words. This person takes God’s Book as an approach in life, leaves gatherings of those who insult others, and tries to oblige others to show mutual respect and use decent language, thus preserving their dignity and that of their family. This way, they are mindful of God and His religion.

## 63- Making Things Easy

God loves us to make things easy for people. God has enjoined us to adhere to His worship, motivating us by facilitating the acts of worship. Thus, if you do not find water to make ablution (*wudu* ) to perform the prayer, you can make dry ablution with clean earth (*tayammum*). If you cannot perform prayer while standing, you can sit or lay. A traveler can shorten and combine prayers, and is also allowed to not observe the obligatory fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, provided the person fasts other days later. It is also permissible for a sick person not to fast, and instead feed the poor. Many verses of the Quran speak about how God has made things easy for people.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has also taught us to make things easy for people, stressing that religion is easy. He said: **“Make things easy and do not make them difficult, cheer the people up by conveying glad tidings to them and do not repulse (them).”** Therefore, making things easy is a good manner we are invited to observe in our day-to-day life. If someone is unable to repay their debt, defer it and give them a respite. Make things easy, so that God will make things easy for you.

A functionary who is in charge of something needs to make things easy, not complicated, for citizens. How ugly the behavior of complicating things for people is. It is far from what God has instructed us. The teacher should make things easy for the students and not overburden them with a lot of homework. Following the middle path is a virtue.

Everyone should make things easy for those they deal with. Do not overload them with conditions and measures. Try to consider the conditions of each one. It is an ethical value that one will be rewarded for by God Almighty. And if we invoke God to make things easy for us, as in the verse “[Moses] said, ‘**My Lord, expand for me my breast [with assurance], And ease for me my task,**’” (Ta-Ha 20:25-26), we have to facilitate things for people.

The Quranic verses that encourage this manner are many, including:

**“Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship,”** (Al-Baqara 2:185).

**“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity,”** (Al-Baqara 2:286).

**“God intends to lighten your burden, for the human being was created weak,”** (An-Nisa 4:28).

A verse from the Gospel of Luke refers to the reprehensibility of making things difficult, and that it is favorable to make it easy for people and not overburden them: **“Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers,”** (Luke 11:46).

In His divine messages, God invites us to make things easy for people. That is why it is a good manner that we have to remember and take as an approach in dealing with each other.

## 64- Consoling Others

As there are material things that someone can provide to another, there are also other moral things that can boost someone's morale and spirits. This is what I mean by consoling. The one who observes this manner knows that a single word or behavior can spare people embarrassment and cheer people's hearts.

Many Quranic verses and prophetic *hadiths* have encouraged us to be mindful of this manner. In the case of divorce, for example, consoling is required through giving compensation to the divorced wife.

Allah says: **“There is no blame upon you if you divorce women you have not touched nor specified for them an obligation. But give them [a gift of] compensation – the wealthy according to his capability and the poor according to his capability – a provision according to what is acceptable, a duty upon the doers of good,”** (Al-Baqara 2:236).

**“And for divorced women is a provision according to what is acceptable – a duty upon the righteous,”** (Al-Baqara 2:241).

This compensation can be seen as a form of consoling the wife, who might be broken-hearted due to the divorce.

The following verse sheds light on another aspect of this manner regarding the distribution of inheritance:

**“And when [other] relatives and orphans and the needy are present at the [time of] division, then provide for them [something] out of the estate and speak to them words of appropriate kindness,”** (An-Nisa 4:8).

So those who happened to attend the distribution of an estate among the heirs, this too will be a form of consoling them, by giving them something from the inheritance to lift their spirits as much as we can.

Examples of consoling in the Quran and *hadith* are countless. Consoling people does not have to be limited to times of great loss; it might also be found in many day-to-day situations. This includes the visits we pay to our relatives and keeping in touch with them, or the kind treatment we show to our neighbors, domestic workers, drivers, and janitors – especially if this is coupled with the provision of food and clothing and honoring their families.

The forms of consoling also include speaking good words. Allah says: **“Have you not considered how Allah presents an example, [making] a good word like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and its branches [high] in the sky? It produces its fruit all the time, by permission of its Lord. And Allah presents examples for the people that perhaps they will be reminded,”** (Ibrahim 14:24-25). Thus, God Almighty instructs us to console those whom we deal with, even including the kind words we might use in speaking with them.

Many parables in the Quran demonstrate several aspects of consoling. In the parable of Prophet Joseph (Yusuf), peace be upon him, Allah consoled him after he has been imprisoned unjustly for years. But after he had been exonerated, he became the governor of Egypt. This was a kind of consoling from God to Joseph.

Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim), peace be upon him, had seen many tragic events in his life until he was thrown into fire. But God consoled him by choosing prophets and messengers from his children Ishmael (Isma'il) and Isaac (Is-haq). This was a kind of consoling from God Almighty to Abraham.

Some verses of the Bible emphasize the greatness of consoling, such as:

**“He heals the brokenhearted And binds up their wounds,”**  
(Psalms 147:3).

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed,”**  
(Luke 4:18).

Let us learn how to delight and please others by a good word, charity, or anything that might cheer them.

The person who has the manner of consoling others hopes for God to console them. They try to console their families, friends, and anyone else they deal with. It is hard for them to find someone in grief or pain without trying to find a way to lift their spirits.

Whoever has this good manner as an approach in their lives will succeed.

## 65- Intercourse

The Quran and prophetic *hadiths* have made reference to the etiquette of sexual intercourse between spouses. This good manner reflects compliance with the ordinance of God and His messenger, and includes many aspects.

First, guard your private parts.

Allah says: **“The men who guard their private parts and the women who do so,”** (Al-Ahzab 33:35).

**“And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline [to injustice],”** (An-Nisa 4:3).

Second, adhere to God’s instruction that intercourse must be only in a lawful relationship. Be aware that it is a human relationship based on affection and compassion from both partners, and establishes a sound relationship.

Third, the etiquette of intercourse obliges you to choose certain times for it, because it is prohibited in some other times, such as during a woman’s menstrual period.

Allah says: **“And they ask you about menstruation. Say, ‘It is harm, so keep away from wives during menstruation. And do not approach them until they are pure. And when they have purified themselves, then come to them from where Allah has ordained for you. Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves,’”** (Al-Baqara 2:222)

It is also prohibited during the fasting hours in the holy month of Ramadan.

Allah says: **“It has been made permissible for you the night preceding fasting to go to your wives [for sexual relations]. They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them. Allah knows that you used to deceive yourselves, so He accepted your repentance and forgave you. So now, have relations with them and seek that which Allah has decreed for you. And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night]. Then complete the fast until the sunset. And do not have relations with them as long as you are staying for worship in the mosques. These are the limits [set by] Allah, so do not approach them. Thus does Allah make clear His ordinances to the people that they may become righteous,”** (Al-Baqara 2:187).

It is also prohibited during the state of *ihram* (the ritual state for performing Hajj pilgrimage and *Umrah* pilgrimage).

Allah says: **“Hajj is [during] well-known months, so whoever has made Hajj obligatory upon himself therein [by entering the state of ihram], there is [to be for him] no sexual relations and no disobedience and no disputing during Hajj. And whatever good you do – Allah knows it. And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah. And fear Me, O you of understanding. There is no blame upon you for seeking bounty from your Lord [during Hajj],”** (Al-Baqara 2:197-198).

There are other obligatory instructions for intercourse, such as having it only in the vagina.

Allah says: **“And when they have purified themselves, then come to them from where Allah has ordained for you,”** (Al-Baqara 2:222).

**“Your wives are a place of sowing of seed for you, so come to your place of cultivation however you wish and put forth [righteousness] for yourselves. And fear Allah and know that you will meet Him. And give good tidings to the believers,”** (Al-Baqara 2:223).

**“They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them,”** (Al-Baqara 2:187).

The above verses make it clear that intercourse is a mutual relationship.

The prophet (peace be upon him) said: **“And in man’s sexual intercourse (with his wife) there is a *Sadaqah* (charity).”** They (the Companions) said: **“O Messenger of Allah, is there reward for him who satisfies his sexual need among us?”** He said: **“You see, if he were to satisfy it with something forbidden, would it not be a sin on his part? Similarly, if he were to satisfy it legally, he should be rewarded.”**

The etiquette of intercourse is not confined to the above. The prophet has recommended supplication be recited before approaching your wife to have intercourse. You must say: **“In the name of Allah. O Allah, keep Satan away from me and keep Satan away from that with which You bless me.”**

All the above are aspects of the manner of intercourse as mentioned in the Quran and the prophet’s *Sunnah* (Prophet Muhammad’s sayings, acts, and approvals). As God Almighty has forbidden fornication (sexual intercourse between unmarried people), He also made marriage lawful and set rules for marriage and intercourse to protect every party. Therefore, adhering to this manner the way it is prescribed in the Quran and the *Sunnah* has a great reward because it is an act of obedience to God. Any violation is a sin. So the best of us are the ones who hold fast to this manner.

Many verses of the Bible also mention this manner, such as:

**“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge,”** (Hebrews 13:4).

**“Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband,”** (I Corinthians 7:3).

The Bible also indicates that any distancing between the husband and wife should be according to mutual consent between the two spouses, so as to avoid any dispute or unfulfilled desire:

**“Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment. For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that,”** (I Corinthians 7:1-7)

## **66- Loving Good Things**

The one who loves good things refuses to feed their children and family anything unlawful. It is a manner that needs extreme politeness with God Almighty, and certainty that His saying **“O you who have believed, eat from the good things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is [indeed] Him that you worship,”** (Al-Baqara 2:172) is a divine message delivered by our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to teach us what is lawful (*halal*) and what is unlawful (*haram*).

Many other verses order us to consume good things, and this is not confined to food and drink but includes anything in general, such as:

**“O you who have believed, do not consume one another’s wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful,”** (An-Nisa 4:29).

The above verse instructs us not to consume one another’s wealth unlawfully. Allah has made trade lawful between two parties and prohibited the money gained from unlawful sources, such as usury. The prophet also explained the favor of eating good things when he told Saad ibn Abi Waqqas, one of his closest companions: **“O Saad, make your food lawful and your supplications will be accepted.”**

Several verses of the Bible stress this meaning, such as:

**“He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who**

does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks,” (Romans 14:6).

**“That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work,”** (II Timothy 3:17).

**“And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous,”** (Exodus 23:8).

**“All bribery and injustice will be blotted out, but good faith will last forever,”** (Sirach 40:12).

Eating “good” food means that we must not eat what God has made unlawful. However, the meaning extends to the concept of adhering to all that is lawful in our lives and not accepting any illicit or unjust gain. The following two *hadiths* are clear examples of this value: **“Allah the Almighty is Good and accepts only that which is good,”** and **“There is no flesh raised that sprouts from the unlawful except that the Fire is more appropriate for it.”** Here we must learn not to be happy about what we have gained from unlawful sources because the price will be exorbitant: Hellfire, God forbid.

In this life, a person must be aware that God has urged them to work and vowed to provide His creation with *rizq* (provision, substance). Allah says: **“It is He who made the earth tame for you – so walk among its slopes and eat of His provision – and to Him is the resurrection,”** (Al-Mulk 67:15). God’s provision assigned to you is decreed and will ultimately come to you. We are required to do our best to achieve this provision, be satisfied with what Allah has allotted for us, preserve people’s property and not consume it unjustly, and to not accept bribery. Abdullah ibn Amr, one of the prophet’s companions, narrated: **“The messenger of Allah cursed the one who bribes and the one who takes bribes.”** Such things mix up lawful wealth with unlawful wealth, and the result is that your money will be impure. It will be like a cup of milk polluted with impurities.

Unfortunately, consuming unlawful wealth has become a malady in society. Many lawsuits are being examined before the courts as we speak due to the failure of someone to render rights to whom they are due, embezzlement, theft, fraud, bribery, etc.

Such things require us to check our morals and ethics from early childhood. We also have to ask ourselves whether our children have learned this at school. Have we spoken to them, even once throughout their years of education, about the favor of lawful wealth, as well as the grave impact of unlawful money on society in the sight of God and its consequences on them in the Hereafter? School textbooks should be designed to build a society that satisfies us and pleases God.

We have to hold ourselves accountable and wonder what we have provided to society to improve the manner of loving good things.

This is a call for everyone to be mindful of this matter. We have to do things that will improve these morals day after day. It is not enough to cry when we see unlawful consumption of wealth. We have to strive to make tomorrow better than today and do everything possible to achieve this goal.

I remember when I was first starting out in business, I had three restaurants. Of course, I never thought about serving alcohol in any of them, even though the licenses allowed me to do so. However, I used to serve shisha (hookah) to customers. This went on for one year. The income from serving shisha was fabulous. One day, I entered my home and saw my son eating lunch. I said to myself: “O my God, I serve shisha in my restaurants, and it may cause cancer and other diseases for customers, God forbid, and yet I feed my son with the money I earn money from it! What will happen to him while I’m feeding him from that money, which is not good?” Here, God Almighty helped me to immediately stop serving shisha to customers. I repented and asked

God Almighty for forgiveness for what I had done. I experienced a sharp drop in my sales. But God helped me to prove my position. Then God opened His gates of grace wide for me and I made money from other lawful sources. I invite everyone to think carefully and add more “filters” to purify their wealth to avoid dubious sources of money.

I return here to the topic of eating good food in the literal sense, that is, food and drink. God has made permissible for us many good things and forbidden a few. Likewise, in drinks, all types of drinks are permitted except one: alcohol.

Eating good food is a trade with God. No one shall lose if they trade with God. They will win in their life and the Hereafter – God willing.

## **67- Love for the Sake of God**

Love is one of the finest and noblest human feelings. If love is dedicated to God Almighty and becomes the pivot on which people's relationships are centered, it will remove many hardships and bear good fruits.

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: **“There are people from the servants of Allah who are neither prophets nor martyrs; the prophets and martyrs will envy them on the Day of Resurrection for their rank from Allah, the Most High.’ They (the people) asked: ‘Tell us, Messenger of Allah, who are they?’ He replied: ‘They are people who love one another for the spirit of Allah, without having any mutual kinship and giving property to one. I swear by Allah, their faces will glow and they will be (sitting) in (pulpits of) light. They will have no fear (on the Day) when the people will have fear, and they will not grieve when the people will grieve.’”**

In the *hadith* of the seven who will be under the shade of Allah's throne on the Day of Judgment, the prophet mentioned those who have mutual love for the sake of God.

The messenger of Allah said: **“Seven are (the persons) whom Allah will give Shade of His Throne on the Day when there would be no shade other than His Throne's Shade: A just ruler; a youth who grew up worshipping Allah; a man whose heart is attached to mosques; two persons who love and meet each other and depart from each other for the sake of Allah; a man whom an extremely beautiful woman seduces (for illicit relation), but he (rejects this**

**offer) by saying: ‘I fear Allah’; a man who gives in charity and conceals it (to such an extent) that the left hand does not know what the right has given; and a person who remembers Allah in solitude and his eyes well up.”**

The Bible also speaks about love for the sake of God in many verses, such as:

**“Let all that you do be done with love,”** (I Corinthians 16:14).

**“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another,”** (Romans 12:10).

Love for the sake of God is one of the best and greatest deeds. Let us love one another. Let us share this feeling with our friends – just pure love, not for the sake of any interest. Finding someone with these traits is a kind of provision from God, so try to share the same feeling with them because such people have become rare.

## 68- Caution

Caution is being alert, watchful, careful, and prepared for anything to happen. God loves to see His servants have this manner. A cautious person is careful in every step they take and is not careless or hasty. They are usually wiser and more successful because they calculate their steps carefully to reach the right results. God has ordered us to have this manner in many verses, such as:

**“And obey Allah and obey the Messenger and beware. And if you turn away – then know that upon Our Messenger is only [the responsibility for] clear notification,”** (Al-Ma’ida 5:92)

**“O you who have believed, take your precaution and [either] go forth in companies or go forth all together,”** (An-Nisa 4:71).

**“And when you are among them and lead them in prayer, let a group of them stand [in prayer] with you and let them carry their arms. And when they have prostrated, let them be [in position] behind you and have the other group come forward which has not [yet] prayed and let them pray with you, taking precaution and carrying their arms. Those who disbelieve wish that you would neglect your weapons and your baggage so they could come down upon you in one [single] attack. But there is no blame upon you, if you are troubled by rain or are ill, for putting down your arms, but take precaution. Indeed, Allah has prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment,”** (An-Nisa 4:102).

The above verses urge people to be vigilant to what is happening around them. Even within the family, one is required to be watchful, as in this verse:

**“O you who have believed, indeed, among your wives and your children are enemies to you, so beware of them. But if you pardon and overlook and forgive – then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful,”** (At-Taghabun 64:14).

In the above verse, God asks us to beware of the closest people to us. This is not strange. Some Quranic parables speak about wives who were not adhering to their husbands’ religions, such as the wives of Noah and Lot (peace be upon them). Allah says:

**“Allah presents an example of those who disbelieved: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were under two of Our righteous servants but betrayed them, so those prophets did not avail them from Allah at all, and it was said, ‘Enter the Fire with those who enter,’”** (At-Tahrim 66:10).

Also, we find this manner in the parable of Prophet Joseph when he told his father, Prophet Jacob (Ya’qub) the dream he had seen:

**“[Of these stories mention] when Joseph said to his father, ‘O my father, indeed I have seen [in a dream] eleven stars and the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrating to me,’”** (Yusuf 12:4).

His father warned him not to tell the dream to his brothers, lest they should plot against him.

Allah says: **“He said, ‘O my son, do not relate your vision to your brothers or they will contrive against you a plan. Indeed Satan, to man, is a manifest enemy,’”** (Yusuf 12:5).

Examples of undutiful sons include the parable of Prophet Noah when he warned his son, but the son refused to follow his father’s religion. The son even refused his father’s advice when the flood came. The result was that Noah’s son drowned.

Allah says: **“And Noah called to his son who was apart [from them], ‘O my son, come aboard with us and be not with the disbelievers.’ [But] he said, ‘I will take refuge on a mountain to protect me from the water.’ [Noah] said, ‘There is no protector today from the decree of Allah, except for whom He gives mercy.’ And the waves came between them, and he was among the drowned,”** (Hud 11:42-43).

The Quran also relates the parable of the undutiful son, whose parents did their best to advise him and invite him to God. But he did not accept their advice and became more rebellious and ignorant.

Allah says: **“But one who says to his parents, ‘Uff to you; do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [into oblivion]?’ while they call to Allah for help [and to their son], ‘Woe to you! Believe! Indeed, the promise of Allah is truth.’ But he says, ‘This is not but legends of the former people,’”** (Al-Ahqaf 46:17).

Therefore, the manner of caution is required with both enemies as well as with our families. It is also required in our movements and relationships. Our acts of worship to God are but a kind of caution against entering Hell and hoping for Paradise.

This manner is mentioned in the Bible in several verses, such as:

**“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,”** (I Peter 5:8).

**“But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues,”** (Matthew 10:17).

**“Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees,”** (Matthew 16:6).

**“Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy,”**  
(Luke 12:1).

**“But shun profane and idle babblings,”** (II Timothy 2:16).

Caution is a basic manner. We are required to have it and teach it to our children. But be careful, our children must not be overcautious, lest they should become excessively and unduly worried about every little thing, the way someone who suffers from hypochondria is constantly worried they have a serious illness. Nor should our children be allowed to become careless and without caution, lest they should become indifferent, thus making mistakes and falling in danger.

Let us be moderate in holding this manner. Following the middle path is a virtue.

## 69- Good Neighborliness

For the great status attached to neighbors by God Almighty, He has recommended us to do good to our neighbors the same way we do with our parents.

Allah says: **“Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful,”** (An-Nisa 4:36).

Neighbors are due many rights from us. Good neighborliness is a basic manner that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has taught us, saying: **“The best of companions with Allah is the one who is best to his companions, and the best of neighbors to Allah is the one who is the best of them to his neighbor.”** Many other *hadiths* ordered us to honor neighbors, feed them from what God has provided us, give them from what we love, respect their privacy, lower our voice while speaking to them in order not to annoy them, lower our gaze at their women, not to enter their home without their permission, keep their secrets, share their joy and grief, and advise one another in truth.

Many verses of the Bible stress this manner, such as:

**“He who does not love does not know God, for God is love,”**  
(I John 4:8).

**“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven,”** (Matthew 5:16).

**“Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation,”** (I Peter 2:12).

You do not choose your neighbor. They see your purchases, car, and living conditions and you see theirs. Your children may play with their children. Your wife may mingle and socialize with your neighbor’s wife. So given the neighbor’s special status, the prophet said: **“He who sleeps on a full stomach whilst his neighbor goes hungry is not one of us,”** and **“Jibril (Gabriel) kept recommending treating neighbors with kindness until I thought he would assign a share of inheritance.”** We all know the traditional saying: “The prophet instructed us on [good neighborliness up to] the seventh neighbor.”

These days, your neighbors may include your chauffeur who stays with you all day long, and the security guards at your building. They may also include your neighbor’s domestic workers and chauffeurs, because they too see what God has provided you. So it is recommended that you give these “modern-day neighbors” a portion from the fruits or meat you buy, even in small amounts. If you have extra food, give to them, and so on.

Good neighborliness is a good manner. I hope it will be taught at school, highlighted in the media, and stressed in religious discourse. Let us teach it to our children. Abandoning this manner may create disputes, conflicts, and confrontations that might result in victims. This manner spares us the evil of all this, rejoices us, and draws us closer to God. Honoring and giving to neighbors is not optional. Your neighbors have rights that have been assigned to us by religion. The best of us is the one who has this praiseworthy manner.

## **70- Having Close Relationships**

The holy Quran has ordered us to have close relationships in many verses, such as the following one that speaks about closeness between spouses:

**“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. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought,”** (Ar-Rum 30:21).

This means that the purpose of marriage is that each spouse finds tranquility in the other and that there should be affection and mercy between them.

One of the aspects of having people we are truly close to is that we must develop a culture of handling disagreements between spouses, since failing to handle disagreements in a healthy and constructive way might lead to divorce – God forbid.

Allah says: **“O you who have believed, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion. And do not make difficulties for them in order to take [back] part of what you gave them unless they commit a clear immorality. And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them – perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good,”** (An-Nisa 4:19-20).

**“And when they have [nearly] fulfilled their term, either retain them according to acceptable terms or part with them according to acceptable terms. And bring to witness two just men from among you and establish the testimony for [the acceptance of]**

**Allah. That is instructed to whoever should believe in Allah and the Last day. And whoever fears Allah – He will make for him a way out,”** (At-Talaq 65:2).

Likewise, the Bible speaks about this manner in many verses, such as:

**“So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself,”** (Ephesians 5:28).

**“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord,”** (Ephesians 5:22).

**“Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything,”** (Ephesians 5:24).

**“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,”** (Ephesians 5:25).

**“Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband,”** (Ephesians 5:33).

**“A wife’s charm delights her husband,”** (Sirach 26:13).

**“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh,”** (Genesis 2:24).

All the above verses from the Quran and the Bible urge having solid ties that could protect our relationships at times of disagreement. The verses also warn that a person should not stoop to a lower level of behavior and abandon this good manner when a dispute escalates, for example to the level of a divorce or the like.

A person should maintain this closeness with their friends, colleagues, and all those around them. One should be affectionate and merciful in dealing with others.

It is reported that a man gave his testimony to Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second Muslim caliph and one of the closest companions to Prophet Muhammad. Umar said to the man: **“I do not know you and it will not harm you that I do not know. Bring someone who knows you.’** A man from his people said: **‘I know him.’** Umar said: **‘What do you know about him?’** The man said: **‘His justice and virtue.’** Umar said: **‘Is he your closest neighbor, such that you know him by his coming and going by day and night?’** The man said no. Umar said: **‘Then, have you had business dealings with him, by which you are shown his piety?’** The man said no. Umar said: **‘Then, have you traveled with him on a journey, by which you are shown his good character?’** The man said no. Umar said: **‘You do not know him.’** Then Umar turned to the witness and said: **‘Bring me someone who knows you.’”**

You should not have close companions only in times where everyone is in harmony and things are going well between you and those you are close with. No, the real trial emerges during times of discord. Here the prophet teaches us a lesson, saying:

**“Four are the qualities which, when found in a person, make him a sheer hypocrite, and one who possesses one of them, possesses one characteristic of hypocrisy until he abandons it. These are: When he is entrusted with something, he betrays trust; when he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he acts treacherously; and when he argues, he behaves in a very imprudent, insulting manner.”**

A person has to have this manner in all cases. In times of harmony, they should be tolerant, helpful, and show good conduct. At times of disagreement, they should recognize the rights of others, forgive, and be merciful.

Many families have fallen apart, and divorce has reached unprecedented rates in our society. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is the lack of having close relationships based on affection and mercifulness, which leads people into bad behaviors like quarreling and bickering. When people build close relationships, are tolerant with one another, and show affection in their relationships, their familial relations will be stronger and their lives will be more stable. Allah says: **“And do not forget graciousness between you,”** (Al-Baqara 2:237). This verse enjoins us to remember the good deeds and kind relations of others. Human relationships are like a bank account that has debit and credit balances. We have to increase our debit balance by building good relations and decrease the credit balance. At the moment of dispute, let us remember the debit balance of the other party.

God sent His messengers, the last of whom was Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), to teach us this manner among other noble traits of character. Let us be careful and show affection and mercifulness when we deal with our family members and others. Let us be tolerant and flexible and have good thoughts about others. Do not be the one to start the dispute.

## **71- Having Good Thoughts (Concerning God)**

Having good thoughts concerning God Almighty is a good manner, as Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: **“Indeed, having good thoughts concerning Allah is from the perfection of the worship of Allah.”** So this is rooted in the Islamic creed. We have to know God’s Ability and that He wants good for us. If someone encroaches upon us and we ask God for help, we should have good thoughts regarding God and His Power and be certain that He is All-Hearing and Able.

Many Quranic verses speak about those who had good thoughts about God and were sure that they would meet their Lord in the Hereafter for accountability, and everyone will have their due rights.

Allah says: **“So as for he who is given his record in his right hand, he will say, ‘Here, read my record! Indeed, I was certain that I would be meeting my account.’ So he will be in a pleasant life – In an elevated garden, Its [fruit] to be picked hanging near,”** (Al-Haqqa 69:19-23).

**“And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah] who are certain that they will meet their Lord and that they will return to Him,”** (Al-Baqara 2:45-46).

These verses teach us to have good thoughts about God. This means that we fully trust and believe in what Allah has said in His holy Book and in what His messengers have conveyed to us and that Paradise is right, He fulfills His promise, He is Able, He is the Helper, and we put our trust in Him by having good thoughts concerning Him.

From my point of view, having good thoughts concerning God is a good manner for dealing with God. That is to say, when we ask Him something, we have to be certain that He is Able to do it and that He will answer our supplication. In this respect, the prophet has said in a *Hadith Qudsy* (revelation from Allah in the Prophet's words) about this meaning, saying:

**“Allah the Exalted says: ‘I am as my slave expects me to be, and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me inwardly, I will remember him inwardly, and if he remembers Me in an assembly, I will remember him in a better assembly (i.e., in the assembly of angels).’”**

The above *hadith* is a call for optimism and cheerfulness, as if God Almighty is inviting us to come closer to Him. Allah also says in the Quran:

**“And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me – indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided,”** (Al-Baqara 2:186).

**“But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah Knows, while you know not,”** (Al-Baqara 2:216).

The above two verses call on us to have good thoughts concerning God whenever we encounter any hardship in our lives.

Let us have good thoughts concerning God and hold fast in this manner.

The legal principle that one is considered innocent unless proven guilty can be seen as a type of having good thoughts. We have to

hold fast to this manner in dealing with others and presume innocence unless proven otherwise.

But the person who has negative assumptions about everyone and everything will exhaust themselves and those around them, and might cause trouble for their friends.

The Quranic verse, which reads: **“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin,”** (Al-Hujurat 49:12), confirms that innocence and having good thoughts are a general principle. This is how a Muslim should behave with other people. So whoever wants to have a manner that pleases God, let them have good thoughts in people unless it is proven that they are not trustworthy.

Likewise, several verses of the Bible tackle this manner, such as:

**“... does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil,”** (I Corinthians 13:5)

**“Casting down arguments,”** (II Corinthians 10:5).

The above biblical verses urge dispelling any negative assumptions that might block communication between us and other people, or between God and people.

Let us have good thoughts concerning God. Let us have good thoughts in our relations with others. Let us have this good manner, which has been enjoined by God and His messenger.

## 72- Guarding Oaths

This is the manner of fulfilling oaths. The messenger of Allah has taught us that there are special manners we much observe regarding oaths, and a person has to fulfill them because the sin of failing to do so is grave in the sight of God.

Islam tackles the subject of oaths seriously, and warns against negligence because an oath represents a vow and covenant that must be guarded. Allah says: **“But guard your oaths,”** (Al-Ma’ida 5:89). The verse urges us to reduce the number of oaths we make, for doing so is closer to righteousness and fearing of God. The more oaths you make the more you might break. That is why Allah has made it obligatory for whoever breaks their oath to make *kaffara* (atonement) for the unfulfilled oath. The *kaffara* includes feeding or clothing a number of poor people or fasting a certain number of days.

The person who has this manner knows well that an oath is very serious, and that they may only resort to it in case it is necessary, bearing in mind that once it is taken, it is not possible to backtrack.

Allah says: **“And do not obey every worthless habitual swearer,”** (Al-Qalam 68:10).

Allah has spoken about the hypocrites who swear to untruth, saying: **“Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allah has become angry? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to untruth while they know [they are lying],”** (Al-Mujadila 58:14).

Allah also says: **“And do not make [your oath by] Allah an excuse against being righteous and fearing Allah and making peace among people. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing. Allah does not impose blame upon you for what is unintentional in your oaths, but He imposes blame upon you for what your hearts have earned. And Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing,”** (Al-Baqara 2:224-225).

Similarly, the Bible urges fulfilling and respecting the oath, as in the following verse:

**“If a man makes a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth,”** (Numbers 30:2).

Unfortunately, TV talk shows are full of guests who might swear by God untruthfully. By hosting those guests, TV stations are not aware that they educate the audience about hateful things. We might see people and children in the streets repeat the same oaths they have heard in the media, unaware that it is not permissible to swear like this.

Also, we often hear people swearing the oath of *talaq* (divorce pronounced verbally by a husband) in the street, as if it is normal. We are prohibited from uttering it without understanding its meaning and consequences. This is because its consequence has a real effect, and a wife is divorced if the husband utters the oath of divorce even as a joke, according to the views of Muslim scholars.

Therefore, taking special care to guard one’s oaths is a good manner. This is because the person who has this manner is aware of what they speak, can bear responsibility for it, and fulfill it. This person respects their word and is truthful in what they say, even if it is not an oath, because they are accustomed to fulfilling their word.

## **73- Protecting Copyrights**

Protecting copyrights is one of the good manners that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has stressed. It means that no one shall claim ownership of something that someone else has made. Here is a relevant Quranic verse that warns those who might like to rejoice and be hailed for what they did not do:

**“And never think that those who rejoice in what they have perpetrated and like to be praised for what they did not do – never think them [to be] in safety from the punishment, and for them is a painful punishment,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:188).

The above verse instructs us to respect what others did, and never to claim ownership of something unrightfully. This also applies to cheating on an exam, because the cheater steals and benefits from the efforts of others. The prophet said: **“Whoever cheats us is not one of us.”**

Several verses of the Bible speak about the favorability of this manner, such as:

**“You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man,”** (Psalms 5:6).

**“May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, And the tongue that speaks proud things,”** (Psalms 12:3).

**“A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who speaks lies will not escape,”** (Proverbs 19:5).

Therefore, it is a manner that requires us to give everyone their due

rights, never to claim something that is not ours, and protect any piece of invention or writing and attribute it to its owner.

Protecting copyrights is one of the good manners that God loves.

## 74- Forbearance

Forbearance (*hilm*) is to **“maintain the bonds of kinship with those who severed them with you, give those who deprived you, and forgive those who oppressed you,”** according to a *hadith*. Linguistically, it means having self-control or restraint, and not doing something too quickly or in great haste. Forbearance is one of the Attributes of Allah, Glory be to Him, as stated in many Quranic verses, such as the following:

**“Kind speech and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury. And Allah is Free of need and Forbearing,”** (Al-Baqara 2:263).

**“Indeed, those of you who turned back on the day the two armies met, it was Satan who caused them to slip because of some [blame] they had earned. But Allah has already forgiven them. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:155).

Forbearance is also a characteristic of the prophets. In the Quran, Allah describes prophets Abraham, Shu’ayb, and Ishmael as forbearing:

**“Indeed, Abraham was forbearing, grieving and [frequently] returning [to Allah],”** (Hud 11:75).

**“They said, ‘O Shu’ayb, does your prayer command you that we should leave what our fathers worship or not do with our wealth what we please? Indeed, you are the forbearing, the discerning!’”** (Hud 11:87).

**“So We gave him good tidings of a forbearing boy,”** (As-Saffat 37:101).

Several other verses refer to this good manner, such as:

**“And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous, who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people – and Allah loves the doers of good,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:133-134).

We learn forgiveness and self-control from such verses.

The prophet has urged us to have this good manner in many *hadiths*, such as:

**“The one who suppresses anger and has the power to give effect to it, will be called out by Allah, the Exalted, to the forefront of the creatures on the Day of Resurrection and he will be asked to choose any of the *Hur* [fair women with large (beautiful) eyes] of his liking.”**

**“There are three attributes that if found in someone, Allah will bring him to His shelter, cover him up with His mercy, and enter him in His love. The people asked: ‘What are these, messenger of Allah?’ He said: ‘It is the one who thanks when he is given, forgives when he is able [to avenge], and restrains himself when he is angry.’”**

Ali ibn Abi Talib, one of the closest companions of Prophet Muhammad and the fourth caliph, said: **“He who speaks kindly, deserves to be loved. And your forbearance with the fool increases your supporters against him.”**

We have to be forbearing even when we encounter ignorance of others. Remember the Quranic verse: **“And when the ignorant address**

**them [harshly], they say [words of] peace,”** (Al-Furqan 25:63).

We need to have this good manner in earnest, so that we will be among those whom Allah will reward immensely.

Verses of the Bible that indicate the greatness of this manner are many, such as:

**“But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also,”** (Matthew 5:39).

**“Not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous,”** (I Timothy 3:3).

**“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good,”** (Romans 12:21).

**“He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit,”** (I Peter 3:10).

**“Those who are patient stay calm until the right moment, and then cheerfulness comes back to them,”** (Sirach 1:23).

All the above assert the greatness of this manner. It is the manner of someone truly capable of exercising self-control, maintaining patience when others annoy them and forgiving when they can retaliate. Let us do our best to train ourselves and our children in this great manner and tell them about its favor in the sight of God.

## 75- Gratefulness

When I speak about gratefulness, I mean that a person should be satisfied and grateful to God. Some people, if asked “How are you?” they may reply: “Thanks to God,” “Fine, thank goodness.” This means they are satisfied with all that God has decreed and prepared for them in their lives. They are grateful for Allah Who has bestowed His favor on them many times, bearing in mind the verse: **“But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you,”** (Al-Baqara 2:216). So they put their trust in God that He will compensate them. It is the manner of grateful people.

You may encounter many trials in life, such as diseases, the death of a loved one, loss of possessions, oppression, etc. Those who are grateful, maintain patience, and thank God will survive such trials because they believe in fate and divine decree – its good and its evil. In turn, God has bestowed His favor on them by making them grateful. We might also find someone who is poor but grateful and a rich person who is dissatisfied or ungrateful.

Gratefulness is the foundation of happiness. The grateful person is happy, but the ungrateful is in distress. God Almighty has prepared a great reward for the grateful, according to many Quranic verses, such as: **“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, ‘If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor],’”** (Ibrahim 14:7) and **“But Allah will reward the grateful,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:144).

This manner requires training and preparedness for different people, old and young alike. The phrase “thank goodness” (*al-hamdu-lillah* in Arabic) requires that we teach it to our children, families, and those

around us. We must teach others how to be grateful and satisfied with what they have, be content with God's provision to them, never to look at what others have, recognize that it is God's will that divided His provision among people and that God will increase His favors if you thank and are grateful to Him. Allah says: **“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, ‘If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor],’”** (Ibrahim 14:7).

The person who has this manner trusts God's justice. If they have not been given wealth or health, they have to know that what is with Allah is better and more lasting, the world is not eternal, and the Hereafter is the truth. So God has guided this person to this way of thinking that leads to gratefulness despite their hardships.

A grateful wife is a blessing to her husband, and the same is also true for the grateful husband. On the contrary, failure to be grateful to God is a reason for one's distress and misery.

However, this manner does not prevent a person from being ambitious. There is no contradiction between gratefulness and ambition because we are ordered by God to exert every possible effort to gain our livelihood.

Allah says: **“It is He who made the earth tame for you – so walk among its slopes and eat of His provision – and to Him is the resurrection,”** (Al-Mulk 67:15).

Likewise, the Bible has encouraged this manner in several verses, such as:

**“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful,”** (Colossians 3:15).

**“I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus,”** (I Corinthians 1:4).

**“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving,”** (Colossians 4:2).

**“If you and your children are well and your affairs are as you wish, I am glad. As my hope is in heaven,”** (II Maccabees 9:20).

**“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,”** (I Thessalonians 1:2).

**“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”** (II Corinthians 9:15).

Finally, we have to thank people as we thank God. The grateful person always thanks whoever does them a favor, expressing their feeling in words and actions.

If you want to lead a happy life, the start will be through being grateful to God. O Allah, praise be to You until You are pleased. Amen.

## 76- Modesty

Modesty (*haya* ' in Arabic) means decency and shyness, the opposite of *waqaha* (imprudence, arrogance, insolence, etc.).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has taught us that modesty is one of the greatest manners ever, saying:

**“Every religion has an innate character. The character of Islam is modesty.”**

**“Your Lord is Modest and Generous, and would never turn the hands of a slave without gain when he raises them to Him (in supplication).”**

How great modesty is! It is a visible manner. Men and women who have this manner are calm, polite, humble, and flexible in dealing with others. You can see modesty in their faces. Their kind replies will never embarrass anybody. They might not answer a question out of modesty, such as a woman who may remain silent when she is asked for marriage. Her silence expresses her opinion.

The prophet said: **“A previously married woman must not be given in marriage except after consulting her; and a virgin must not be given in marriage except after her permission.”** They asked: **“O Allah’s Messenger! How can we know her permission?”** He said: **“Her silence (indicates her permission).”**

The prophet has also prohibited giving either of these two women in marriage without her consent.

However, Allah has ordered the believers not to be shy in certain situations, saying:

**“O you who have believed, do not enter the houses of the Prophet except when you are permitted for a meal, without awaiting its readiness. But when you are invited, then enter; and when you have eaten, disperse without seeking to remain for conversation. Indeed, that [behavior] was troubling the Prophet, and he is shy of [dismissing] you. But Allah is not shy of the truth. And when you ask [his wives] for something, ask them from behind a partition. That is purer for your hearts and their hearts. And it is not [conceivable or lawful] for you to harm the Messenger of Allah or to marry his wives after him, ever. Indeed, that would be in the sight of Allah an enormity,” (Al-Ahzab 33:53).**

Therefore, as long as we are in truth, we should neither fear anyone nor feel embarrassed or be shy while confronting them. At the same time, we have to maintain modesty when we deal with people whether in social gatherings, homes, or work.

Modesty is about cultivating the culture of speaking and dealing with others. Its opposite in Egyptian Arabic is *tabagguh* (brazen disrespect), which is a reprehensible manner.

Don't we all deserve to be described as modest?

Modesty requires everyone purify their behavior. We need to teach it to our children at home and at school. A woman's modesty raises her status in society and makes her dress decently while being confident in what she wears. She will also look modest. We should seriously care for and protect such good manners.

A modest man respects everyone's privacy and does not look at something that does not belong to him out of respect for others and a desire to not hurt anyone's feelings. We hope our children will have this manner.

Aisha, one of Prophet Muhammad's wives, reported:

**“The Prophet was lying down in my room with his thigh uncovered when Abu Bakr asked for permission to enter. He gave him permission to enter, remaining as he was. Then Umar asked for permission to come in and he gave him permission, remaining as he was. Then Uthman asked for permission to enter and the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, sat up and arranged his garment, and then he came in and spoke. When he left, I said, ‘Messenger of Allah, Abu Bakr came in and you did not exert yourself nor concern yourself with him. Then Umar came in and you did not exert yourself nor concern yourself with him. Then Uthman came in and you sat up and arranged your garment.’ He said, ‘Should I not be modest before a man before whom the angels are modest?’”**

The Bible has many verses speaking about modesty, such as:

**“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. ... Rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God,”** (I Peter 3:1-4).

**“... in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing,”** (I Timothy 2:9).

How beautiful modesty is when it adorns our children, so that they will show politeness and modesty in their appearance, speech, and gaze. Such manners are decreasing in society, and we must hold fast to them and revive them. This is because God Almighty loves such good manners and loves to see His servants holding fast to them.

## 77- Fearing God

The person who fears God Almighty knows what awaits them in terms of great rewards and Gardens in the Hereafter. Allah says:

**“And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger and fears Allah and is conscious of Him – it is those who are the attainers,”** (An-Nur 24:52).

**“Indeed, those who fear their Lord unseen will have forgiveness and great reward,”** (Al-Mulk 67:12).

Such a person fears none but Allah because they know that only a few things are prohibited for them, while many things are made lawful for them. They know that they are in a trial during their lifetime. So they do not like to evoke God’s anger because they are interested in attaining His mercy and winning what He has promised, as laid out in this verse:

**“Call upon your Lord in humility and privately; indeed, He does not like transgressors. And cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation. And invoke Him in fear and aspiration. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good,”** (Al-A’raf 7:55-56).

This person knows that they may die at any moment and may not have enough time to repent before death. So they never come closer to what God has prohibited for fear of Him and Hellfire and in aspiration for His Paradise.

Given that scholars and clerics understand the religion very well – what is lawful and unlawful and the reward for this or that – they are

supposed to be the most God-fearing among people. Their knowledge has made them aware of the powers of Allah, Who says:

**“Do you not see that Allah sends down rain from the sky, and We produce thereby fruits of varying colors? And in the mountains are tracts, white and red of varying shades and [some] extremely black. And among people and moving creatures and grazing livestock are various colors similarly. Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Forgiving,”** (Fatir 35:27-28).

God Almighty also informs us that fearing Him is needed. It is the manner of whoever is interested in trading with God. Fearing God is the immune system that keeps a person away from what is prohibited. God likes that His servants fear him, giving a similitude in the Quran:

**“If We had sent down this Qur’an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and coming apart from fear of Allah. And these examples We present to the people that perhaps they will give thought,”** (Al-Hashr 59:21).

Here I have selected just a handful of the verses found in the Bible that explain the favor of fearing God:

**“The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility,”** (Proverbs 15:33).

**“For the fear of the Lord is wisdom and discipline, fidelity and humility are his delight,”** (Sirach 1:27).

**“Riches and strength build up confidence, but the fear of the Lord is better than either,”** (Sirach 40:26).

**“Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, Who walks in His ways. When you eat the labor of your hands, You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you,”** (Psalms 128:1-2).

**“The rich, and the eminent, and the poor – their glory is the fear of the Lord,”** (Sirach 10:22).

We should not forget the human devils (bad friends) who always try to dispel this fear from your hearts by a multitude of temptations. They may convince you that you are still too young to comply with God’s instructions, and that you have to attain worldly pleasures before it is too late. Do not heed them.

Nor should we forget that the soul itself is a “persistent enjoyer of evil” and pushes you to pursue pleasures and lusts in defiance of God’s instructions. So you have to boost your “reproaching soul,” purify yourself, and bring it closer to God. Always remember that if you want to challenge, do this with someone who has equal power to yours. But do not challenge your Lord by attempting to step out of the limits He has set. God is indeed Over-Forgiving and Merciful. He loves His repenting slaves and bestows His favor to whoever wants to repent and return to Him.

Allah is more fitting that you should fear Him. He promises Paradise to those who fear Him. How beautiful Paradise is. It is the most worthy of your efforts and your aspirations.

## **78- Lowering the Voice**

Some may wonder if lowering the voice is indeed a good manner, and could argue that they have been born with a loud voice. So why not use it? But Allah has drawn our attention to this manner in the Quran, using the imperative form of the verb. The following verse delivers the instructions of Luqman the sage to his son, saying: **“And lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys,”** (Luqman 31:19).

The implicit likening of someone’s loud voice to the donkey’s was a punitive description from Luqman. God Almighty has praised the person who lowers their voice while speaking in many verses of the Quran, as follows:

**“They will murmur among themselves, ‘You remained not but ten [days in the world],’”** (Ta-Ha 20:103).

**“So they set out, while lowering their voices,”** (Al-Qalam 68:23).

**“That Day, everyone will follow [the call of] the Caller [with] no deviation therefrom, and [all] voices will be stilled before the Most Merciful, so you will not hear except a whisper [of footsteps],”** (Ta-Ha 20:108).

**“Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allah – they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and great reward,”** (Al-Hujurat 49:3).

Several verses of the Bible have stressed this manner, such as:

**“A fool raises his voice when he laughs, but the wise smile quietly,”** (Sirach 21:20).

**“Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your face is lovely,”** (Song of Solomon 2:14).

**“He will not quarrel nor cry out, Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets,”** (Matthew 12:19).

A loud voice could annoy many people. By speaking loudly, a person may also let others overhear what they are saying. They may let secrets out or make public what should be kept confidential. So be keen to practice this good manner. You will be rewarded for it by God. It is a sign of politeness. It is the way of speaking by the dwellers of Paradise. It also reflects obedience to a very clear order by God.

If it is your habit to raise your voice, try to train yourself to lower it. God loves to see His servants speaking in a low voice. When you seek to lower your voice, you seek to obey God and comply with His orders.

I had a chat with a renowned scholar of the Arabic language on the subject of speaking loudly, and if he had a solution. He gave me a valuable answer. He said that a loud voice is the result of producing the voice from the larynx, using the vocal cords only. This is called the treble (*jawab* in Arabic) or the high-pitched voice. However, if you produce the voice from the diaphragm, the scholar said, it will be significantly lower, wider, and more audible. This voice is called the bass (*qarar* in Arabic). I asked him if this is natural, because I speak from the larynx and not from the diaphragm. He told me that singers and professional Quran reciters start their performance by the voice coming from the abdomen (the bass voice). He gave me an example

by speaking once from the larynx and another from the diaphragm. I noticed a big difference. He also told me that if you overuse your larynx, you will expose your vocal cords to harm, but if you produce your voice from the diaphragm, this will be better for your larynx.

Therefore, a person in the habit of speaking in a loud voice must train themselves in how to speak from the abdomen instead of the larynx. Later I learned that some singers do not eat for many hours before a performance, in order to keep their stomach empty to produce a better voice. So simple training can draw us closer to God.

Let us instruct our children and advise one another on speaking in a low voice. Let us hold this good manner.

## **79- Repelling Evil With That Which Is Better**

This is a wonderful manner. The person who has it understands and is convinced of the divine order stated in the Quranic verse: **“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend,”** (Fussilat 41:34). So this person has taken this verse as an approach in their lives and a manner in dealing with others, believing that if you plant goodness you will harvest a kind treatment from people. They bear in mind the verse: **“And the forerunners, the forerunners; Those are the ones brought near [to Allah]; In the Gardens of Pleasure,”** (Al-Waqi’a 56:10-12). So this person is keener to take the lead in doing favors, reuniting people, ending disputes, and bringing hearts together. God Almighty has ordered us to have this manner, which requires good character.

Likewise, the Bible states the following:

**“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,”** (Matthew 5:44).

**“If you meet your enemy’s ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it,”** (Exodus 23:4-5).

The above two verses do indeed emphasize the manner of repelling evil with that which is better.

This manner can be applied to words, good actions, spending, standing by someone in a crisis, or doing something that might have a positive result in the future because it is an initiative for reconciliation. It is an inspiring approach, which means that God has informed us that this method has long produced effective results by ending disputes and even turning an enemy into a devoted friend.

I give an example of what late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat did when he decided to visit Israel and address the Knesset, Israel's parliament, to offer peace. This was a kind of repelling evil with that which is better that ended war and brought peace.

God Almighty invites everybody – spouses, partners, and friends – to end their disputes by applying this approach.

In this manner, we can go forward and overcome our disagreements. The person who has this manner is also resolute in their decisions and has a strong character. They do not believe that their initiative to show goodness can ever downgrade them. Rather, it will strengthen them and prove to the other party that this person rises above disagreements and shows a desire to end any dispute.

I do believe, as far as I understand, that this manner is wonderful because the person who takes such an initiative does not do it out of ambition for immediate results, but rather out of trust in what God has ordered them to do. If someone has not borne the fruit of their good deeds during their lifetime, this will be kept with God to multiply it for them manifold. Let us plant the world with love, credibility, help, charity, and gallantry. All these are manners enjoined by God and His messenger. It is more fitting for us to hold such manners.

Here, I have to recognize the favor of my late father, the lawyer Mr. Abdel-Maguid Amer. How often did I meet someone who would voluntarily help me, in recognition of my father's favors on them?

Some extended help to me because my father defended them and stood by them out of his belief in their innocence. They were happy to return to the son some of his father's favors.

This has happened several times with me and in different situations. My late father, may Allah have mercy on him, did not wait for the results of what he had cultivated. Rather, he would recommend me to plant goodness and not to care if this would be met with gratitude or ingratitude. He did not know that his children will harvest the fruit of what he planted.

Here I remember the story of Safana bint Hatim al-Tai when she had fallen captive to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is reported that the prophet freed her and gave her gifts after he learned that she was the daughter of Hatim al-Tai. When asked about this, the prophet said: "Her father used to encourage good manners, and I have been sent to uphold and complement ethical values."

Safana harvested the fruit her father had planted. This proves that whoever plants good deeds hoping for that which is with God, will one day harvest. If they have not reached that day, they will find it in their Scale of Good Deeds on the Day of Judgment. This harvest may also take the form of repelling evil that might have afflicted their offspring. Or their offspring may benefit from it. In all cases, it will be added to their Scale of Good Deeds because this is the manner of those who obey God and submit and respond to His orders. That is why it is a good manner.

## 80- Mentioning Good Qualities of Others

Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) wants us to mention the good qualities of others, and has forbidden his followers to talk badly about a person who is not present.

Allah says in the Quran: **“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful,”** (Al-Hujurat 49:12).

The above verse uses a horrifying simile, likening the person who backbites to one who eats the flesh of their dead brother, as a way to illustrate how abhorrent backbiting is. Also, in the verse **“Woe to every scorner and mocker,”** (Al-Humaza 104:1), the term “scorner” (*humaza* in Arabic) refers to the backbiter. The Arabic word *wayl*, translated as “woe,” also can mean torment and a valley in Hellfire.

In the Quranic verse: **“And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart – about all those [one] will be questioned,”** (Al-Isra 17:36), the prohibition “do not pursue” means do not speak negatively about someone who is absent.

God Almighty and His messenger do not like anyone to speak negatively about others who are not present, or to describe bad qualities they do not actually have. On the other hand, God likes it when you speak well of others. We need to have the good manner of speaking favorably about others. We have to stop speaking negatively about

others in our gatherings unless we mention their good qualities as well. Hurting others verbally is unacceptable according to the above verses.

Likewise, the Bible encourages mentioning the good qualities of others in several verses, such as:

**“Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases,”** (Proverbs 26:20).

**“A whisperer degrades himself and is hated in his neighborhood,”** (Sirach 21:28).

**“Curse the gossips and the double-tongued,”** (Sirach 28:13).

**“Honor and dishonor come from speaking, and the tongue of mortals may be their downfall. Do not be called double-tongued and do not lay traps with your tongue; for shame comes to the thief, and severe condemnation to the double-tongued. In great and small matters cause no harm,”** (Sirach 5:13-15).

Let us cultivate our good character traits by mentioning the positive qualities people have, and not backbiting.

## 81- Kindness

*Ra'fah* in Arabic (kindness, compassion, pity) means to be gentle in dealing with others. It is one of Allah's Attributes. Allah says: **“And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking means to the approval of Allah. And Allah is kind to [His] servants,”** (Al-Baqara 2:207). The verse describes Allah as “kind,” *ra'uf* in Arabic.

We find the same in several verses of the Bible, such as:

**“The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy,”** (Psalms 103:8).

**“For the Lord is compassionate and merciful; he forgives sins and saves in time of distress,”** (Sirach 2:11).

**“Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy,”** (Matthew 5:7).

Kindness was also one of the manners of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), just as the following verse describes him:

**“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful,”** (At-Tawba 9:128).

Other Quranic verses explain that kindness is one of the qualities of believers in Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), as in the following Quranic verse:

**“Then We sent following their footsteps Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel. And We placed in the hearts of those who followed**

**him compassion and mercy and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they did so] seeking the approval of Allah. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient,”** (Al-Hadid 57:27).

Kindness is a good manner that we are invited to have. Believers have this manner because the heart of a kind person is full of mercy, wisdom, and tenderness. This person likes to make things easy for others, and does not stubbornly adhere to their view of everything.

However, take careful note of the Quranic verse that prohibits us from being kind in certain cases. Allah says:

**“The [unmarried] woman or [unmarried] man found guilty of sexual intercourse – lash each one of them with a hundred lashes, and do not be taken by pity for them in the religion of Allah, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a group of the believers witness their punishment,”** (An-Nur 24:2).

Allah has set strict rules for the application of the punishment mentioned in the above verse to prove the accusation leveled against the suspects. But if they admit it, the penalty will be applied to them as explained in the verse.

A judge can show kindness and compassion in their ruling against a defendant, if the judge finds reasons to do so. The teacher should also be kind to their students.

Using a kind approach when deciding on a punishment is surely something good. This applies to the parent with their children, an employer with employees, or a manager with subordinates.

I'll give another example. You might go to a renowned, expensive restaurant and order many fine dishes. Everything is fine so far. But remember, the waiter who takes your order might have difficult living conditions, and their salary may be insufficient. It would be kind of you not to boast in front of the waiter. Speak to them kindly. It will be also kind of you to give them a good tip.

Here's another example. A young man from a wealthy family might buy a new watch, after getting his father's approval. That's perfectly OK, no problem. But the son has to be kind to the seller in the watch shop. The seller might be a young man too, except that he has difficult living conditions. Out of kindness, the buyer can tell the seller that he's buying the watch for one of his parents, for example, or that someone has sent him to buy the watch. He can also give a good tip to the seller, if possible.

In our life in general, not being harsh or overly strict is a good manner. You need to be kind to people.

Let us reconsider everything we do and be kind as much as we can. May Allah register us among those who have kindness in their hearts. Whoever asks God for kindness on the Day of Reckoning will need to have been sufficiently kind to people during their lifetime. That will allow them to ask for kindness from God.

## **82- Manliness**

It is wonderful when someone has the manner of manliness. Of course, this has nothing to do with gender. Manliness is not a manner of men only, but also those who can be trusted and have firm positions. Allah has described His messengers in the Quran as men in the verse:

**“And We sent not before you except men to whom We revealed [Our message]. So ask the people of the message if you do not know,”** (An-Nahl 16:43).

Allah has described those who have this manner as loving to purify themselves, saying:

**“And [there are] those [hypocrites] who took for themselves a mosque for causing harm and disbelief and division among the believers and as a station for whoever had warred against Allah and His Messenger before. And they will surely swear, ‘We intended only the best.’ And Allah testifies that indeed they are liars. Do not stand [for prayer] within it – ever. A mosque founded on righteousness from the first day is more worthy for you to stand in. Within it are men who love to purify themselves; and Allah loves those who purify themselves,”** (At-Tawba 9:107-108).

Those who have this manner should not let their business or career distract them from remembering Him, and that they are true to what they have pledged to Him.

Allah says: **“Among the believers are men true to what they promised Allah. Among them is he who has fulfilled his vow [to the death], and among them is he who awaits [his chance]. And they**

**did not alter [the terms of their commitment] by any alteration,”** (Al-Ahzab 33:23).

Similarly, the Bible says: **“Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong,”** (I Corinthians 16:13). It is worth noting that the Arabic translation of this verse uses the word “men” (*rijal*) as a synonym for the phrase “be brave.”

Manliness means being true to what you have pledged God you will do. This is the characteristic of true men, and people are happy to deal with them because of their firm positions.

In business, people enjoy dealing with a person who has this manner because they fulfill their commitments and do not go back on what they say. People would also love to become in-laws with someone who has this manner by marrying their sons or daughters. This is because such a person honors their word and is loved by their friends and family, who are reassured that this faithful person will never give up on them.

Women can also have this manner, although they are not described with the same term. However, in our traditional sayings in Egypt, we say “[She is] a woman equal to a thousand men,” or describe a woman as *gada’a*, which can be translated to “a trusted woman.”

People who have firm positions have respectful manners. We have to teach our children how to assume responsibility, take care of those around them, fulfill their commitments, and honor their word. This way, we can raise a generation who will help our nation make progress.

## 83- Gentleness

*Rifq* (gentleness) in Arabic is all about leniency in words and actions, choosing the best, most gentle way of treating people and things. It is the opposite of *'unf* (violence).

Many calls in the Quran encourage us to have this manner. For example, regarding the treatment of animals, Allah says:

**“[It is He] who has made for you the earth as a bed [spread out] and inserted therein for you roadways and sent down from the sky, rain and produced thereby categories of various plants. Eat [therefrom] and pasture your livestock. Indeed, in that are signs for those of intelligence,”** (Ta-Ha 20:53-54).

**“Do they not see that We have created for them from what Our hands have made, grazing livestock, and [then] they are their owners? And We have tamed them for them, so some of them they ride, and some of them they eat. And for them therein are [other] benefits and drinks, so will they not be grateful?”** (Ya-Sin 36:71-73).

Gentleness with animals can take the form of treating them well and taking care of their wellbeing.

The Quran has also criticized the pre-Islamic (*Jahiliya*) people for slitting the ears of their cattle and cutting off camel humps, describing them as people who have “sustained a clear loss.”

Allah says: **“They call upon instead of Him none but female [deities], and they [actually] call upon none but a rebellious Satan. Whom Allah has cursed. For he had said, ‘I will surely take from among Your servants a specific portion. And I will mislead them,**

**and I will arouse in them [sinful] desires, and I will command them so they will slit the ears of cattle, and I will command them so they will change the creation of Allah.’ And whoever takes Satan as an ally instead of Allah has certainly sustained a clear loss,”** (An-Nisa 4:117-119).

Allah has also forbidden us from hurting livestock and called for animal welfare, as in the following verses:

**“Eat [therefrom] and pasture your livestock. Indeed, in that are signs for those of intelligence. From the earth We created you, and into it We will return you, and from it We will extract you another time,”** (Ta-Ha 20:54-55).

**“Have they not seen that We drive the water [in clouds] to barren land and bring forth thereby crops from which their livestock eat and [they] themselves? Then do they not see?”** (As-Sajda 32:27).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) provided us an example of animal and bird welfare, as reported in many *hadiths*. The prophet was reported to have said: **“There is no person who kills a small bird or anything larger for no just reason, but Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, will ask him about it.’ It was said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, what does “just reason” mean?’ He said: ‘That you slaughter it and eat it, and do not cut off its head and throw it aside.’”** Therefore, it is permissible to hunt for eating. But hunting merely for amusement represents disrespect for animals and birds, and the person who does this will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment.

The prophet also informed us that a woman would be punished in Hell because she imprisoned a cat for such a long time that it died, as indicated in the following *hadith*:

**“A woman was tortured and was put in Hell because of a cat which she had kept locked till it died of hunger.’ Allah’s Messenger further said, (Allah knows better) Allah said (to the woman): ‘You neither fed it nor watered when you locked it up, nor did you set it free to eat the insects of the earth.’”**

As for treating humans gently, the following verses are the best examples from the Quran:

**“And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds,”** (Al-Anbiya 21:107).

**“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful,”** (At-Tawba 9:128).

**“And then being among those who believed and advised one another to patience and advised one another to compassion. Those are the companions of the right,”** (Al-Balad 90:17-18).

**“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him],”** (Al-i-Imran 3:159).

Also, when Allah has asked prophets Moses and Aaron (peace be upon them) to go to the Pharaoh, He asked them to speak gently, saying: **“And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah],”** (Ta-Ha 20:44).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also advised his wife Aisha bint Abi Bakr, saying: **“Be gentle and calm, O Aisha! Be**

**gentle and beware of being harsh and of saying evil things.”** The prophet also said: **“Whenever forbearance is added to something, it adorns it; and whenever it is withdrawn from something, it leaves it defective.”**

Many examples from the prophetic *hadiths* and the prophet’s life (*sirah*) call for gentleness, leniency, tolerance, mercy, and compassion.

Several verses of the Bible also call for this manner, such as:

**“But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children,”** (I Thessalonians 2:7).

**“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,”** (II Timothy 2:24).

## 84- Delicate Feelings

Having delicate feelings is among the higher levels of good manners and fine feelings. The following two verses refer to this manner:

**“And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth. They say, ‘Our Lord, we have believed, so register us among the witnesses,’”** (Al-Ma’ida 5:83).

**“The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely,”** (Al-Anfal 8:2).

Those well-mannered people have reached a level that pleases Allah and His messenger, who in turn have filled their hearts with warm feelings. The result is that they cry when they hear the Quran, with their faces showing extreme humility, faith, obedience, and submission to God.

May Allah make us among them and be pleased with us as He has been pleased with them. May Allah guide us to success. Glory be Allah, Who has said and His saying is true: **“Indeed, [O Muhammad], you do not guide whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He is most knowing of the [rightly] guided,”** (Al-Qasas 28:56). The verse denotes that Allah guides whoever wants to be guided. May Allah guide us with those whom You have guided and bestow this good manner on us.

I think this manner can be applied to all our relations with others. The person who has warm, delicate feelings and weeps when listening to the Quran also feels the meaning of the words they hear.

Allah says: **“And [it is] a Qur’an which We have separated [by intervals] that you might recite it to the people over a prolonged period. And We have sent it down progressively. Say, ‘Believe in it or do not believe. Indeed, those who were given knowledge before it – when it is recited to them, they fall upon their faces in prostration, And they say, ‘Exalted is our Lord! Indeed, the promise of our Lord has been fulfilled.’ And they fall upon their faces weeping, and the Qur’an increases them in humble submission,”** (Al-Isra 17:106-109).

In our life, we are required to share the feelings of those around us. We should not be coldhearted. We have to share their pain, joy, grief, and we have to console them.

Allah loves to see us having this manner.

Verses of the Bible also refer to this manner, such as:

**“And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things,”** (Mark 6:34).

## 85- Asceticism

Asceticism (*zuhd*) is when someone looks at the world with an awareness that it will perish, and that what is with Allah will last. The person who has this manner cannot be tempted by the world's pleasures, but instead looks to those in the Hereafter. Their faith has made them certain that what is with Allah is better and is enduring, and what Allah has said in the following verses is true:

**“Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children – like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth pleases the tillers; then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes [scattered] debris. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment and forgiveness from Allah and approval. And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion,”** (Al-Hadid 57:20).

**“Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire – of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:14).

**“But you prefer the worldly life, While the Hereafter is better and more enduring,”** (Al-A'la 87:16-17).

Many verses of the Bible denote this meaning, such as:

**“Do not love the world or the things in the world. ... For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. ... And the world is passing away, and the lust of it,”** (I John 2:15-17).

**“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you,’”** (Hebrews 13:5).

Some people may be immersed in their worldly life, seeking fame and a wide network of relations. But they may not be aware that such socialization could be the cause of their misery in this world and their loss in the Hereafter. They want wealth and power. But be careful, such things do not last.

Allah says: **“Say, ‘O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will. You honor whom You will and You humble whom You will. In Your hand is [all] good. Indeed, You are over all things competent,’”** (Al-i-Imran 3:26).

We have to train ourselves how to prefer that which will last, and not those things which we will leave behind in this world. The Hereafter is what is true. Paradise is true. Asceticism is a path to Paradise.

## 86- Payment

By this I mean that if you are financially able pay back a debt, you should not have an unpaid commitment to anyone.

Some people intentionally refuse to pay what they owe, believing it is a kind of cleverness or an opportunity to delay the payment to keep using the money in business and gain profits. Unfortunately, this has become a phenomenon in our society. Lawsuits involving people who pass bad checks have increased, although the check is a legal bond that has an outstanding payable balance.

Surprisingly, some people who have enough money to pay their debts still insist on writing bad checks. They are not refusing to pay because of financial hardship or a lack of funds. They refuse because of their bad manners, which Allah does not like to see His servants practicing.

We may find this bad manner pop up in other situations, including husbands who have divorced their wives and yet refuse to pay alimony. The result is that our courts are flooded with many cases regarding the recovery of alimony payments. Again, sometimes the husband does not pay alimony because he is intransigent or insists on continuing to fight with his ex-wife, and not because he does not have enough money. Indeed, the good manner for him is to move quickly to pay what is due to him as long as he is able and it is easy for him to pay. If the husband does not have sufficient money, he can ask for a respite until he is able to pay.

Allah has invited us to the manner of payment in several verses of the Quran, such as: **“O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts,”** (Al-Ma’ida 5:1). A contract, in my view, is not necessarily a written

document for buying or selling. Any commitment by someone is considered a contract. The above verse seems to be inviting us to fulfill all our commitments.

When entering a building in Egypt, you may find a sign written by the union of apartment owners and tenants that has the names of the building residents who have not paid the regular maintenance fees. These residents do not pay, even though they use all the services available at the building. Paying such a small amount of money cannot possibly affect their income. But the problem is that it has become their habit. Some of them may argue that they do not permanently reside in the building, forgetting that it is a commitment regardless of whether they live there permanently or not.

You can find lots of other times where people evade payment. However, media programs and school textbooks fail to provide any hint about good manners regarding payments, even though it is a foundation for stable relationships and transactions.

God Almighty has made it easy for those who are unable to pay, allowing them to postpone their dues. Allah says: **“And if someone is in hardship, then [let there be] postponement until [a time of] ease. But if you give [from your right as] charity, then it is better for you, if you only knew,”** (Al-Baqara 2:280).

The verse emphasizes that payment is obligatory and must be made, unless there is a compulsive reason not to pay. In that case, an insolvent person can be given a respite. But there will be still another opportunity for payment; this is not an exemption, it just means payment is postponed until the hardship has passed.

I hope parents will serve as an example to their children by clearly showing how they pay what they owe on time, as long as it is easy to do. This includes tuition for education, building maintenance fees,

various subscriptions, household bills, taxes, etc. Children learn from what they see.

Children also learn from what they read in textbooks. I have never heard in my life that a textbook teaches students how to be committed when making payments, although one of our country's worst problems is the non-payment of bills and taxes by a considerable segment of the population.

Isn't it time we started teaching this good manner in school? Through this manner, students can learn how to respect the funds of others, first and foremost being what we owe the state, and that we must pay what we have agreed to pay.

All of us must do our best to encourage this manner at school, in the media, as a general guidance, in our religious discourse, and at home.

A traditional proverb goes: "The day of payment is a celebration." It truly is a celebration because it delights both the one who pays and the one who receives.

Another form of payment is the distribution of an estate. Allah says "**after any bequest they [may have] made or debt,**" (An-Nisa 4:12), meaning it is not permissible to divide the inheritance of a deceased person unless you make sure that all their debts have been paid. Any debt incurred during one's life shall not be waived after death. Rather, it remains payable and must be deducted from the deceased's bequest before its distribution among the heirs. This payable money could include the deceased's debt and even the deferred part of the dowry.

Several verses of the Bible have encouraged and praised fulfillment of payment, such as:

**"Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to the Lord, and it be sin to you,"** (Deuteronomy 24:15).

**“I will pay my vows to the Lord Now in the presence of all His people,”** (Psalms 116:14).

**“When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you,”** (Deuteronomy 23:21).

Let us comprehend how great this manner is. Let every one of us be more committed to paying what is due.

In old Egyptian movies, we used to see the wife dividing her husband’s salary for the month and putting it in different envelopes – one for the grocer, another for the butcher, and so on. This reflected a commitment to the good manner of payment, thus educating the audience that once the money arrives at home, payment has become obligatory. Unfortunately, this manner is somehow absent in our lives. But the greatness of it makes it worthy of being among the priorities that we encourage society to have.

The performance of prayers at their five appointed times, paying *zakah* (compulsory charity), fasting one month (Ramadan) in the year, and doing Hajj pilgrimage are all rights prescribed by Allah. All these acts of worship teach us that they are rights we are obligated to do. They are similar to a payable financial obligation. Perhaps the prescription of prayers at fixed times teaches us a lesson – be committed to pay your dues on time.

This is not a matter that should be left to anyone to just do what they like. There are obligations that are payable at certain times. The evidence is the prescription of acts of worship (prayer, *zakah*, fasting, and Hajj) at fixed times. They can be described as payable acts of worship that cannot be skipped. If someone is unable to fast a day in Ramadan, they must make up for it after the holy month; if someone

cannot perform the prayer at its due time, they must do it later. The same also applies to *zakah*.

In conclusion, repayment is a form of giving things that were entrusted to you back to their owners. The obligated person can delight those around them by paying on time.

The highest level of this manner is when someone says that when they give their word, it is a commitment. The debt might not be recorded in any document. But the committed person recognizes it and hurries to repay it.

May Allah disseminate this manner and make us among those who pay their debts.

## **87- Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is one of the good manners that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been sent with. Your actions are either announced to others, or are kept confidential so that no one knows anything about them. Noble verses of the Quran explain that Allah loves the manner of confidentiality and does not certain things being mentioned in public.

Allah says: **“Allah does not like the public mention of evil except by one who has been wronged. And ever is Allah Hearing and Knowing,”** (An-Nisa 4:148). So Allah does not like it if anyone makes public mention regarding evil, because this act reflects one’s imprudence with Allah, and may inspire others to follow suit.

Likewise, the Bible says:

**“A talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter,”** (Proverbs 11:13).

**“They hold back their words until the right moment; then the lips of many tell of their good sense,”** (Sirach 1:24).

Also, Allah likes that your acts of worship be dedicated to Him and not to seek people’s approval.

Allah says: **“And remember your Lord within yourself in humility and in fear without being apparent in speech – in the mornings and the evenings. And do not be among the heedless,”** (Al-A’raf 7:205).

**“Those who spend their wealth [in Allah’s way] by night and by day, secretly and publicly – they will have their reward with their Lord. And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve,”** (Al-Baqara 2:274).

As God sees it, there are different levels of giving charity; this is because the person who spends in charity night and day does not wait for someone to thank them. They give charity to provide comfort, not to make the recipient feel embarrassed about having to thank the person giving alms.

Confidentiality is based on honesty in doing things. It is the manner of a respectable person. If this person is a friend of yours and you entrust them with a secret, they will keep it out of faithfulness to you. If this person is your spouse, they will keep any family secrets out of faithfulness to you, their partner. If this person is a doctor or a lawyer, they will keep the secrets of their patients or clients. If this person is a military officer, they will keep the secrets of both citizens and the state because of their faithfulness in fulfilling their duty.

Confidentiality is a manner of someone who knows how to control their tongue and how to weigh what they say, because words can cause troubles, disputes, and even wars. This manner also requires training and practice.

Finally, it is the manner of a person who cares for God only; someone who is not interested in being seen praying or giving charity. It reflects a higher-level relationship between man and God. This is because the person, in this case, does not anticipate praise from anyone. They do what they like for the sake of God and out of faithfulness in performing their acts of worship.

Let us train ourselves not to say the good things we have done in public, whether acts of worship or worldly affairs, lest this cause ill-

willed people to envy you or plot against you. When Prophet Joseph (Yusuf) mentioned his dream to his father, Prophet Jacob (Ya'qub), the father was concerned. **“He said, ‘O my son, do not relate your vision to your brothers or they will contrive against you a plan. Indeed Satan, to man, is a manifest enemy,’”** (Yusuf 12:5).

Let all our good acts be dedicated to God, without waiting for any praise from anyone. Anticipate the beautiful reward from Allah. Avoid the evil eye. If you have confidentiality, you will do so, and I regard this as a very good manner indeed.

## **88- Representation of One's Religion**

The person who holds this good manner knows that as long as they embrace a certain religion, they have to preserve the image of this faith before people. A Muslim or Christian person should be representatives of their religions. People can recognize the ethics of any religion from its representatives and their behavior and relationships with others. Therefore, we have to bear in mind that we are not free in our behaviors. We have to carry the responsibility of being representatives of our religion before others. Our behavior and conduct can make others judge our religion – negatively or positively.

I will give an example. If someone belongs to a certain family or tribe, they have to preserve its name out of their responsibility. We need to be the best representatives of this religion through our behaviors and conduct. When you read about Prophet Muhammad's life (*sirah*), you will come to know how people embraced this religion after they had seen good manners exemplified in people, and admired a religion that calls for these manners.

The person who has this good manner understands that they must not stoop to the level of someone who is acting in an ill-mannered way. Rather, it is precisely in these times that they must display their high morals, values, and the instructions they believe in. They must know that they represent a true image of their religion, and be keen to do so. Therefore, they have to steer away from any act that might degrade their morals and values. Their values make them shoulder anything for the sake of guarding God's religion and presenting the best image of it.

Here I will give an example of a national player who wears a jersey with the national flag on it to represent their country in international

championships. The athlete shows zeal for the national flag and team, and does their best to win. So what about the person who carries the banner of their religion?

Representation is the manner a person has when they are certain they may be viewed as a representative of their religion in one way or another. If you are a Muslim, for instance, and you travel to a country where there are not many Muslims, this is the time when you can do good or do harm to the image of your religion as a result of your behavior. The same is true if you find yourself in a group where most of the people are not from your same religion, whether it is at work, school, or any situation. The person who has this good manner understands that they seek to be the best representative of their religion.

I have found verses in the Bible related to this manner, such as:

**“Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God,”** (II Corinthians 5:20).

**“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct,”** (Hebrews 13:7).

**“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven,”** (Matthew 5:16).

It is a good manner that needs us to understand it, feel it, teach it to our children, and promote it as part of our culture. How beautiful this manner is when we become ambassadors of religion in our appearance, behavior, and relationships. This way, the world will come to know that the principles and values of this religion are consistent and complementary to what prophets Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them) came with. And that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been sent “to perfect good character.”

## 89- Travelling

The question: Is traveling a manner?

The answer: Yes. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has taught us a supplication we recite before embarking on a journey or when we ride something. The first part of this supplication is a Quranic verse: **“Exalted is He who has subjected this to us, and we could not have [otherwise] subdued it,”** (Az-Zukhruf 43:13).

Then the messenger of Allah continues the supplication, saying:

**“Glory is to Him Who has provided this for us though we could never have had it by our efforts. Surely, unto our Lord we are returning. O Allah, we ask You on this our journey for goodness and piety, and for works that are pleasing to You. O Allah, lighten this journey for us and make its distance easy for us. O Allah, You are our Companion on the road and the One in Whose care we leave our family. O Allah, I seek refuge in You from this journey’s hardships, and from the wicked sights in store and from finding our family and property in misfortune upon returning.”**

Upon returning, recite the same again and add: **“We return repentant to our Lord, worshiping our Lord, and praising our Lord.”**

And when traveling by sea, we repeat the Quranic verse: **“In the name of Allah is its course and its anchorage. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful,”** (Hud 11:41).

All the above explains how traveling by car, plane, or ship has a particular etiquette. First, we have to attribute the favor to Allah by saying: **“And upon Allah is the direction of the [right]**

**way,”** (An-Nahl 16:9). It is Allah Who has enabled us to travel and made it easy for us. So we invoke Him to make it easy for us and alleviate the journey’s hardships. Then we submit to Allah that we will ultimately return to Him. The traveler also asks God to make their work during the journey in service of goodness and that which pleases Him. Then the traveler asks God to make the journey free of troubles and hardships and to spare them the feeling of boredom resulting from the potential length of the trip may take by saying: **“and make its distance easy for us.”** And so on till the end of the supplication.

The Quranic verse **“And upon Allah is the direction of the [right] way”** (Al-Nahl 16:9) explains that we put our trust in God, Who grants success.

Verses of the Bible have explained some etiquette of travel that should be observed, such as:

**“Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go; Keep her, for she is your life,”** (Proverbs 4:13).

**“And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves,”** (I Thessalonians 5:13).

**“Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles,”** (I Peter 2:12).

A traveler is, of course, required to be flexible with their companions during a journey, consulting them and giving recommendations in a spirit of truth and patience. The traveler should also help others in obeying God, be happy to serve them, distribute roles among the passengers to take care of one another, help the weak or the elderly who need assistance carrying something or boarding the vehicle, stay with whoever falls sick, and never be a source of annoyance.

All these are values and etiquette regarding travel that we have learned from Allah and His messenger. They are done by a person who attributes favor to its owner, submits to God Almighty, and asks God to keep them steadfast in obedience. Certainly, traveling in the right way is a good manner.

## 90- Leniency

In Arabic, the word *samaha* can be interpreted as leniency, flexibility, and easiness. As I understand it, the word also denotes mutual satisfaction or consent. When someone has this manner, they become *samh* (lenient) in their relationships and transactions with others. Therefore, they will satisfy others and be content with what they take or give.

Allah says: **“O you who have believed, do not consume one another’s wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful,”** (An-Nisa 4:29).

The verse demands that we satisfy others, that we love for our brother those things that we love for ourselves, and show a spirit of kindness and satisfaction in dealing with others.

In this context, I mention the prophetic saying: **“May Allah’s mercy be on him who is lenient in his buying, selling, and in demanding back his money.”** In this *hadith*, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) encourages leniency, good treatment, and avoiding arguments and quarrels in transactions. By applying this, your transaction will be blessed. The prophet only urges what is beneficial for his *Ummah* (Muslim community) in their lives and the Hereafter.

The following verses from the Bible also encourage leniency:

**“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you,”** (Ephesians 4:32).

**“Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,”** (Matthew 5:44).

**“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do,”** (Colossians 3:12-13).

With leniency, transactions grow and prosper. People are usually inclined to deal with honest traders who have a sound record of business, especially those who are lenient in their relations. This kind of traders feel happy when they satisfy their clients who in turn will like dealing with such merchants. With this moral, the prophet teaches us how to have mutual consent in business, as stated in the above Quranic verse. It involves mutual leniency and satisfaction between all sides in the dealings, be they buyer or seller or others. The seller is satisfied with what they gained and wishes success for the buyer, who in turn is also satisfied and wishes blessings for the seller's profits. This is the greatest atmosphere for a trader to build prosperous business relations.

If we want to be successful in our business and want people to enter into business dealings with us, we have to hold fast to the manner of leniency, be satisfied in our transactions, and wish good things and success for others.

This is not only limited to business; it applies to all our affairs in general. We have to be lenient and tolerant with people, deal with them in a civilized manner, smile, get consent, avoid quarrels or disputes, and be transparent. This will definitely improve our relations with others and we will be having a good manner – leniency.

## 91- Interceding

God, Glory be to Him, informs us in the Quran that to Him belongs exclusively the right to grant intercession. Allah says: **“Say, ‘To Allah belongs [the right to allow] intercession entirely. To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. Then to Him you will be returned,’”** (Al-Zumar 39:44). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the one who will intercede on behalf of his *Ummah* (Muslim community) on the Day of Judgment. He will intercede to ask God Almighty to grant them admission to Paradise.

The manner of interceding can be found in this noble verse: **“Whoever intercedes for a good cause will have a reward therefrom; and whoever intercedes for an evil cause will have a burden therefrom. And ever is Allah, over all things, a Keeper,”** (An-Nisa 4:85).

A similar idea is stated in the Bible: **“Pray for one another,”** (James 5:16), and even saints used to ask people to pray for them. Apostle Paul said to the people of Thessalonica: **“Pray for us,”** (II Thessalonians 3:1). He also sent a letter to Philemon in which he interceded to take back his runaway slave Onesimus, as stated in Paul’s epistle to Philemon.

Interceding here can be considered a manner that moves the person to mediate, to support others, present the truth, look for an explanation for what they have done, and ask for forgiveness. This person loves goodness, seeks to attain it, wishes it for others, and takes positive steps to intercede in doing good deeds. The person who intercedes for the purpose of doing something bad will have a portion of its evil.

The manner of intercession that we learn from the Quran is to support people, show the truth, and intercede to support the innocent. Prophet Joseph's conversation with his companion in prison, as stated in the Quran, was a form of asking for intercession. Joseph (peace be upon him) asked his companion to intercede on his behalf to get the king to free him. Allah says: **“And he said to the one whom he knew would go free, ‘Mention me before your master,’”** (Yusuf 12:42).

Intercession is a manner of whoever loves Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and who wants him to intercede for them with God in the Day of Resurrection. Who wouldn't want the prophet to intercede for them?

Seeking to help someone to restore their rights or prove their innocence are instances of the good manner we call intercession, or *shafa'ah* in Arabic.

## 92- Transparency

Transparency is when our relations with others are completely clear and do not have any vagueness or uncertainty. I found this meaning in the Quranic verse: **“And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it],”** (Al-Baqara 2:42). Allah orders us to make everything absolutely clear; in today’s terminology we call this transparency.

Transparency means our business dealings are based on mutual consent, as indicated in the verse: **“O you who have believed, do not consume one another’s wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent,”** (An-Nisa 4:29).

The Bible says:

**“He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully,”** (Psalms 24:4).

**“For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you,”** (I Corinthians 11:19).

**“Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences,”** (II Corinthians 11:5).

Therefore, we are required to be clear and frank with others and inform them of any negatives before the positives in everything we do.

Divorce rates among newly married couples have increased. The reason for this is the absence of transparency between the two partners from the very start. If each one made things clear to the other and told

them about any problem before marriage, they might not have gone through with the wedding at all, and avoided all their troubles.

Courts of law are looking at many lawsuits that demand the annulment of contracts involving cheating. If there had been transparency as well as due diligence on both sides from the beginning, the dispute might not have occurred.

In particular, any person in charge of expenditures on behalf of others should be one hundred percent transparent, so as to dispel any doubts that could be leveled against them.

We need to practice transparency as a manner. It is a mix of truthfulness, honesty, and the fulfillment of commitments.

Let us all take a second look at how we conduct ourselves, and make sure we know this is a manner we absolutely must have. Let us teach it to our children as well.

In the developed communities, they have realized that transparency is a right, and so they have adopted it as a manner and as a culture. We have to be aware of the advantages that this manner brings, and apply it to all our familial, social, and business relations.

## 93- Giving Testimony

Man is in a state of permanent testimony from birth to death. This happens every day. When a child informs his father that they have a good friend, they give a form of testimony, and they have to learn how to tell the truth. When the manager of an institution writes a report to evaluate their staff, this is a testimony. The manager must not sin by favoring a particular person. This will be an untruthful testimony. When a person is asked about a specific woman and whether she might be a suitable wife for someone, this too is a form of testimony. And so on.

The testimony here means bear witness to the truth, and to tell the truth. That is why it is a good manner. You should be keen to maintain your testimony truthfully. Someone's life or the application of a penalty may depend on this testimony. For this, God Almighty warns in the Quran: **“Their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned,”** (Az-Zukhruf 43:19).

Likewise, the Bible says:

**“A faithful witness does not lie, But a false witness will utter lies,”** (Proverbs 14:5).

**“A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who speaks lies will not escape,”** (Proverbs 19:5 and 19:9).

So let each of us be keen to bear witness to truth.

Voting in elections is a kind of testimony. You must vote for the candidate who deserves it.

Also, an investigation conducted by the police is a kind of written testimony that must work to uncover and relate the truth to the relevant authorities.

All the above examples explain to us that God Almighty has sent His messengers (peace be upon them) to teach people about telling the truth and bearing witness to truth. This is because a false testimony could end people's lives and freedoms, or destroy their future. Therefore, we should not belittle this issue while teaching it to our children. There must be a clear, deterrent punishment if we find a child who is inclined to lie, and we must not consider this to be just "a little white lie." The child who is raised thinking white lies are acceptable will develop the bad manner of giving untruthful testimony when they grow up.

Everybody is in a state of learning and training when it comes to telling the truth, especially regarding people's rights and interests. The exception is when you make a false testimony under duress or to your enemies, or when you are trying to reconcile people, as explained in the following *hadith*:

**“Umm Kulthum bint Uqbah (may Allah be pleased with her), reported: ‘Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “The person who (lies) in order to conciliate between people is not a liar, when he conveys good or says (something) good.”’ In another narration, She (Umm Kulthum bint Uqbah) said: ‘I never heard him (she meant the prophet) giving permission of lying in anything except in three (things): war, conciliating between people, and the conversation of man with his wife and the conversation of a woman with her husband.’”**

A dear friend of mine once asked me why this manner is no longer prevalent these days.

I told him perhaps it is because people are unaware how dangerous this issue is. Our religious discourse must invite us to have this good manner and explain its privileges. If religious scholars are the heirs of prophets, the former should complete the discourse initiated by the latter. Religious scholars must guide us to this good manner and teach us part of what the prophet had instructed people, and the manners stated in divine books. We must hold fast to these manners. Perhaps while seeking to develop our religious discourse these days, we should concentrate on what Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: **“I was sent to perfect good character.”**

I think the quality of a suitable religious discourse must be linked to the presence or absence of a specific result – the development and improvement of people’s morals in a way that pleases God Almighty.

The ultimate message of the heavenly religions is to perfect character. Any religious discourse will surely fail in its desired result, if its intended recipient fails to actually avail themselves to the discourse.

We have to educate society about the merits of bearing witness to truth, and the grave sin of giving false testimony. Giving truthful testimony is a basic foundation of our relations; when it is present, communities will progress in the right direction, and when it is absent, justice disappears and oppression prevails.

## 94- Gallantry

Gallantry is a good manner. It means that you stand by your friends and family, and never hesitate to extend help to others. It is chivalry.

The person who has this manner is positive, feels happy to “have your back,” never approves of the oppression of others, and hurries to support the oppressed and the weak. They also have zeal for their families and neighbors and can never give up their role in protecting and caring for them. This is how God loves to see us – feeling sympathy with one another.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: **“The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever.”**

Let us be keen, while educating our children, to teach them how to be positive and helpful to others and never be negative and selfish. Selfishness is the worst behavior ever. TV and radio dramas, especially those produced by state bodies, must highlight good examples of gallantry and manliness to present role models that give lessons to positive, well-mannered societies.

Allah says: **“Among the believers are men true to what they promised Allah. Among them is he who has fulfilled his vow [to the death], and among them is he who awaits [his chance]. And they did not alter [the terms of their commitment] by any alteration,”** (Al-Ahzab 33:23).

The verse explains that the true “men” are those who are gallant and fulfill their promises. It is not the manner of everybody, but only special people – both men and women – who have it. So congratulations to those whom Allah has praised. They are the gallant people who have been true to their covenant with Allah.

Many verses of the Bible speak about this great manner, such as:

**“Everyone helped his neighbor, And said to his brother, ‘Be of good courage!’”** (Isaiah 41:6).

**“For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me,”** (Matthew 25:35-36).

**“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends,”** (John 15:13).

## 95- Patience

*Sabr* in Arabic means patience or steadfastness, in the sense that we suppress the soul from complaining about the agony of distress, such as when we are afflicted with a calamity or experiences hardships, yet remain patient, self-controlled, without complaining.

The manner of patience is difficult. Allah says: **“And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah],”** (Al-Baqara 2:45).

God Almighty informs us that patience is not a small thing and that it requires high levels of certainty (*yaqin*). God also explains the favor of patience, saying:

**“O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient,”** (Al-Baqara 2:153).

**“And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient,”** (Al-Baqara 2:155).

**“Except for those who are patient and do righteous deeds; those will have forgiveness and great reward,”** (Hud 11:11).

Patience also needs understanding, especially when it comes to the divine decree. Consider this Quranic verse: **“Who, when disaster strikes them, say, ‘Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return,’”** (Al-Baqara 2:156). It means that distress (*musiba*) requires the presence of one who strikes and one who is struck; hence, the distress occurs. The One Who strikes here is God Almighty. So it is unlikely that there is a mistake.

The person who possesses the good manners of certainty and patience accepts God's ordinance. They know nothing can keep back the destiny decreed by God, and the only thing man can do is remain patient to receive the reward assigned by God to the patient.

Through this manner, God Almighty teaches us to change the negatives into positives. It seems as if He is telling us that if you have distress, try to create your path to Paradise by patience. It is an important life lesson for our children that they should not be shocked by what they may face. They have to keep patient and transform any calamity into a ladder that they can climb and make progress. A patient person has peace of mind and they can absorb shocks and find positives and opportunities in them. Most importantly, these shocks draw the patient person closer to God and raise their standing with Him.

Allah speaks the truth when He says: **“But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah Knows, while you know not,”** (Al-Baqara 2:126). God teaches us to be patient and seek good in all that we encounter. Countries can take this approach regarding making national progress because it implies endurance, resilience, and the ability to face life's changes.

We have to be careful while teaching our children, and not give them everything they want, so that they learn patience. The person who had all their wishes granted when they were young without exerting any effort will do nothing when they grow up. They might lead a miserable life and might not be able to achieve everything their family hoped they would. Their family did not teach them the lesson of patience.

Children need limits and to be deprived of certain things as a practical lesson for them. The family can teach a child this manner by depriving them of a toy. A young man can be taught patience by

turning down his request to buy the car he desires, even though his family can afford it. He would then be able to have patience, and thank God for the favors He has bestowed on him.

God has not only instructed us to be patient, He has urged us to recommend one another to patience. Allah says: **“By time, Indeed, mankind is in loss, Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience,”** (Al-Asr 103). In this short Surah, Allah swears by time that mankind is in loss, except those who advise one another in patience. This indicates how great this manner is. It is an invitation to another good manner related to patience: consoling. God Almighty gives a great reward for whoever advises each other in patience and calls on those who have been afflicted with distress to remain patient, thank God for His favors, and gives glad tidings that God will give them the reward He assigned for those who are patient.

The highest level of patience is when someone does not only remain patient amid distress, but they hurry to thank God as well. Allah says: **“But Allah will reward the grateful,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:144). Here emerges the highest degree of rationality, wisdom, and the state of coming nearer to God. So this person accepts what God has decreed and thanks Him for His favors, thus revealing the manners of gratefulness, thankfulness, and appreciation, as well as implying acceptance, obedience, and submission to God. How great this manner is!

Allah has ordered not only His servants to be patient, but His prophets and messengers as well. Allah says: **“So be patient, [O Muhammad], as were those of determination among the messengers,”** (Al-Ahqaf 46:35). Allah has invited Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to be patient to be an excellent example for us to follow, and he did. When all his sons, especially Ibrahim, died, the prophet remained patient. The following *hadith* is reported from the incident of Ibrahim’s death:

**“The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) came to his son Ibrahim when he was breathing his last. The eyes of the Messenger of Allah began shedding tears. Abdul-Rahman ibn Auf (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, you too weep?’ He (the prophet) said: ‘O Ibn Auf! It is mercy.’ Then he began to weep and said: ‘The eyes are shedding tears and the heart is grieved, and we will not say except what pleases our Lord. O Ibrahim! Indeed we are grieved by your departure.’”**

This reflects the prophet’s patience and gratefulness for God’s decree. The prophet’s life is also full of patience.

Several verses of the Bible speak about the merits of patience, such as:

**“And perseverance, character; and character, hope,”** (Romans 5:4).

**“Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience,”** (James 1:3).

**“By your patience possess your souls,”** (Luke 21:19).

Thus, Allah has sent His messengers to give us an example and demonstrate the greatness of this manner. The following Quranic verse refers to God’s reward for patience:

**“Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account,”** (Az-Zumar 39:10).

Is there any reward greater than when you take a reward from Allah without account?

May Allah admit us to Paradise without account! Amen.

## 96- Truthfulness

*Sidq* (truthfulness) in Arabic is to tell the truth, it is the opposite of *kidhb* (telling a lie). A truthful person is one who verifies by action what they say by their tongue.

Truthfulness is highly required for a believer's life. It is the foremost among virtues and the epitome of morals. Allah has explained the merit of the truthful person, saying in the Quran:

**“And the one who has brought the truth and [they who] believed in it – those are the righteous. They will have whatever they desire with their Lord. That is the reward of the doers of good – that Allah may remove from them the worst of what they did and reward them their due for the best of what they used to do,”** (Az-Zumar 39:33-35).

Allah has also ordered us to tell the truth in many Quranic verses, such as:

**“O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are true,”** (At-Tawba 9:119).

Truthfulness is one of the Attributes of Allah, who says:

**“Say, ‘Allah has told the truth,’”** (Al-i-Imran 3:95).

**“And whose word can be truer than Allah's?”** (An-Nisa 4:87).

**“And who is more truthful than Allah in statement,”** (An-Nisa 4:122).

Truthfulness is also a characteristic of prophets and messengers (peace be upon them).

Regarding Abraham (Ibrahim), Allah says:

**“[And he said], ‘My Lord, grant me authority and join me with the righteous. And grant me a reputation of honor among later generations,’”** (Ash-Shu’ara 26:83-84).

**“And mention in the Book [the story of] Abraham. Indeed, he was a man of truth and a prophet,”** (Maryam 19:41).

For prophets Isaac (Ishaq), Jacob (Ya’qub), Ishmael (Isma’il), Idrees, Joseph (Yusuf), and Muhammad, Allah says:

**“So when he had left them and those they worshipped other than Allah, We gave him Isaac and Jacob, and each [of them] We made a prophet. And We gave them of Our mercy, and We made for them a reputation of high honor,”** (Maryam 19:49-50).

**“And mention in the Book, Ishmael. Indeed, he was true to his promise, and he was a messenger and a prophet,”** (Maryam 19:54).

**“And mention in the Book, Idrees. Indeed, he was a man of truth and a prophet. And We raised him to a high station,”** (Maryam 19:56-57).

**“[He said], ‘Joseph, O man of truth, explain to us about ...’”** (Yusuf 12:46).

**“Your companion [Muhammad] has not strayed, nor has he erred, Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed,”** (An-Najm 53:2-4).

Truthfulness is an attribute of the righteous. Allah says: **“And the one who has brought the truth and [they who] believed in it – those are the righteous,”** (Az-Zumar 39:33).

Truthfulness is also one of the characteristics of Prophet Muhammad’s companions (*sahaba*).

Allah says: **“For the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties, seeking bounty from Allah and [His] approval and supporting Allah and His Messenger, [there is also a share]. Those are the truthful,”** (Al-Hashr 59:8).

Let us examine three types of truthfulness presented in the Quran.

- Truthfulness with God:

**“If they had been true to Allah, it would have been better for them,”** (Muhammad 47:21).

**“Among the believers are men true to what they promised Allah. Among them is he who has fulfilled his vow [to the death], and among them is he who awaits [his chance]. And they did not alter [the terms of their commitment] by any alteration – That Allah may reward the truthful for their truth and punish the hypocrites if He wills or accept their repentance. Indeed, Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful,”** (Al-Ahzab 33:23-24).

**“And those who have believed in Allah and His messengers – those are [in the ranks of] the supporters of truth,”** (Al-Hadid 57:19).

- Truthfulness in words:

**“O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice,”** (Al-Ahzab 33:70).

**“And when you testify, be just, even if [it concerns] a near relative,”** (Al-An’am 6:152).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: **“He who believes in Allah and the Last Day must either speak good or remain silent.”**

- Truthfulness in actions:

**“O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do? Great is hatred in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do,”** (As-Saff 61:2-3).

In a nutshell, truthfulness is the backbone of humanity’s manners. A truthful person deals with this manner out of their belief that it fits all aspects of life.

With truthfulness, your transactions will be blessed. The Messenger of Allah said:

**“Both parties in a business transaction have a right to annul it so long as they have not separated; and if they tell the truth and make everything clear to each other (i.e., the seller and the buyer speak the truth, the seller with regard to what is purchased, and the buyer with regard to the money) they will be blessed in their transaction, but if they conceal anything and lie, the blessing on their transaction will be eliminated.”**

Truthfulness is also the key to peace of mind. The messenger of Allah said: **“Give up what is doubtful to you for that which is not doubtful; for truth is peace of mind and falsehood is doubt.”**

If you hold fast to this good manner, you will be qualified – God willing – to be elevated to the levels of the righteous and saints.

Allah says: **“And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger – those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favor of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions,”** (An-Nisa 4:69).

Finally, truthfulness is key to Paradise and God’s satisfaction.

Allah says: **“Allah will say, ‘This is the Day when the truthful**

**will benefit from their truthfulness.’ For them are gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them, and they with Him. That is the great attainment,”** (Al-Ma’ida 5:119).

I found considerable similarities between verses of the Bible and those of the Quran regarding the manner of truthfulness. The following verses are just examples:

**“Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal truthfully are His delight,”** (Proverbs 12:22).

**“Do not devise a lie against your brother, or do the same to a friend,”** (Sirach 7:13).

**“A faithful witness does not lie, But a false witness will utter lies,”** (Proverbs 14:5).

**“Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit,”** (Psalms 34:13).

**“For my mouth will speak truth; Wickedness is an abomination to my lips,”** (Proverbs 8:7).

Therefore, truthfulness needs to be a basic theme emphasized at school and in the media, in religious discourse, and as part of the approach we take when raising our children. Let us be examples to our children and those around us. Every one of us has to take a second look at their views on telling the truth, and what level they have achieved in this regard. Doing so will help us to improve day by day. God loves truthful people and has promised them Gardens and great success.

May Allah make us among the truthful, gather us with them in the Day of Resurrection, and grant us truthful tongues.

## **97- Purity of Heart and Loving Good for People**

This is one of the best and most honorable manners. The person who has it fits exactly Allah's saying:

**“And We will have removed whatever is within their breasts of resentment, [while] flowing beneath them are rivers. And they will say, ‘Praise to Allah, who has guided us to this; and we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us. Certainly the messengers of our Lord had come with the truth.’ And they will be called, ‘This is Paradise, which you have been made to inherit for what you used to do,’”** (Al-A'raf 7:43).

Regarding this manner, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has said: **“No one of you becomes a true believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself.”**

The person who has this manner wishes good things for others, and rejoices when good things happen to them, because doing so is a sign of faith. Therefore, they rejoice because God has registered them among the believers.

Unfortunately, this manner is sorely absent from our lives. We see many people begrudging and envying others for the favors Allah has bestowed on them. This is one of the worst behaviors ever. Allah does not judge people by their appearance, but rather by what is in their hearts, and holds them accountable on this basis.

Allah says: **“Allah does not impose blame upon you for what is unintentional in your oaths, but He imposes blame upon you for what your hearts have earned. And Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing,”** (Al-Baqara 2:225).

God Almighty knows that even though He calls on people to hold this good manner (which is considered one of the key moral values His messengers were sent with) not many people actually follow it. God also knows that the hearts of many people will be filled with grudges, rancor, hypocrisy, and the like. Allah says:

**“In their hearts is disease, so Allah has increased their disease; and for them is a painful punishment because they [habitually] used to lie,”** (Al-Baqara 2:10).

**“[Remember] when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was disease said, ‘Their religion has deluded those [Muslims].’ But whoever relies upon Allah – then indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise,”** (Al-Anfal 8:49).

**“But as for those in whose hearts is disease, it has [only] increased them in evil [in addition] to their evil. And they will have died while they are disbelievers,”** (At-Tawba 9:125).

You may be deceived by people who are close to you, or those who you deal with gently. Unfortunately, their hearts are not pure and they are far from faith. Allah describes such people, saying:

**“And of the people is he whose speech pleases you in worldly life, and he calls Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the fiercest of opponents,”** (Al-Baqara 2:204).

**“O you who have believed, indeed, among your wives and your children are enemies to you, so beware of them. But if you pardon and overlook and forgive – then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful,”** (At-Taghabun 64:14).

In conclusion, we have to bear in mind the warning made by the messenger of Allah: **“No one of you becomes a true believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself.”** This is the criterion for faith in the sight of Allah. Given that the heart is the source of

intention, we can view the heart as a mirror showing the essence of humanity and our relationship with God. Let us purify our hearts and rejoice if the people around us have something good. If we do so, we realize that this is God's ordinance. These are favors which He bestows on whom He wills without account. When God sees this in our hearts, He will reward us with the fullest recompense.

Let us teach our children that when they are impressed by something they see, they must say "*masha'a-Allah*," meaning "what Allah willed [has occurred]." Let us teach them not to look enviously at what others have, and to also wish for others what they wish for themselves.

The media, especially the state-owned outlets, should be aware of what is presented to their audience. If the media presents something promoting this manner, this will be wonderful. If not, it will promote grudges and hatred.

The remembrance of God and drawing close to Him acts as a treatment for a heart that has a disease, based on Allah's saying: **"Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured,"** (Ar-Ra'd 13:28).

We have to purify ourselves and our hearts. Each of us knows quite well what is in our heart. If someone knows their disease, they have to treat themselves by coming nearer to Allah, remembering Allah, and purifying their soul. Allah says: **"And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it. And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness. He has succeeded who purifies it. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption],"** (Ash-Shams 91:7-10).

For example, let's say there is a person whose job is to carry out other people's interests. However, they feel this disease in their heart. This person has to leave their job, because their role is most importantly to serve and

bring happiness to people. Their most important qualification is to love seeing good things for the people they serve, and to facilitate their interests.

Many verses of the Bible have highlighted the favor of purifying the heart, such as:

**“Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God,”** (Matthew 5:8).

**“Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life,”** (Proverbs 4:23).

**“Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it,”** (Psalms 34:14).

**“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in the power of your hand to do so,”** (Proverbs 3:27).

**“He who earnestly seeks good finds favor, But trouble will come to him who seeks evil,”** (Proverbs 11:27).

**“Seek good and not evil, That you may live,”** (Amos 5:14).

**“Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good,”** (Romans 12:9).

**“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith,”** (Galatians 6:10).

**“See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all,”** (I Thessalonians 5:15).

It would be a fine thing indeed if human resource development programs included modules for training and educating employees to develop this manner. They have to understand that their work may invoke God’s satisfaction if they facilitate people’s interests, but also His wrath if they do the opposite.

Let us purify our hearts. May Allah record us among those who have purified their hearts toward others and love to see good things happen for everyone! May Allah register us among the believers.

## **98- Gracious Forgiveness**

This is the manner of whoever generously forgives others and overlooks their offenses, so that God may forgive them.

Allah, Glory be to Him, has taught us the merit of this manner in many Quranic verses, such as:

**“And We have not created the heavens and earth and that between them except in truth. And indeed, the Hour is coming; so forgive with gracious forgiveness,”** (Al-Hijr 15:85).

**“And let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give [aid] to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of Allah, and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful,”** (An-Nur 24:22).

Gracious forgiveness (*safh*) was one of the prophet’s moral values. Allah has ordered the prophet to forgive others, saying:

**“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him],”** (Al-i-Imran 3:159).

To this effect, we can find several verses of the Bible, such as:

**“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses,”** (Matthew 6:14-15).

**“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you,”** (Ephesians 4:32).

**“Forgive, and you will be forgiven,”** (Luke 6:37).

Therefore, a forgiving person loves to have this manner, which is ordered by God Almighty and was one of the prophet’s morals. We describe the person who has this manner as having a “pure heart.” They can easily forget people’s offenses and forgive them, so their heart is pure and free from any anger.

The “gracious forgiveness” mentioned in the above Quranic verse means to forgive without blaming and to do favors for people we have forgiven. This is the highest level of this manner and this is what Allah loves to see us doing. That is why Allah has ordered us to forgive. We have to obey God. Let us have pure hearts and forgive others. Let our forgiveness be gracious and be followed with good words and, if possible, charity to the person we have forgiven. Why not? Forgiveness is truly gracious.

Our children learn from us, and we should want to be role models for them so they can develop this manner. The first step is to forgive them when they do something wrong and they apologize. This way, they can learn from us how to forgive. If you do not forgive, the one who does wrong may continue their bad behavior. However, forgiveness may encourage them to stop their bad conduct. It will be better if your forgiveness is followed by a charity.

Gracious forgiveness builds and reunites. It is a manner that delights the person who has it. They can sleep with their heart free of any grudge against anybody. This is a reason for happiness in this world.

A small amount of forgiveness can preserve numerous families and prevent many divorces, which have become rampant due to the absence

of forgiveness. Spouses should not live their lives as if they are on one long quest to find their partner's faults and shortcomings. Spouses have to remember the good things and the wonderful days they had, and overlook insignificant issues in order to avoid disagreements and disputes. If they do, any emerging dispute can be easily settled before developing into divorce.

A small amount of this manner can end thousands of lawsuits and reunite families and friends.

Gracious forgiveness is a beautiful manner. It is also beautiful if we seek to forgive and overlook. Let us have forgiveness as a manner and as part of our culture. Do we not love that God forgives us?

## 99- Prayer

In this chapter, I do not review the conditions and rulings related to the performance of prayer. I would like to find lessons about the manners and etiquette of performing prayer.

The first is sincerity, for Allah says: **“And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, and to establish prayer and to give *zakah*. And that is the correct religion,”** (Al-Bayyina 98:5).

The second is the perfection of ablution (*wudu'*) and tranquility. The messenger of Allah said: **“If you hear the *iqamah* [call to start the prayer], you must walk to the prayer (place) with tranquility and dignity, and do not hasten; and whatever portion of the prayer you get (along with the imam) offer it, and complete afterward whatever you missed.”**

If we are at the mosque, we have to space ourselves out, and give room to others. Allah says: **“O you who have believed, when you are told, ‘Space yourselves’ in assemblies, then make space; Allah will make space for you. And when you are told, ‘Arise,’ then arise; Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is Acquainted with what you do,”** (Al-Mujadila 58:11).

The worshiper must feel that they are about to stand before God Almighty, and this is a place of humility and worship. A worshiper does not go to the mosque unless they have taken their adornment and worn perfume, if possible. Allah says: **“O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid,”** (Al-A'raf 7:31).

An important etiquette regarding prayer in our modern era is to turn off mobile phones before entering the mosque so we do not disturb other worshiper's concentration. Also, do not talk with others during the Friday sermon. Make sure the place remains suitable for everyone to concentrate on their prayers. Do not do or say anything that may disturb others or break their concentration in prayer.

Worshippers must not compete with each other to enter or exit the mosque. Do not pass in front of other worshippers or pass through the rows of worshippers inappropriately. Rather, you should strive to be flexible with other worshippers so as to make the rows straight.

I found several verses in the Bible speaking about the etiquette for prayer, mostly focusing on supplications, continuity in performance, and thanking God for it, such as:

**“Hear my prayer, O Lord, Give ear to my supplications! In Your faithfulness answer me, And in Your righteousness,”** (Psalms 143:1).

**“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving,”** (Colossians 4:2).

**“Continuing steadfastly in prayer,”** (Romans 12:12).

**“What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding,”** (I Corinthians 14:15).

**“Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ‘Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all**

**that I possess.’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted,’’ (Luke 18:9-14).**

Finally, when you stand in prayer, pray like someone bidding farewell, feeling that it might be your last prayer. This will help you to perfect your prayer.

## **100- Maintaining Bonds of Kinship**

Many Quranic verses encourage maintaining bonds of kinship. These include:

**“Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded,”** (An-Nahl 16:90).

**“So give the relative his right, as well as the needy and the traveler,”** (Ar-Rum 30:38).

**“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever, over you, an Observer,”** (An-Nisa 4:1).

**“And let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give [aid] to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of Allah, and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful,”** (An-Nur 24:22).

God has advised us to maintain ties of kinship – our relatives through the father, mother, son, or daughter – even if they have severed ties with us.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: **“The person who perfectly maintains the ties of kinship is not the one who does it because he gets recompensed by his relatives (for being kind**

**and good to them), but the one who truly maintains the bonds of kinship is the one who persists in doing so even though the latter has severed the ties of kinship with him.”**

The message here is that if one of your relatives has stopped communicating with you, take the lead and contact them.

Likewise, the Bible stresses the manner of maintaining ties of kinship in several verses, such as:

**“Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,”** (Matthew 19:19).

**“But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God,”** (I Timothy 5:4).

**“But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever,”** (I Timothy 5:8).

Maintaining bonds of kinship takes many forms, including spending. Many Quranic verses have urged us to spend in charity, giving priority to our relatives. It can also take the form of communication, consoling them, taking care of their affairs, etc.

The merit of maintaining ties of kinship is great in the sight of Allah, and at the same time, severing it is a grave sin.

The messenger of Allah said in a *Hadith Qudsy* (revelation from Allah in the prophet’s words): **“Allah, the Almighty and Exalted, said: ‘I am the Merciful (Ar-Rahman). I have created ties of kinship and derived a name for it from My Name. If anyone maintains ties of kinship, I maintain connection with him, and I shall cut off anyone who cuts them off.”**

So do not downplay the importance of maintaining ties of kinship, for cutting off ties with your relatives is a grave sin.

An offense committed by a relative might actually be a trial or test for us: Will we fail, get angry, and sever ties with them? Or win and attain God's satisfaction by keeping the bonds of kinship despite their offense?

Allah has made ordered us to have this good manner. It is an order and we have no options. God has created us as families, and connected them by commanding us to maintain our bonds of kinship.

Let each of us review our ties with our parents, grandparents, grandchildren, siblings and their children, uncles and aunts and their children, and any person we have a bond of kinship with. Let each of us move quickly to attain God's reward by maintaining ties of kinship. How great is the reward of the person who takes the lead?

The world has changed dramatically in recent years. Now people have wide circles of friends and acquaintances on social media and messaging apps. So why not create groups for our kin as well, through which we can communicate and revive our bonds? Social media groups can be the simplest way to maintain ties of kinship. Through these group chats, you can connect with your relatives and wish them well on different holidays and occasions, get to know their problems, share their interests, and keep up a connection with them. This is the minimum level of maintaining ties of kinship. Then, to take it a step further, you can consider giving to them if they are in need. Have we done so? Some people may not pay part of their *zakah* (compulsory charity) to their relatives, although their relatives may be in dire need of support. We will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment for not helping our poorer relatives.

On the other hand, some of our relatives may persistently demand money in an impolite way. This may be a trial for us, and we have to succeed by staying patient regarding their misbehavior and maintaining ties of kinship with them.

Let every one of us maintain bonds of kinship and make it a priority, because it is a foundation for good manners which God has ordered us to hold. The person who maintains their ties of kinship will achieve great success on the Day of Judgement – God willing.

## 101- Obedience

Obedience to God Almighty is a great manner. Allah has given glad tidings to whoever is obedient to Him and His messenger, that they will be among those upon whom He has bestowed favor on the Day of Resurrection.

Allah says: **“And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger – those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favor of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions,”** (An-Nisa 4:69).

If the above verse means obedient people will attain higher levels in Paradise, I think obedience is a worldly state that people must observe during their lifetime. Obedient people respect what their prophet has been sent with, they do not come close to sins, and they do what Allah and His messenger have ordered them to do. Therefore, they win God’s satisfaction during their life, and this will be the beginning of achieving a higher level in Paradise. If God is pleased with someone, He will love them; and whoever Allah loves, He will protect them and grant them success in this world.

Obedience is part of fearing God, something with which He protects a person’s offspring after their death. Allah says: **“And let those [executors and guardians] fear [injustice] as if they [themselves] had left weak offspring behind and feared for them. So let them fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice,”** (An-Nisa 4:9). Therefore, obedience is the manner of those on whom Allah has bestowed His favors, those who have asked Him for guidance and steadfastness and who He has guided and kept steadfast.

Let us be among the obedient, and ask to God in our prayers to guide us to this manner and register us among the obedient ones, so we can achieve the greatest success.

Allah has also ordered us to obey those in authority, saying: **“O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result,”** (An-Nisa 4:59). So obeying those in authority on Earth is also obligatory as long as it is within the boundaries of obedience to Allah and His messenger and on the same basis. The verse is clear: **“And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger.”** This means that obedience to Allah and His messenger is the benchmark for obeying those in authority.

Some scholars maintain a view that “those in authority” here means religious scholars who explain the orders of Allah and His messenger for us to obey. Other scholars have said that “those in authority” now means the national laws that we have to comply with. I am not a jurist and should not involve myself in something that has different interpretations. Yet there is a conclusion in this respect: obey God, His messenger, and all that comes in accordance with this obedience.

Many verses of the Bible have stressed the merit of obedience, such as:

**“Listen to me your father, O children; act accordingly, that you may be kept in safety,”** (Sirach 3:1).

**“We ought to obey God rather than men,”** (Acts 5:29).

**“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right,”** (Ephesians 6:1).

**“Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord,” (Colossians 3:20).**

**“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you,” (Hebrews 13:17).**

We ask God Almighty to make us among the successfully obedient.

## 102- Eating and Drinking

Of course, there is etiquette for eating and drinking, the first of which is stated in the verse: **“And eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess,”** (Al-A’raf 7:31). So the best thing is to maintain a middle way.

Allah also says: **“O you who have believed, eat from the good things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is [indeed] Him that you worship,”** (Al-Baqara 2:172). This means that Allah invites us to eat from the good things and avoid what He has made unlawful for us.

Likewise, the Bible has focused on some important issues regarding eating, such as:

**“Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes,”** (Matthew 14:19).

Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) used food to build good relations and invite people to repent. Mealtimes are holy and beneficial.

Do not refuse the food offered to you, or get angry about it. Likewise, do not be too greatly interested in filling your stomach. The Bible says:

**“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are**

**you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things,”** (Matthew 6:25-32).

I- have compiled a few rules of etiquette regarding eating and drinking, although it is by no means an exhaustive list.

•First, the etiquette of eating:

1. Wash your hands before and after eating. The messenger of Allah said: **“The blessing of food consists in ablution before it and ablution after it.”**
2. Mention the name of Allah in the beginning and thank Him at the end. Umar ibn Abi Salama is reported to have said: **“The messenger of Allah told me: ‘Mention Allah’s Name (i.e., say *bismillah*), eat with your right hand, and eat from what is in front of you.’”** If you forget to mention Allah’s name at the beginning, you can say upon remembering: **“*Bismillah awwalihi wa akhirihi* (With the Name of Allah, in the beginning and in the end).”**
3. Do not express disapproval about any food offered to you. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: **“Messenger of Allah never found fault with food. If he had inclination to eating it, he would eat;**

**and if he disliked it, he would leave it.”** The behavior of disapproving food shows the bad manner of arrogance and reflects contempt regarding God’s favor, which must be respected by thanking God and expressing contentment with even the smallest amount of it.

4. Eat with your right hand and from what is in front of you.
5. Do not lean against something while eating, following the prophet’s saying: **“I do not take my meals while leaning (against something).”** This is to prevent any harm and avoid showing arrogance or superiority.
6. It is recommended to speak while eating. Nothing indicates that Islam prohibits talking while having your meals. The common saying: “No greeting or speaking during eating,” has no basis in religion.
7. Do not start eating before those who are older than you. This is based on a *hadith* reported by Hudhayfa saying: **“When we attended a dinner along with the Messenger of Allah, we did not lay our hands on the food until Allah’s Messenger had laid his hand and commenced eating (the food).”**
8. Pray to the host when you finish eating. Anas ibn Malik reported that the messenger of Allah went to Saad ibn Ubada, who offered the prophet bread and oil to eat. The prophet ate and then said: **“May fasting people break their fast with you, may the righteous eat your food, and may the angels send blessing upon you.”**

- Second, the etiquette of drinking:

1. Mention the name of Allah and thank Him. Drink in three

gulps. The prophet said: **“Do not drink in one gulp like a camel, but in two or three (gulps). Mention the Name of Allah (i.e., say *Bismillah*) when you start drinking and praise Him (i.e., say *al-hamdu-lillah*) after you have finished (drinking).”**

2. It is undesirable to blow into the vessel you drink from. It is reported that **“The prophet prohibited us from breathing into the drinking vessel or blowing in it.”**
3. Do not fill your stomach with food and drink. The messenger of Allah said: **“No man fills a container worse than his stomach. A few morsels that keep his back upright are sufficient for him. If he has to, then he should keep one-third for food, one-third for drink and one-third for his breathing.”** Scholars have mentioned many harms associated with filling the stomach.
4. It is recommended that the person who brings water to others should be the last one to drink. It is reported that the messenger of Allah was on a journey when the people became thirsty. He camped in a place and started to serve his companions with drinking water. They begged the messenger of Allah to drink. But he said: **“He who serves others with drinking water should be the last to drink himself.”**

## 103- Divorce

Divorce is a religiously lawful solution that two spouses resort to when their lives become deadlocked. But beware that divorce is **“the lawful thing which Allah hates most,”** as reported in a *hadith*. I am not a cleric to speak here about the rulings of divorce. I am just explaining the etiquette people must follow if they resort to divorce. The first is that it must be done in calmness and deliberation and should be preceded with attempts at reconciliation. Allah says:

**“Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband’s] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance – [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand. And if you fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, Allah will cause it between them. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Acquainted [with all things],”** (An-Nisa 4:34-35).

Based on the above verse, some steps must be taken into account before any divorce, including:

1. Advising and reminding about each spouse’s rights.
2. Forsaking the wife in bed.
3. Striking. As far as I understand, and according to the view of

the majority of Muslim scholars, the phrase “*idribuhunna*” (“strike them”) in the above verse means to leave home and neglect the wife.

4. Choosing two good arbitrators from among the spouses’ relatives who are concerned about resolving the conflict between them.
5. Settlement between spouses is religiously desirable. One of them has to make a concession to keep the bond of marriage intact.

Allah says: **“And if a woman fears from her husband contempt or evasion, there is no sin upon them if they make terms of settlement between them – and settlement is best. And present in [human] souls is stinginess. But if you do good and fear Allah – then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted,”** (An-Nisa 4:128).

**“And if you amend [your affairs] and fear Allah – then indeed, Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful,”** (An-Nisa 4:129).

Because Islam permits verbal divorce (when a man says “I divorce you” and it is considered a legally binding divorce) the official registration of it on paper is recommended in order to preserve the woman’s right to have an official document proving her divorce. Divorce must also take place while the woman is in *tuhr* (period of ritual purity, or the period between two menstruations) during which she has not had intercourse with her husband, unless she is pregnant.

The etiquette of divorce also includes informing the wife of her divorce, and that she has to spend her *iddah* (woman’s prescribed waiting period after divorce or widowhood) at the husband’s home, contrary to what the majority of families do by forcing the divorced woman out of the husband’s house. This is based on the Quranic verse:

**“O Prophet, when you [Muslims] divorce women, divorce them for [the commencement of] their waiting period and keep count of the waiting period, and fear Allah, your Lord. Do not turn them out of their [husbands’] houses, nor should they [themselves] leave [during that period] unless they are committing a clear immorality. And those are the limits [set by] Allah. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah has certainly wronged himself. You know not; perhaps Allah will bring about after that a [different] matter,”** (At-Talaq 65:1).

Once divorce has taken place, the former couple must behave in a way that is judged as good, beneficial, or fitting; this good manner has a specific religious name in Arabic, *ma`ruf*. But behaving this way requires that there are no legal disputes between two spouses stemming from any post-divorce financial obligations, such as the obligatory financial support (*nafaqah* in Arabic) and alimony, as well as non-financial obligations, such as allowing the father to see his children.

Therefore, the two partners, based on the ideal manners of divorce as indicated in the Quran, have to be wise and implement the rulings prescribed in the Quran without procrastination or argument, in accordance with the verse:

**“Divorce is twice. Then, either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with good treatment. And it is not lawful for you to take anything of what you have given them unless both fear that they will not be able to keep [within] the limits of Allah. But if you fear that they will not keep [within] the limits of Allah, then there is no blame upon either of them concerning that by which she ransoms herself. These are the limits of Allah, so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah – it is those who are the wrongdoers,”** (Al-Baqara 2:229).

According to the above verse, maintaining good relations and mutual respect is required after divorce as part of the moral values of divorce in Islam. God Almighty has ordered us that *ma'ruf* should be the prevailing manner among people, according to the verses:

**“And for divorced women is a provision according to what is acceptable – a duty upon the righteous,”** (Al-Baqara 2:241).

**“There is no blame upon you if you divorce women you have not touched nor specified for them an obligation. But give them [a gift of] compensation – the wealthy according to his capability and the poor according to his capability – a provision according to what is acceptable, a duty upon the doers of good,”** (Al-Baqara 2:236).

In general, *ma'ruf* should be the etiquette of divorce held by Muslim men and women. This requires both parties show mutual respect and not procrastinate in rendering the due rights, out of their conviction that this pleases God. The divorcing husband should also show kindness and pay the rights due to his ex-wife. Divorce must be the last resort after seeking all other solutions, as indicated above where the Quran says, **“a duty upon the righteous,”** meaning those who fear and obey Allah.

Some verses of the Bible tackle the etiquette of divorce. Again, I do not speak about the rulings of divorce, but rather the ethics of the disagreement when divorce occurs and how the two partners deal with each other. Here are two verses from the Old Testament to this effect:

**“Yet you say, ‘For what reason?’ Because the Lord has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant,”** (Malachi 2:14).

**“But did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth,”** (Malachi 2:15).

But in the New Testament, divorce is banned except for the cases of infidelity (Mathew 19). Yet the most important etiquette in divorce, even in cases of infidelity, is to do so discreetly.

**“Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly,”** (Matthew 1:19).

## 104- Reassurance

Reassurance means you feel comfortable and at ease about what Allah has decreed, or will decree, and that you act accordingly. This naturally leads to peace of mind, which makes you feel reassured in all your affairs.

God Almighty loves us to have this manner at all times – in both ease and adversity. God says: **“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to the other direction]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss,”** (Al-Hajj 22:11).

Allah also mentions that the recitation of the Holy Quran, *tasbih* (saying: “*Subhan Allah* [Glory be to Allah]”), and supplication are means of reassuring the heart. Allah says:

**“Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured,”** (Ar-Ra’d 13:28).

**“And Allah made it not except as [a sign of] good tidings for you and to reassure your hearts thereby. And victory is not except from Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Wise,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:126).

People may pray to God, ask His help, and support to have their heart reassurance. Allah says:

**“[Remember] when you asked help of your Lord, and He answered you, ‘Indeed, I will reinforce you with a thousand from the angels, following one another,’”** (Al-Anfal 8:10).

In my opinion, the manner of reassurance can only be held by those who have carried out their duties, obeyed God and His messenger, and sought to be thankful servants.

God Almighty loves to see the believer reassured while performing prayer. God says: **“And when you have completed the prayer, remember Allah standing, sitting, or [lying] on your sides. But when you become secure, reestablish [regular] prayer. Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times,”** (An-Nisa 4:103). Prayer with reassurance produces concentration and sincerity, which constitute a path to acceptance – God willing.

Allah has given glad tidings of Paradise with all its pleasures to whomever has this manner, stating that they are servants of God, saying: **“[To the righteous it will be said], ‘O reassured soul, Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him], And enter among My [righteous] servants, And enter My Paradise,’”** (Al-Fajr 89:27-30).

Several verses of the Bible stress the importance of reassurance, such as:

**“In quietness and confidence shall be your strength,”** (Isaiah 30:15).

**“I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety,”** (Psalms 4:8).

**“Return to your rest, O my soul, For the Lord has dealt bountifully with you,”** (Psalms 116:7).

May God empower us to have this manner.

## 105- Justice and Fairness

It is a divine order that we must have the good manner of justice. It is not optional for us. Allah says: **“Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded,”** (An-Nahl 16:90).

Justice is one of the good manners that all of the prophets – the last of whom was Muhammad – were sent with.

Allah says: **“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do,”** (Al-Ma’ida 5:8).

**“[We said], ‘O David, indeed We have made you a successor upon the earth, so judge between the people in truth and do not follow [your own] desire, as it will lead you astray from the way of Allah.’ Indeed, those who go astray from the way of Allah will have a severe punishment for having forgotten the Day of Account,”** (Sad 38:26).

The above verses and others explain that we are ordered to achieve justice, which is one of Allah’s Attributes. Allah loves His servants to achieve this manner, one that allows nations to prosper. In the absence of justice, communities deteriorate and fight. Justice is the ultimate dream of humankind. No one likes to be oppressed, for Allah has made oppression unlawful for Himself. The prophet is reported to have said in a *Hadith Qudsy* (revelation from Allah in the prophet’s

words): **“Verily I have made oppression unlawful for Me and for My servants too, so do not commit oppression. The rest of the hadith is the same.”**

Allah also prohibited us from oppressing others and following personal inclination. Rather, He urged us to advise one another and be fair. This does not apply only to judges. Everyone is ordered to be just and fair.

Several verses of the Bible urge justice, such as:

**“You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume,”** (Leviticus 19:35).

**“Of accuracy with scales and weights, and of acquiring much or little,”** (Sirach 42:4).

**“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”** (Isaiah 5:20).

In our relations and transactions, we have to be just and fair, never wrong anyone, give everyone their due rights, and never favor someone at the expense of another. The employer who is not just with their employees has given up this manner, even though they have been divinely ordered to have it.

Does anyone like to be described as unjust or an oppressor? Failure to hold tightly to justice makes you slide into oppression – God forbid. Oppression is a grave sin in the sight of God.

Being just and fair is a manner that God will reward us for if we hold it, and He will punish us if we fail to implement it.

Looking more specifically at judges, who are the people most associated with ideas of justice and its implementation in society,

the process of choosing judges requires that their health and mental ability be checked. This is because such qualities enable the judge to implement justice fairly. I see nothing wrong with judges being reassessed regularly, perhaps even every five years, to make sure they are still mentally and psychologically fit for the job. This is like the regular medical check-up that pilots have to pass in order to renew their license. Is there a reason we should not do this for judges?

If a judge can issue a death penalty against a defendant, it stands to reason that society has the right to make sure that judges are healthy enough and mentally and psychologically capable of issuing such a serious verdict.

On the other hand, a judge must be financially and administratively independent so that no one can direct, suggest, or dictate a ruling to them. Otherwise, justice will disappear. The independence of judges is the basis of their neutrality and integrity. It is the real guarantee for the ruler and the ruled.

Justice and fairness are good manners that require training. It needs us to take a fresh look at our positions, every day and every hour, and recheck our relations with others.

If we think that we have wronged anyone, let us hurry to correct the mistake, remove injustice, and establish the truth. That is why God Almighty says in the Quran: **“O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow – and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do,”** (Al-Hashr 59:18).

Umar ibn al-Khattab, one of the closest companions of Prophet Muhammad and the second caliph, said: **“Hold yourself accountable before you are held accountable and weigh your deeds before they are weighed for you. This will be easier for you to hold yourself**

**accountable today before you are held accountable tomorrow. And take your adornment for the Grand Exhibition when you will be exhibited [for judgment]; not hidden among you is anything concealed.”**

The person who has this manner seeks to be fair in all their affairs. They are fair and just with their children, even including those from an ex-wife with whom there might be legal disputes. Justice is based on the rule: **“And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another,”** (Fatir 35:18). So if someone has children from an ex-wife, the children have nothing to do with their parents’ disputes. The father has to be just and fair with them all, morally and financially, in a way that pleases God.

Be just and fair. Beware of injustice. Hold tightly to the good manner of justice. Review your positions regularly. We ask God to grant us success.

## 106- Self-Honor

This manner has nothing to do with someone's wealth or poverty. You may find a wealthy person who lacks this manner and poor person with a great deal of self-honor

Because of their honor or pride, a person who has this manner abstains from asking for help or aid from others. Because they have self-honor, this kind of person may appear to be rich while they are poor and need assistance. Here is a description in the following verse:

**“[Charity is] for the poor who have been restricted for the cause of Allah, unable to move about in the land. An ignorant [person] would think them self-sufficient because of their restraint, but you will know them by their [characteristic] sign. They do not ask people persistently [or at all]. And whatever you spend of good – indeed, Allah is Knowing of it,”** (Al-Baqara 2:273).

Based on the above verse, the manner associated with self-honor is *ta'affuf* (restraint, dignity), which is also a good manner.

The following are some verses from the Bible about this manner:

**“Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house, Lest he become weary of you and hate you,”** (Proverbs 25:17).

**“And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content,”** (I Timothy 6:8).

These days, we frequently find people who are indifferent and choose the easier way and depend on others. And instead of working and striving to provide their livelihood, they may ask others for help. Allah loves

those who strive, do their best in their work, and have self-honor, and Allah does not like those who stretch out their hands to beg from others.

The person with self-honor has self-respect and respects others, and aims to attain mutual respect with others and avoid doing anything that would bring them censure or reproach. This is because people with self-honor are in a way also delicate, and do not like to hear a word that can hurt them. So they avoid this in a polite, respectful way.

The manner of self-honor protects a person from slipping into many errors in their relations with God and people. Therefore, the person who has this manner and teaches it to their children and those around them will succeed. The parents are a source of learning for their children, so when children see their parents dealing with others with self-honor, they will most probably do the same when they grow up.

The person who has self-honor is certain that God is the Provider. So there is nothing that can force them to degrade themselves or compromise their morals. They strive and know that God will provide for them, believing that whoever gives to them, they give from God's favor. That is why it is a good manner.

From another perspective, we have to preserve people's dignity and not abuse or repel them. Allah says: "**And as for the petitioner, do not repel [him],**" (Ad-Dhuha 93:10). We are required to preserve people's honor.

Therefore, if God has granted you success and you have reached a high position, be keen to preserve people's honor and dignity. Do not oppress anyone. Give everyone their due rights. This is not a favor you give, but the duty of your post. God Almighty does not like people to dominate others. God likes good treatment and the preservation of people's dignity and honor.

We have to hold fast to this good manner, and be careful about our actions in order to be pleasing to God and His messenger.

## 107- Determination

Determination is the extreme ability to endure hardships. God, Glory be to Him, tells us about the five “messengers of determination” or strong will (*ulu al-‘azm*) among other prophets, saying:

**“So be patient, [O Muhammad], as were those of determination among the messengers and do not be impatient for them,”** (Al-Ahqaf 46:35). The five prophets are Muhammad, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon them.

Allah also says: **“And [mention, O Muhammad], when We took from the prophets their covenant and from you and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, the son of Mary; and We took from them a solemn covenant,”** (Al-Ahzab 33:7).

Other verses speak about determination, such as:

**“You will surely be tested in your possessions and in yourselves. And you will surely hear from those who were given the Scripture before you and from those who associate others with Allah much abuse. But if you are patient and fear Allah – indeed, that is of the matters [worthy] of determination,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:186).

**“O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] determination,”** (Luqman 31:17).

**“And whoever is patient and forgives – indeed, that is of the matters [requiring] determination,”** (Ash-Shura 42:43).

**“Obedience and good words. And when the matter [of fighting] was determined, if they had been true to Allah, it would have been better for them,”** (Muhammad 47:21).

Likewise, the Bible states:

**“When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord,”** (Acts 11:23).

**“Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well,”** (I Corinthians 7:37).

**“Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer,”** (Romans 12:12).

**“My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord – that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful,”** (James 5:10-11).

God blesses the person who has this manner and provides them with the power to endure calamities, adversities, and horrors. Some prophets reached this level and became among the “messengers of determination.” Let the person who has such a manner know that God has bestowed His favor on them to allow them to follow the manners of these prophets. This is the pinnacle of success.

This is indeed a good manner, and the person who holds it may reach higher levels in some cases. For example, a parent whose child has died may remain patient. Patience in this case is part of the manner of determination. A person may be killed, and yet their parents remain patient, and may forgive the killer. This will be a higher level of determination.

The person who holds this manner knows that life is full of toil and hardships, but they are determined to continue their obedience to God, bearing any hardship they might encounter. They are determined to remain steadfast to please God and His messenger.

Determination is an elevated good manner that requires effort. God Almighty selects it for whom He wills from among His servants. God has also given the patient glad tidings of Paradise in several verses, including: **“But give good tidings to the patient, Who, when disaster strikes them, say, ‘Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return,’”** (Al-Baqara 2:155-156).

This manner is based on the fact that whatever afflicts a person is a trial from God, and they have a strong will to succeed, even despite the severity of the trial. So it is a good manner and at a high level in the sight of Allah.

## 108- Benevolence

Benevolence is the manner of someone who feels for others, loves helping others, and knows that helping others is a source of happiness. If the person has a higher level of this manner, they consider it to be their role and duty in society.

In my view, benevolence has many aspects: financial, moral, social, and human.

First, the financial aspect is represented in charity with all its forms, such as *zakah* (compulsory charity) and alms.

A benevolent person knows they are giving people their due rights, and if they stop doing this, God will suspend His provision for them. So when they see someone in need in the street, they feel it is compulsory to give alms to them. They feel they have no other option. They feel as though God has specifically placed this poor person in their path. Therefore, if they have the true manner of benevolence, they will give to the poor from what Allah has given them. It is a trial from God to test their benevolence. The one who helps this person and hastens to help them is a successful person.

The person who has this manner feels that it is not enough to pay only 2.5 percent of their wealth as *zakah*. They are willing to pay more than this. The more you spend in the way of Allah, the more you express gratitude to Him.

Also, the person who is benevolent does not expect others to thank them. They are only mindful of God, and know that they will find in the Hereafter what they have spent during their lifetime, and that they will leave behind what they have not spent.

This person feels sympathy when they see people in need. They feel happy to help others and thank God that He has not made them among the needy.

Many verses of the Quran speak about those who have this manner, such as:

**“Those who spend their wealth [in Allah ‘s way] by night and by day, secretly and publicly – they will have their reward with their Lord. And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve,”** (Al-Baqara 2:274).

I also found a large number of verses in the Bible speaking about the merits of benevolence and giving, such as:

**“It is more blessed to give than to receive,”** (Acts 20:35).

**“Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away,”** (Matthew 5:42).

**“Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back,”** (Luke 6:30).

**“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver,”** (II Corinthians 9:7).

**“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink,”** (Romans 12:20).

**“Do not let your hand be stretched out to receive and closed when it is time to give,”** (Sirach 4:31).

**“He who has a generous eye will be blessed, For he gives of his bread to the poor,”** (Proverbs 22:9).

**“Do not say to your neighbor, ‘Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it,’ When you have it with you,”** (Proverbs 3:28).

**“Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward,”** (Matthew 6:2).

**“But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,”** (Matthew 6:3).

Second, the moral aspect of benevolence can be seen in various forms of affection, compassion, maintaining ties of kinship, and sharing in the joy and grief of others. A benevolent person has a positive energy that moves them to act and not remain idle. They always take the initiative and play a leading role in helping people and relieving their distress. They never feel annoyed about it, and instead rejoice when they find solutions to the troubles of others.

Third, social benevolence is to love dedicating your capabilities for the benefit of society in general, sparing no effort to provide solutions and ideas, and volunteering to relieve others or assume responsibility for something. This manner engenders a desire to always participate, and to always have others benefit from the solutions you find. You are not ambitious about obtaining a position. Rather, you provide what you can without being asked.

Fourth, human benevolence can be found for example in parents’ dedication to their children. It is the conduct of someone who stays up to help others and feels sad if they find someone in distress or sick. The only thing they are concerned about is finding solutions for others, alleviating their hardships, and relieving their distress.

Benevolence is one of the comprehensive manners which, if taught to children, will establish a society of mutual love.

This manner is the basis for any dutiful child and patriotic citizen. It should be there in our school textbooks. It must prevail in our culture.

Any government will aim to maximize community participation. But where is the education that is supporting this? Where are the ideas that can lead to this desired objective?

Benevolence is not only related to those who can spend. It is not material benevolence only. It is a manner for all, and everyone can have it.

May Allah grant us, our children, and our society this manner and make it our approach in life. Amen.

## 109- Modesty (Chastity)

Having modesty and chastity is one of the noblest manners, one that implies the finest human values, respect for the privacy of others, obedience, and compliance.

A modest, chaste person is watchful of Allah's limits and those things that please Him, because they are aware of His saying: **“And they who guard their private parts, Except from their wives or those their right hands possess, for indeed, they will not be blamed – But whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors,”** (Al-Mu'minun 23:5-7). They take this verse as an indestructible approach to their lives, and they can never imagine violating it, no matter what temptations there are.

A person with a higher level of modesty and chastity feels happy that they are not a source of temptation for anyone else. They love to remain modest and know that God Almighty loves us lowering our gaze. Allah says:

**“Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do. And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those**

**male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed,”** (An-Nur 24:30-31).

Therefore, all of us are required to be modest and chaste in a way that helps others to at least lower their gaze. The prophet has taught us this when he told Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him): **“Do not give a second look, Ali, (because) while you are not to blame for the first, you have no right to the second.”**

Several verses of the Bible have stressed modesty, such as:

**“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell,”** (Matthew 5:27-29).

**“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s,”** (Exodus 20:17 and Deuteronomy 5:21).

**“Keep yourself pure,”** (I Timothy 5:22).

**“To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled,”** (Titus 1:15).

Lowering your gaze is a sign of this good manner. It also guards and protects against temptation.

When we speak about lowering the gaze as a first step to guarding yourself against sliding into error, the rest must also be understood and clear.

A modest, chaste person has a strong belief that guarding one's private parts is not optional. It is compulsory and a good deed. For them, chastity is part of their character and something that makes them happy – not the opposite.

We ask Allah to make this good manner one of the characteristics that distinguishes our nation. Allah is the best guardian and He is the most merciful.

## **110- Forgiveness and Tolerance**

Forgiveness is one of Allah's Attributes. It is a manner that gives Allah's servants hope for returning to the straight path after they have deviated from it. It also implies concepts of loftiness, sublimity, and far-sightedness.

One's life does not stop due to a mistake or violation, but instead continues. If we stop due to a certain mistake and wait for the penalty, our life's affairs will become stuck and there will be no hope for the violator to come back to the straight path. That is why Almighty God has encouraged His servants to repent, stop committing bad deeds, and forgive the repentant.

We have to learn a lesson from how, through forgiving, God has encouraged His servants to return to the right path. The forgiver is often in a higher and stronger position. The person who forgives is the one who has been wronged, and it is up to them if they will pardon a transgression against them. They hold the power to forgive. Among us humans, this manner copies the divine act of forgiving, which encourages an end to disputes, stability in life, and turning negatives to positives.

The Quran has presented an example of this manner in the verse:

**“He said, ‘No blame will there be upon you today. Allah will forgive you; and He is the most merciful of the merciful,’”** (Yusuf 12:92).

Verses in the Quran encouraging tolerance and forgiveness among people are many, such as:

**“And let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not**

**to give [aid] to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of Allah, and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful,”** (An-Nur 24:22).

**“But whoever pardons and makes reconciliation – his reward is [due] from Allah,”** (Ash-Shura 42:40).

Divorce has reached unprecedented rates in society due to a lack of forgiveness. If more people were forgiving, it might really cut down on this negative phenomenon.

This good manner, however, requires the wisdom to see what is be lost by perpetuating the dispute, versus what is be gained through tolerance and forgiveness, which results in correcting the paths of two disputing parties. Allah’s prophets (peace be upon him) have taught us the value of tolerance. They have done this so that we may have sound nations and families, and to allow humanity to develop the world, instead of giving all our time to disputes and destruction.

Let us prioritize tolerance over anything else. I am sure the result will be positive – God willing. Allah has taught us to take the lead and pardon others, and not just those who have apologized to us. The noble behavior is to move quickly to forgive and get rid of any disagreement.

The manifestation of this value is represented in the Quranic verse: **“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend,”** (Fussilat 41:34). This verse instructs us about a high level of this manner, one where you not only forgive the person who has wronged you but also to give him kindness. This is the manner of honorable people.

Several verses of the Bible have also stressed the value of pardoning, such as:

**“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you,”** (Ephesians 4:32).

**“Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do,”** (Colossians 3:13).

**“And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven,”** (James 5:15).

**“Forgive, and you will be forgiven,”** (Luke 6:37).

True forgiveness is like the concept of “rehabilitation” in the penal code, according to which the person who has completed their prison sentence has the right to have their crime dropped from their record after the passage of some years. This forgiveness is carried out by the state to allow its citizens who committed crimes to return to normal and try to find a job. So in our relations, when we forgive someone, we need to completely remove their mistake and never remember it or remind them of it in conversation. Forgiveness requires forgetting.

## 111- Work

First of all, is work a manner?

In my opinion, the answer is yes. Someone's love for work and the pleasant feeling of getting paid for your efforts are better than feeling happy from just being idle. So work is a doctrine you adopt in life and therefore a manner.

Look at the conflicts, revolutions, and civil wars around us, which have resulted in the migration of millions of people from different nationalities, many of whom are waiting for international aid. We can find others who have been displaced from their homes but are working to earn their livelihoods. I give as an example of our Syrian brothers, who have been rendered homeless and forced from their country due to the civil strife, and who have come to Egypt. They have the spirit and culture of work. Each one of them is trying to make something and work anything. You can see making and selling desserts and pastries for passers-by in the streets. Not one of them accepts money without giving you goods in return. Some of them have opened workshops and small industries in collaboration with others to continue their lives and their careers. They do not accept staying idle and receiving aid. They possess the good manner of working.

The Quran speaks about the merit of working, and God Almighty teaches us this manner in the verse: **“It is He who made the earth tame for you - so walk among its slopes and eat of His provision - and to Him is the resurrection,”** (Al-Mulk 67:15). So God tells us that we have to strive and work, anticipating that He will provide for us.

Many verses of the Bible speak about work, such as:

**“If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat,”**  
(II Thessalonians 3:10).

**“The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich,”** (Proverbs 13:4).

**“The lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting, But diligence is man’s precious possession,”** (Proverbs 12:27).

**“The desire of the lazy man kills him, For his hands refuse to labor,”** (Proverbs 21:25).

**“How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep?”** (Proverbs 6:9).

Allah has given us an example of work in the Quran. When the Virgin Mary (peace be upon her) was about to give birth and felt the pains of childbirth, Allah ordered her to shake the trunk of the palm tree, saying:

**“And shake toward you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you ripe, fresh dates,”** (Maryam 19:25).

The question is: Could a pregnant woman in such a state shake a palm tree? It would be very difficult, if not impossible. But God has set a rule for His servants: nothing can be achieved without toil and work.

We have to perfect our work if we want to improve our manners and our living conditions. Many peoples, such as the Germans and Chinese, have opted for hard work as a manner and culture; therefore, their countries have made wonderful progress and their economies are among the best in the world. This is because they have the manner of working.

Let us teach our children that no success can be achieved without having the manner of work, and no progress can be done without striving at your work. Students must work to do their best in their studies, a sports champion's job is to exert effort in exercises to be prepared for matches and competitions, and so on. Work is a duty. Our curricula should teach this to students. Media programs should also highlight success stories and the importance of work.

Do not we like to see our country progressing?

We have to work, because Allah, His messenger, and the believers will see our deeds.

## 112- Visiting the Sick

Allah has not assigned the same duties to sick people as to the physically fit and healthy. A sick person who is unable to stand in prayer can perform it while sitting, or even without movement. For fasting of the holy month of Ramadan, a sick person does not have to observe the fast and can make up for the days they did not fast after Ramadan. Allah says: **“So whoever among you is ill or on a journey [during them] – then an equal number of days [are to be made up],”** (Al-Baqara 2:184). Other verses indicate how Allah makes things easier for the ill and weak, instructing us in the good conduct of being kind, sympathetic, and caring for those who are not well.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) tells us in several *hadiths* about the advantages of visiting and caring for the sick, encouraging us to adopt this behavior as a manner. He said: **“Every Muslim has five rights over another Muslim: to return the greetings, to visit the sick, to accompany funeral processions, to accept an invitation, to respond to the sneezer [i.e., to say: ‘yarhamuka-Allah (may Allah bestow His Mercy on you),’ when the sneezer praises Allah].”**

The prophet also said: **“When one visits a sick person he continues to plunge into mercy till he sits down, and when he sits down he is immersed in it.”**

The prophet is also reported to have said in a *Hadith Qudsy* (revelation from Allah in the prophet’s words): **“On the day of resurrection God most high will say: ‘Son of Adam, I was sick and you did not visit me.’ He will reply: ‘My Lord, how could I visit Thee when Thou art the Lord of the universe?’ He will say: ‘Did**

**you not know that my servant so and so was ill and yet you did not visit him? Did you not know that if you had visited him you would have found me with him?”**

Based on the above *hadiths*, the person who visits the sick has come to know the rewards awaiting them as thanks for their behavior. Visiting the sick shows sympathy and compassion, which God Almighty loves to see us have.

Verses of the Bible urge visiting the sick, such as:

**“I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me,”** (Matthew 25:36).

**“Do not hesitate to visit the sick, because for such deeds you will be loved,”** (Ben Sira 7:35).

**“Go, say to him, ‘You shall certainly recover,’”** (II Kings 8:10).

Let us ask ourselves, when was the last time we visited a sick person from among our friends or extended family?

Let us plan times to visit sick people we know, or even simply plan when to contact them to check on their recovery. We know how expensive medical treatment is these days, and what people have to do to afford it. So shall we continue to overlook this problem, one that many people face, or hurry and provide financial and moral support to them?

Some ill people may feel embarrassed accepting financial assistance if you offer it. In this case, we might decide to pay part of their treatment costs without telling them, or by saying the costs are covered by health insurance. We can say something like this to avoid embarrassment. So do not hesitate to extend aid to someone who is ill, because the cost of treatment has already become exorbitant and unreasonable.

To merely visit a sick relative who cannot afford the cost of treatment is not enough. Why aren't you providing health insurance for them and their children, if you can afford it? This way, you can feel reassured that if they remain ill, you know you did your best. You can do this with other people in your life, such as the security guard of your building, other security personnel, your maid and her family, and others. For these people in your life, the good manner of visiting the sick actually starts when they are healthy by providing them health insurance, if you can. If you cannot afford it, let it be your charity project in collaboration with your neighbors in the building or at work, and so on.

We need this manner, which can reunite people and strengthen bonds between us. It exhibits great moral values and human feelings, in addition to the reward expected from God Almighty, Who loves this manner.

## **113- Lowering the Gaze**

The Quran teaches us to lower our gaze while walking among others. Allah says:

**“Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do. And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts,”** (An-Nur 24:30-31).

**“And do not extend your eyes toward that by which We have given enjoyment to [some] categories of them, [its being but] the splendor of worldly life by which We test them. And the provision of your Lord is better and more enduring,”** (Ta-Ha 20:131).

**“Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart – about all those [one] will be questioned,”** (Al-Isra 17:36).

We find similar meanings in many verses of the Bible, such as:

**“I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?”** (Job 31:1).

**“Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, And revive me in Your way,”** (Psalms 119:37).

**“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your**

**members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell,”**  
(Matthew 5:27-29).

Lowering the gaze is a good manner that keeps us away from the path of vice or any inappropriate behavior that does not please God. Looking is the first step; if you fail to cast down your gaze, you might dare to do a graver sin. Lowering the gaze is the start of virtue, because the gaze can arouse a person, and it implies impolite behavior in dealing with others by breaching their privacy.

It is not an acceptable excuse to say that others have allowed you to look at them, such as a woman that exhibits her charms to draw attention. What others do is not our concern, and we should have nothing to do with it. This is because the manners ordained by Allah and His messengers teach us primarily not to look, for such an unacceptable gaze is the start of the way to error. And the successful person is the one who turns away.

Indeed, it is not easy. It requires certainty (*yaqin*) that what is with Allah is better. This manner also requires practice, because it requires us to not look at or watch what could arouse sexual urges, so as to avert sliding into a grave error. Just like the proverb that says, “Prevention is better than a cure,” lowering the gaze is better and prevents many errors, perhaps including major sins, which we must surely avoid.

Let us try as much as we can. The start is to know that we are required to practice this manner which Allah loves to see us holding.

## **114- Rejoicing and Making Others Rejoice**

God Almighty loves to see His servants rejoicing and pledges to make the dwellers in Paradise rejoice.

Allah says: **“And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision, Rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty, and they receive good tidings about those [to be martyred] after them who have not yet joined them – that there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:169-170).

Also in this world, God appreciates those who rejoice at His bounty, saying:

**“And [the believers among] those to whom We have given the [previous] Scripture rejoice at what has been revealed to you, [O Muhammad], but among the [opposing] factions are those who deny part of it. Say, ‘I have only been commanded to worship Allah and not associate [anything] with Him. To Him I invite, and to Him is my return,’”** (Ar-Ra’d 13:36).

I have found proof of this manner in the following verses of the Bible:

**“Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer,”** (Romans 12:11-12).

**“Rejoice the soul of Your servant, For to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul,”** (Psalms 86:4).

**“And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!’”** (Romans 10:15).

**“Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!”** (Luke 15:6).

**“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”** (Philippians 4:4).

From all this, we get a picture of just how much God loves to see us rejoicing when we encounter things that please Him, such as when we see good manners prevailing among the youth, when our brothers and friends are prospering, when our homeland is making progress, etc.

The good manner of rejoicing comes from the good manner of feeling satisfied and content with life. God Almighty loves to see His servants holding this good manner because it implies values of gratitude and praise to Him.

As God loves to see us rejoicing, we too have to make others happy through our kind words, charity, repayment of their debts, providing clothes and food to poor children, supporting the oppressed, or through whatever method you may choose. The person who holds this manner feels empathy for others. If they see someone grieving, they step in and try to get them out of their sadness.

Rejoicing and making others rejoice is a good manner and a cornerstone of a beautiful character.

## 115- Discernment

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) tells us about this manner, saying: **“A believer is shrewd, careful and cautious.”** In another *hadith*, he said: **“A believer should not be stung twice from the same hole.”** A shrewd, discerning person learns from their mistakes and is keen not to repeat them. And when they make a mistake, they return and repent.

The person who has this manner is aware that every mistake has its causes and signs. That is to say, they understand that perhaps a bad friend was the one who persuaded them to drink alcohol at a time before they became aware how serious this mistake was, and repented. They came to understand that maintaining a friendship with this person could make them commit the same sin again. Therefore, their discernment inspired them to cut ties with this person, in response to the prophet’s saying: **“Man follows his friend’s religion, you should be careful who you take for friends.”** So this person uses their experience and understanding in obeying God – and this is discernment. Indeed, God is the Forgiver, but He does not like those who persist in sin. So once this person understands what and who implicated them in sin, they must exert efforts to avoid this in the future. This is God’s favor of discernment.

Several verses of the Bible refer to this manner, such as:

**“Good understanding gains favor, But the way of the unfaithful is hard,”** (Proverbs 13:15).

**“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever,”** (Psalms 111:10).

**“A man will be commended according to his wisdom, But he who is of a perverse heart will be despised,”** (Proverbs 12:8).

Therefore, a person with discernment understands and uses their senses to obey God and His messenger.

You can see this in our day-to-day life. If you had a small accident while driving or ate something that caused you some stomach trouble, you will try to avoid repeating these things in the future.

We are required to exercise this same discernment so as not to commit sins again. Let us consider a sin we made as a dent we caused to our car, and try to avoid it happening again. To do so, we have to abstain from what had caused us to commit the sin and do our best to draw closer to God and ask Him to guide us. Whoever does this is a person with a discerning manner.

## **116- Doing Good without Wishing Reward or Gratitude**

The person who has this manner puts their complete trust in God. They are mindful of God, carry out His ordinances to please Him, and do good for the sake of God, wishing for no reward or gratitude from anybody. They do this for the sake of God, Who says: “[**Saying**], ‘**We feed you only for the countenance of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude,**’” (Al-Insan 76:9).

This person knows that it is a trade with God, Glory be to Him, and they lend unto Him, in implementation of the verse: “**Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned,**” (Al-Baqara 2:245).

We find almost the same meaning in this verse of the Bible: “**He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, And He will pay back what he has given,**” (Proverbs 19:17).

The Bible also states:

“**He who gives to the poor will not lack,**” (Proverbs 28:27).

“**But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil,**” (Luke 6:35).

The highest level of this manner is when the person does good only to please God. They may not be waiting for God to satisfy them, rather they are doing good while wishing for no return whatsoever, to the extent that doing good has become like the air they breathe. They may not think that they breathe to live; they are just breathing. This is exactly how they do good; just for the sake of Allah, wishing no reward or gratitude from anybody.

## **117- Contentment and Satisfaction**

This is the manner of whoever is content with what they have and, therefore, reached the level of contentment and satisfaction, which is a high level of gratefulness.

Satisfaction is the state of the people of Paradise. Allah says:

**“Their reward with Allah will be gardens of perpetual residence beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them and they with Him. That is for whoever has feared his Lord,”** (Al-Bayyina 98:8).

**“He will be in a pleasant life,”** (Al-Qari’a 101:7).

Several verses of the Bible speak about the merit of contentment, such as:

**“For I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content,”** (Philippians 4:11).

**“Now godliness with contentment is great gain,”** (I Timothy 6:6).

It is a truly good thing when you learn how to be satisfied and content with what you have, so that you do not look at what others have. The person who has this manner is happy and is convinced that they have the best of things, complying with Allah’s saying:

**“And do not extend your eyes toward that by which We have given enjoyment to [some] categories of them, [its being but] the splendor of worldly life by which We test them. And the provision of your Lord is better and more enduring,”** (Ta-Ha 20:131).

It is nice to thank God Almighty, but nicer is to be satisfied and contented with what He has bestowed on us. This is a key to happiness.

Finally, contentment is described as silent gratitude, and therefore it is a key to more provisions from God, who says: **“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, ‘If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe,’”** (Ibrahim 14:7).

## 118- Writing

Some may wonder: Is writing a manner?

In my opinion, yes, it is. Some may use their memory in dealing with the people. Others may respond to Allah's order to us to write what we owe and to bring witnesses – two men or a man and two women. Here I do not speak about religious rulings related to the following verse, but about the manner of writing. Allah says:

**“O you who have believed, when you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down. And let a scribe write [it] between you in justice. Let no scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him. So let him write and let the one who has the obligation dictate. And let him fear Allah, his Lord, and not leave anything out of it. But if the one who has the obligation is of limited understanding or weak or unable to dictate himself, then let his guardian dictate in justice. And bring to witness two witnesses from among your men. And if there are not two men [available], then a man and two women from those whom you accept as witnesses – so that if one of the women errs, then the other can remind her. And let not the witnesses refuse when they are called upon. And do not be [too] weary to write it, whether it is small or large, for its [specified] term. That is more just in the sight of Allah and stronger as evidence and more likely to prevent doubt between you, except when it is an immediate transaction which you conduct among yourselves. For [then] there is no blame upon you if you do not write it. And take witnesses when you conclude a contract. Let no scribe be harmed or any witness. For if you do so, indeed, it**

**is [grave] disobedience in you. And fear Allah. And Allah teaches you. And Allah is Knowing of all things,”** (Al-Baqara 2:282).

Many verses of the Bible also speak about the manner of writing and how it is preferred in transactions. The following are some:

**“Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce,’”** (Matthew 5:31).

**“It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus,”** (Luke 1:3).

**“My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin,”** (I John 2:1).

**“Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie,”** (Galatians 1:20).

**“I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write,”** (Acts 25:26).

The angel in the beginning of the Book of Revelation instructed St. John: **“What you see, write in a book and send it,”** (Revelation 1:11).

God Almighty wants to tell us that this is how our manners and transactions with each other should be. God knows that we forget, and this is unintentional. He knows that a person’s soul may entice them to consume the wealth of someone else, or wash their hands of responsibility for something. Therefore, Allah wants us to writing and making records as a key approach to how we live our lives, in order to preserve the people’s rights. The person who has this manner is always keen to write down their debts, or anything similar, and never seeks to

evade this writing. And because they have a good character, they want to register what they owe others in recognition that such commitments must be fulfilled during their lifetime, or before the distribution of their estate following their death.

Writing protects and preserves people's rights. Let us write and teach our children the manner of writing to help them remain on a correct path in their lives. Of course, we have to teach them how to protect and fulfill the rights of others.

## 119- Restraining Anger

Restraining anger (*kadh al-ghaydh* in Arabic) means to suppress it and not display it outwardly in words or actions when you can retaliate against the person who has offended you. *Ghaydh* in Arabic is the source of anger. Allah has praised the person who suppresses their anger.

**“And who restrain anger and who pardon the people – and Allah loves the doers of good,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:134).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: **“The one who suppresses anger and has the power to give effect to it, will be called out by Allah, the Exalted, to the forefront of the creatures on the Day of Resurrection and he will be asked to choose any of the *Hur* [fair women with large (beautiful) eyes] of his liking.”**

The prophet also said: **“The strong man is not one who is good at wrestling, but the strong man is one who controls himself in a fit of rage.”**

Likewise, several verses of the Bible speak about this manner, such as:

**“Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools,”** (Ecclesiastes 7:9).

**“Anger and wrath, these also are abominations, yet a sinner holds on to them,”** (Sirach 27:30).

**“For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God,”** (James 1:20).

Restraining your anger is a great manner, and if you have it you can control your behavior, suppress your anger, and not seek revenge. Due to some people's failure to restrain their anger, families have broken apart and nations have engaged in conflict.

The message here is to know first that failure to control your reactions is not something that only affects you, because the consequences of your anger can harm others, including people you care about.

When two spouses quarrel and neither restrains their anger, the result will eventually be the tearing apart of their family and the absence of a healthy environment at home for bringing up their children. Now those children are paying the price for their parents not having the good manner of restraining anger.

You may encounter someone who offends you in the street. You may fail to suppress your anger and then push this person to the ground so forcefully that they hit their head and die. The result would be contrary to what you wanted, and you would spend the rest of your life in prison and destroy your family because you tried to retaliate. But you can avoid such troubles and continue your life safely if you consider the situation well and suppress your anger, especially as this behavior pleases God and He rewards us for it.

In my opinion, suppressing anger is one of the highest and noblest manners because it is practiced by a person with a strong, resolute character. This person knows that they are stronger than the one who angered them or tried to provoke them. So they are not forced to degrade themselves in a struggle with the other party, knowing that they trade with Allah, Who loves the manner of suppressing anger.

The person who restrains their anger is proud, superior, a leader, a builder, wise, and gives priority to the interests of others over the immediate retaliation they might carry out when reacting to an offense.

The person who restrains their anger must be taught and trained about forgiveness, which is one of Allah's Attributes. And whoever holds or practices a divine attribute is a person who has reached a higher level of morals. This is because they pardon, forgive, and overlook – not out of weakness but out of awareness, responsibility, far-sightedness, and their ability to take the right decision at the right time. So a person may have to train for a long time to attain this manner.

If a parent saw their child throwing a tennis racket to the ground after losing a match, the parent should learn that the child has failed to restrain their anger. In this case, the child's family and coach should instruct and train them on how to suppress their anger. The child who breaks their toy angrily needs training on how to restrain their anger. The nervous, irritable child needs training on how to suppress their anger. A husband, wife, judge, teacher, employee, driver, and others may all need training on restraining anger, so they can absorb the mistakes and offenses of others. Furthermore, the best way to motivate them to restrain their anger is to tell them that Allah loves this manner and rewards it.

If a soldier goes to war armed with ammunition and weapons, the best thing a person should be armed with every morning before going out should be the manner of restraining anger. This manner protects the person against many harms and troubles they might encounter. Again, I will remind you that Allah says: **“Who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people – and Allah loves the doers of good,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:134).

Allah has promised Paradise and its blessing to His servants who restrain their anger. This indicates how great and wise those people are. The phrase **“and Allah loves the doers of good”** indicates that God loves the person who not only restrains their anger but also follows

this with doing good to the one who has offended them. Only people who trust in God and have a high level of this manner can do this.

In my opinion, there is a relation between a weak character and the inability to restrain anger. This is because the weakness of a personality is the basis for rashness and uncontrollable action, which could make the person lose control, react nervously, and escalate to an extreme level. But the person who has a strong character, self-confidence, and self-control can restrain their anger and prevent themselves from sliding into unjustified actions.

In our daily life if we want to enjoin what is good; the best form of it, in my opinion, is to seek to calm down the angry people around us. This initiative will aim to contain daily disputes around us in order not to exacerbate problems, urge people to tell the truth, be calm, and settle things in calmness and deliberation.

I remember the FIFA 2006 World Cup final between Italy and France, when Italy's Marco Materazzi seemed to have insulted the French captain Zinedine Zidane. No one heard what the Italian defender told the French midfielder, despite the presence of tens of thousands in the stadium and millions of viewers around the world. The problem was that the French star lost control of himself and failed to restrain his anger. Instead of thwarting Materazzi's trickery, Zidane head-butted him in the chest. A red card was waved. Zidane left the match, unaware he may have just ruined his country's chances of winning the World Cup, and amid the anger of millions of fans watching him. All this came the pass because of a moment when he failed to suppress their anger.

Materazzi's ploy worked. The French team lost because Zidane failed to restrain his anger or put his own personal feelings aside in order to rise to the occasion and achieve his country's dream.

Now, let us come to the highest level of restraining anger. This occurs when the person who has restrained their anger is asked to rise above this and give charity to the one who abused them. This had happened with Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, one of the closest companions of Prophet Muhammad, his father-in-law, and the first caliph. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) halted his regular aid to one of his relatives, Mistah ibn Uthatha, after the latter had spoken evil of the former's daughter, Aisha, a Mother of the Believers (a wife of Prophet Muhammad), may Allah be pleased with her.

Then the following verse was revealed to the prophet, including reference to Abu Bakr:

**“And let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give [aid] to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of Allah, and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful,”** (An-Nur 24:22).

Through the above verse, Allah teaches us that we can go a step beyond just restraining our anger, and take it to the higher level of actually giving charity to the one who did you wrong.

By doing so, the giver demonstrates their faith in God and belief that what they spend in charity falls in God's Hand before it goes to the person you give. Here the almsgiver's love of spending in charity and attaining higher levels of faith goes beyond all the limits of anger they had felt.

In conclusion, we have to always remember the common phrase “God forgive you,” (*Allah yesamhak*). I remember when I was young how we would utter this to whoever wronged us. This saying implies the concept of restraining anger. It is not uttered by the weak party, but rather by the one who holds this manner.

Also, some of Jesus Christ's instructions to his companions provide a good example of this moral value:

**“To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either,”** (Luke 6:29).

The above verse exemplifies this manner. It teaches us not to be troublemakers, but rather be lenient and tolerant as much as we can. The person who restrains their anger is tolerant by nature, hoping to live in peace, not out of weakness but out of obedience to God and by holding fast to this good manner.

## 120- Speaking

Speaking has its own specific forms of etiquette, as stated in the Quran and the prophet's *Sunnah*, starting with the volume of your voice. Allah says: **“And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys,”** (Luqman 31:19). This means your voice should be low and not loud. This is the manner of speaking stated in the Quran.

There are other prohibitions when it comes to speaking, such as talking in a vain way or speaking ill (*laqhw*) of someone or something in a way that gives no benefit. Allah says: **“And they who turn away from ill speech,”** (Al-Mu'minun 23:3). These prohibitions include backbiting. If you speak about someone who is not present, you should not say things about them that they do not like. Rather, you can praise them. Gossiping is also prohibited – that is to say, you should not say something that may cause a dispute or animosity between people.

We are ordered in many verses of the Quran to speak well, such as:

**“And tell My servants to say that which is best. Indeed, Satan induces [dissension] among them. Indeed Satan is ever, to mankind, a clear enemy,”** (Al-Isra 17:53).

**“To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it,”** (Fatir 35:10).

**“And speak to people good [words],”** (Al-Baqara 2:83).

When Allah sent prophets Moses and his brother Aaron (peace be upon them) to Pharaoh, He ordered them to speak gently with him: **“Go, both of you, to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed. And**

**speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah],” (Ta-Ha 20:43-44).**

Another important piece of etiquette is that you should not stick your nose in anything that does not concern you. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have said the following hadiths concerning this manner:

**“It is from the excellence of (a believer’s) Islam that he should shun that which is of no concern to him.”**

**“A Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hands the Muslims are safe; and a *Muhajir* (Emigrant) is the one who refrains from what Allah has forbidden.”**

**“A man utters a word pleasing to Allah without considering it of any significance for which Allah exalts his ranks (in *Jannah* or Paradise); another one speaks a word displeasing to Allah without considering it of any importance, and for this reason he will sink down into Hell.”**

Also, do not speak about the evil you have done. Speak only about the good things. Allah says: **“Allah does not like the public mention of evil except by one who has been wronged. And ever is Allah Hearing and Knowing,” (An-Nisa 4:148).**

Chatting on social media is a modern form of talking. Users may convey lies because they do not bother verifying whether the posts they share are true or false. The following verse prohibits this behavior: **“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful,” (Al-Hujurat 49:6).** You should not share what cannot be verified as authentic. Also, do not share something that can stir up animosity or

disagreements among people. This is a kind of prohibited gossiping. This also applies to posts that can damage people's morals.

Finally, do not chat just for the sake of chatting on social media, for instance with people who you do not know and will never meet in the future. Why are people these days so obsessed with getting likes and followers?

The prophet said: **“He who believes in Allah and the Last Day must either speak good or remain silent.”**

Several verses of the Bible discuss the manner of speaking, such as:

**“Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit,”** (Psalms 34:13).

**“Some people keep silent and are thought to be wise, while others are detested for being talkative. ... Whoever talks too much is detested, and whoever pretends to authority is hated,”** (Sirach 20:5, 8).

**“Honor and dishonor come from speaking, and the tongue of mortals may be their downfall. Do not be called double-tongued and do not lay traps with your tongue; for shame comes to the thief, and severe condemnation to the double-tongued,”** (Sirach 5:13-14).

**“A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger,”** (Proverbs 15:1).

**“The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious, But the lips of a fool shall swallow him up,”** (Ecclesiastes 10:12).

**“A fool also multiplies words,”** (Ecclesiastes 10:14).

**“The words of the wise are like goads,”** (Ecclesiastes 12:11).

**“They hold back their words until the right moment,”** (Sirach 1:24).

**“Stand firm for what you know, and let your speech be consistent,”** (Sirach 5:10).

**“And a word spoken in due season, how good it is!”** (Proverbs 15:23).

**“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold In settings of silver,”** (Proverbs 25:11).

Let us reassess our behavior, and also check what our children write and share on social media.

You may find people publicly insulting and defaming others. This is a grave sin and far from the manner of speaking put forth in the Quran and the prophet’s *Sunnah* (Prophet Muhammad’s sayings, deeds and approvals).

On the other hand, to achieve this manner we are ordered not to speak evil of anybody, even by insinuation. Allah says:

**“Woe to every scorner and mocker,”** (Al-Humaza 104:1).

**“And do not obey every worthless habitual swearer [And] scorner, going about with malicious gossip,”** (Al-Qalam 68:10-11).

The two Quranic terms *humazah* and *hammaz*, translated above as “scorner,” mean the person who backbites and mentions the faults of others behind their back. The term *lumazah*, translated above as “mocker,” refers to the person who mocks others, whether through words or by some movement of their lips, eyes, hands, etc. The above terms in Arabic denote the mocking of someone by insinuation or hints.

We are also ordered not to call each other by offensive nicknames. Allah prohibits this in the Quran, saying: **“And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames,”** (Al-Hujurat 49:11). So we have to respect people and use the nicknames they prefer.

Let us adhere to this good manner in our speech. Let us “speak good or remain silent.”

## 121- Saying *masha'allah* – “What Allah Willed”

Saying *masha'allah* (what Allah willed [has occurred]) is a good manner because it attributes favor to its Owner. We use this expression in our society to ward off the evil eye from ourselves, our children, our property, etc. so as to prevent envy.

Allah says: “**And why did you, when you entered your garden, not say, ‘What Allah willed [has occurred]; there is no power except in Allah?’**” (Al-Kahf 18:39).

This verse instructs us to say *masha'allah la quwwata illa billah*, meaning “What Allah willed [has occurred]; there is no power except in Allah,” whenever we look at anything that belongs to us or others, in order to protect it from the evil of envy. This phrase attributes favor to its Creator and implies protection for us and comfort for others.

If your friend hears you say it when you enter their house or see their children, it implies a supplication for them, as if you are essentially saying: “May God bless you and protect you and your children.” In this way, you will be welcomed as an honorable guest. Your friend will feel comfortable when you enter their house, a place where you can plainly see God’s favors on them. In other words, it means that you wish good for your friend and you reassure them by using these words.

We have to say it when we see God’s favors on us as well, in order to attribute the favor to its bestower. We have also to train ourselves not to look at God’s favors on others unless we wish the same for ourselves and pray to God to maintain His favor on them. Again, if we do this, we have to say *masha'allah la quwwata illa billah*; “What

Allah willed [has occurred]; there is no power except in Allah.” The phrase *masha'allah* means this is what Allah has ordered to be by saying: “Be,” and so it is. Can we have a view other than this?

God, Exalted be He, gives whomever He wills whatever He wills. All we can do is to instruct ourselves and those around us to rejoice for others and say *masha'allah* when we see or meet them or see what God has bestowed on them. Our children shall learn it from us when they see us doing it.

Although the Bible does not include the utterance *masha'allah*, many verses make mention of envy as an abhorrent behavior and urge us to wish good for people and look kindly on others. The following verses are examples:

**“A sound heart is life to the body, But envy is rottenness to the bones,”** (Proverbs 14:30).

**“He is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions,”** (I Timothy 6:4).

**“The eye of the greedy person is not satisfied with his share; greedy injustice withers the soul. A miser begrudges bread, and it is lacking at his table,”** (Sirach 14:9-10).

**“Remember that a greedy eye is a bad thing,”** (Sirach 31:13).

**“He who has a generous eye will be blessed, For he gives of his bread to the poor,”** (Proverbs 22:9).

In the Christian faith, there is no belief in the power of the evil eye, although the faith does consider envy to be a sin because it reflects a grudge in the envier’s heart.

However, the effect of envy in Christianity is represented through the provocation of Satan to work against the favor that the envied person has received. In this way, Satan can induce the envied person to experience harmful sin and evil, hence the danger of envy.

Saying *masha'allah* is a great manner for teaching people to be contented and love good for other people.

## **122- Pledging Allegiance (to God and His messenger)**

Allah has mentioned the prophet's companions who pledged allegiance (*bay'ah*) to fight with him and never to run away, saying in the Quran:

**“Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you, [O Muhammad] – they are actually pledging allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands. So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised Allah – He will give him a great reward,”** (Al-Fath 48:10).

This is a good manner of brave people who were faithful to the prophet (peace be upon him).

But the question remains: Has the time of pledging allegiance ended? Can we practice this manner in our time?

In my opinion, which may or may not be correct, pledging allegiance is still possible.

This manner is still valid. Believing in Allah and His messenger and supporting the prophet is possible and will continue to the end of time. Adhering to the orders, prohibitions, and good manners ordained by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is like pledging allegiance to him during his time. So pledging allegiance is not limited to the prophet's time, but rather continues with us. The person who now adheres to the Islamic faith and its morals is a supporter of the prophet because they are fighting and resisting all types of temptations and corruption around them. Consequently, they are pledging allegiance to the prophet and they will be granted success by God.

If this is the case with Muslims, the Bible has several verses related to Jesus' followers, such as:

**“If you love Me, keep My commandments,”** (John 14:15).

**“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word,”** (Psalms 119:9).

The Christian faith recommends absolute obedience to God. It also provides for enlightened obedience, which means obedience within the limits set by God and in conformity with the Bible. We can find this concept in the following verses:

**“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct,”** (Hebrews 13:7).

**“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right,”** (Ephesians 6:1).

We must know that by following the ordinances of Allah and His messenger, we will be pledging allegiance to the prophet, and those who have done this have attained something great. May Allah make us among them. Amen.

## **123- Protection**

The good manner of protection is associated with the manner of trust. The person who has this manner knows that God's favors are a trust that must be protected in the same way that they protect their health, or our country's water and roads, and so on. They protect what Allah has entrusted them with.

Perhaps if our media outlets tackled the issue of water through the perspective that it is a favor and trust from Allah, and whoever protects it shall be rewarded by Him, this could help us face the problems related to water and the rationalization of its use.

If we get people to understand that roads and transportation are also among God's favors that must be protected, this may convince many to take better care of public property. Many do not know that the protection of public property is a religious duty. But if they are invited to this good manner, their conscience might be stirred in a positive way.

The correlation between one's own interests and divine orders could be used to develop religious discourse. Undoubtedly, the presence of personal/public interest in anything we want to preserve will move people's consciences to preserve it. You may fail to persuade citizens to take care of public property – public buses for example – by only telling them they are stakeholders in such things. They may not understand this, and argue that they pay taxes and, therefore, it is not their job to protect public property. But if they know that they are ordered by God Almighty to protect public interests, their attitude may change considerably and they may show interest in protecting it.

For example, Allah says: **“And [He created] the horses, mules and donkeys for you to ride and [as] adornment. And He creates that which you do not know,”** (An-Nahl 16:8).

Similarly, we can compare the above-mentioned means (horses, mules, and donkeys) to modern means of transportation (buses, trains, etc.) and say they are favors of God that we must protect so that we can take them as adornment. How can you adorn yourself with something that is broken down? Likewise, the many Quranic verses about the protection of things we are entrusted with can be used to the same effect.

The factor of self-interest can therefore be used as a catalyst for obedience to Allah’s ordinances. We must promote these manners among those around us and make them understand that they will attain great rewards for this.

The higher objectives of *sharia* (in Arabic: *maqasid al-shari’ah*) as well as those of other heavenly religions are in agreement about the protection of faith, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth.

We can also find this in Apostle Paul’s epistle to the Corinthians: **“Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s,”** (I Corinthians 6:20).

The Bible says that God created man to care for and protect nature: **“Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it,”** (Genesis 2:15).

Protection is a good manner, one that we should all have.

## 124- Reassessing Oneself

Reassessing oneself means that a person evaluates themselves honestly to look at the negatives and positives as a means of self-improvement.

It is a great manner for reform. The person who has it wants to improve their relationship with God and other people. It is the manner of a reasonable person who can hold themselves accountable.

Allah says: **“That is because Allah would not change a favor which He had bestowed upon a people until they change what is within themselves. And indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing,”** (Al-Anfal 8:53).

According to this verse, God tells us that the starting point of changing things is from the self. When we change ourselves, God will change His favor for us.

The following verse provides another proof for this: **“Indeed, [O Muhammad], you do not guide whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He is most knowing of the [rightly] guided,”** (Al-Qasas 28:56).

In the Bible, we find Paul the Apostle writes to his disciple Timothy, saying: **“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you,”** (I Timothy 4:16).

Jesus Christ explains how the prodigal son “came to himself” and repented to the Lord and his father.

Jesus said: **“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!’”** (Luke 15:17).

All the above verses establish the manner of reassessing oneself. When someone reexamines their actions and finds something wrong, they should ask God to guide and reform them. God loves to see His servants having this manner. The evidence is that we recite in every unit of prayer (*rak’ah*) this verse from the first chapter (*surah*) of the Quran: **“Guide us to the straight path,”** (Al-Fatiha 1:6). We recite it a total of 17 times a day.

God Almighty also loves the person who holds themselves to account and strives to go back to the right path if they have done any acts of evil, saying: **“Except for those who repent, believe and do righteous work. For them Allah will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful,”** (Al-Furqan 25:70).

If a student failed an exam, they must reassess and ask themselves: “Why didn’t I pass the exam? Was it because I didn’t study my lessons? Have I neglected my studies? Have I made friends with the wrong people?” The student’s success will be assured if they can take a good, hard look at themselves, thoroughly understand what they have done, see how it negatively affected them, and then draw up a new plan that is different from their old one.

If spouses who constantly argue would reassess themselves, they might save their families from the consequences of divorce, which has been on the rise in recent years. Children are often the ones who end up paying the price of parents who fail to reexamine themselves.

If companies reassess themselves, they can avoid the anger of their employees.

Disagreeing friends and family members should also reassess themselves and remove any causes of disagreement.

Reassessing is a general manner for reform; you can think of it like a teacher grading an exam, where the “answers” are your behaviors. You have to put points for each answer/behavior, and review them seriously and reasonably. Then you must truthfully intend to correct your mistakes. In this way, our society and our nation can be reformed.

Allah loves to see that His servants have this manner, which encourages objectivity, reason, good treatment, respect for others, wishing for success and progress, learning from our mistakes, and desiring to change our image before others and before God Almighty. Let us teach it to our children. Let us reassess ourselves every day and better change our relationship with God. Let us give others their due rights. Let us make tomorrow better than yesterday.

What a wonderful manner reassessing oneself is.

## 125- Respecting Others' Privacy

Respecting others' privacy is the behavior of someone who understands that good character traits require us to studiously avoid interfering in others' affairs and to restrain our curiosity about them. It is an order stated in several verses of the Quran, such as:

**“And do not spy or backbite each other,”** (Al-Hujurat 49:12).

**“For you is your religion, and for me is my religion,”**  
(Al-Kafirun 109:6).

**“O you who have believed, do not ask about things which, if they are shown to you, will distress you,”** (Al-Ma'ida 5:101).

It is also mentioned in a *hadith* where Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: **“It is from the excellence of (a believer's) Islam that he should shun that which is of no concern to him.”** Many other Quranic verses and prophetic *hadiths* call for this manner.

Likewise, the Bible says:

**“A boor peers into the house from the door, but a cultivated person remains outside,”** (Sirach 21:23).

**“It is ill-mannered for a person to listen at a door; the discreet would be grieved by the disgrace,”** (Sirach 21:24).

Seeking to know about others' personal business could cause disputes. This is because people often like to keep secret their confidential information, opinions, special relations, etc. In this way, they can feel reassured that no one will get access to such things.

Being reassured about this, they continue their confidential activities (expressing opinions, chat with others, writings, etc.), unaware that others may violate this privacy and get access to their personal information.

How many cases of divorce have occurred because the wife, for example, intruded into her husband's privacy by searching his clothes or checking messages on his mobile phone? In this case, the wife may be searching for things that could distress her, and which at the same time could end her marriage. If she has doubts about her husband's behaviors, it would be better to start by speaking to him and allowing him to provide answers and get out of his crisis. This can help him stop whatever wrong he may have been doing.

In this age, some young people compete with one another to hack other people's phones, computers, and other data. How abhorrent this behavior is in the sight of Allah! It is spying and a violation of others' privacy.

We are required to respect the privacy of others. We would not want anybody to violate our privacy, so we should not do this to others.

## **126- Hastening to Do Good Deeds**

Several verses of the Quran explain the merits of hastening to do good deeds, such as:

**“And [mention] Zechariah, when he called to his Lord, ‘My Lord, do not leave me alone [with no heir], while you are the best of inheritors.’ So We responded to him, and We gave to him John, and amended for him his wife. Indeed, they used to hasten to good deeds and supplicate Us in hope and fear, and they were to Us humbly submissive,” (Al-Anbiya 21:89-90).**

**“Then we caused to inherit the Book those We have chosen of Our servants; and among them is he who wrongs himself, and among them is he who is moderate, and among them is he who is foremost in good deeds by permission of Allah. That [inheritance] is what is the great bounty,” (Fatir 35:32).**

God Almighty has also invited us to move quickly toward good deeds in certain other verses, such as:

**“Race toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and earth, prepared for those who believed in Allah and His messengers. That is the bounty of Allah which He gives to whom He wills, and Allah is the possessor of great bounty,” (Al-Hadid 57:21).**

**“Indeed, the righteous will be in pleasure, On adorned couches, observing. You will recognize in their faces the radiance of pleasure. They will be given to drink [pure] wine [which was] sealed. The**

**last of it is musk. So for this let the competitors compete,”** (Al-Mutaffifin 83:22-26).

Similarly, many verses of the Bible discuss this manner, such as:

**“Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it,”** (Psalms 34:14).

**“Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good,”** (Romans 12:9).

**“Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it,”** (I Peter 3:11).

Truly, doing good deeds is a good manner, and hastening to do good deeds is another good manner.

The person who has this manner is very interested in doing good deeds, repenting, and returning to God, knowing that they will be rewarded by God for this. When we do good deeds, God knows how keen we are to please Him. We should not only do these good deeds and repent before God in an everyday way, but rather we should hasten to do this to prove our truthfulness in pleasing Him.

We have to teach our children to hasten to do good deeds, and to reward them for this so that they can learn that God and His messenger love this manner. Children have to hasten to do good deeds to be among those who God is pleased with.

## 127- Helping Others

Helping others is one of the good manners that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has emphasized. It means we should be ready to serve others when we are asked.

The prophet said: **“If anyone relieves a Muslim believer from one of the hardships of this worldly life, Allah will relieve him of one of the hardships of the Day of Resurrection. If anyone makes it easy for the one who is indebted to him (while finding it difficult to repay), Allah will make it easy for him in this worldly life and in the Hereafter, and if anyone conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah helps His slave as long as he helps his brother.”**

Quranic verses also say we must take the lead in helping whoever seeks protection, even if they are unbelievers.

Allah says: **“And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allah. Then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know,”** (At-Tawba 9:6).

This is the highest level of humane feelings, which do not differentiate between a believer or an unbeliever when it comes to seeking protection. This is because when you protect someone, you may protect their life or the lives of those with them. This manner encourages us to never give up on any human being who needs us.

Many verses in the Bible mention this manner, such as:

**“But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil,”** (Luke 6:35).

**“If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies,”** (I Peter 4:11).

**“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in the power of your hand to do so,”** (Proverbs 3:27).

**“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink,”** (Romans 12:20).

We have to teach our children how to help others. We should not pamper them to the extent that they become selfish and only think of themselves. They should be raised in the spirit of cooperation, gallantry, and manliness. This is the manner of helping others.

This manner is not only about financial assistance. We have to extend our hand to help whoever is in need. If we find someone who cannot cross the street on their own, or who is unable to carry their belongings, or who cannot do their job, or who does not know how to write something they are requested to, we have to help them. Our day-to-day life is full of countless examples. We must remember his good manner whenever we find someone in need. Hasten to help others draw nearer to God and comply with His ordinances.

## 128- Walking

Walking has ethical guidelines stated in the Quran. Allah says: **“Then is one who walks fallen on his face better guided or one who walks erect on a straight path?”** (Al-Mulk 67:22). The verse implicitly invites us to move forward in a way that pleases Allah and His messenger, and to think twice before taking any path that may anger Allah, and to seek to attain His pleasure.

The Bible refers to the manner of walking in the verse: **“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up,”** (I Corinthians 13:4).

The way that we walk has a certain etiquette described in the Quran, as stated in Luqman’s instructions to his son: **“And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys,”** (Luqman 31:19). He instructs his son to walk at a moderate pace.

Another verse says: **“And do not walk upon the earth exultantly. Indeed, you will never tear the earth [apart], and you will never reach the mountains in height,”** (Al-Isra 17:37). It teaches us not to walk proudly, but rather be moderate in our pace in such a way that we respect ourselves and make others respect us.

While walking, we will certainly meet people. So God teaches us the following: **“And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet [in return] with one better than it or [at least] return it [in a like manner]. Indeed, Allah is ever, over all things, an Accountant,”** (An-Nisa 4:86). The verse orders us to greet whomever we meet

while walking. If we meet passers-by or peopling sitting, we have to greet them.

The prophet taught us to smile in the face of others, saying: **“Your smiling in the face of your brother is charity.”** So we have to smile in the face of others while walking. Smiling is one of the etiquettes of walking and meeting people.

Let us learn all the above ethics and etiquette related to walking, and teach them to our children.

## 129- Supporting

This means supporting others to overcome hardships. It is one of the Attributes of Allah, Who says: **“And We have already sent messengers before you to their peoples, and they came to them with clear evidences; then We took retribution from those who committed crimes, and incumbent upon Us was support of the believers,”** (Ar-Rum 30:47).

Many other verses tell us explicitly about it. Additionally, Allah has asked us in several verses of the Quran to support Him, His messenger, and those who have rights, such as:

**“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet,”** (Muhammad 47:7).

**“Why do you not help each other?”** (As-Saffat 37:25).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also urged us to support others, saying: **“Help your brother whether he is an oppressor or an oppressed.’ A man said: ‘O Allah’s messenger! I will help him if he is oppressed, but if he is an oppressor, how shall I help him?’ The prophet said: ‘By preventing him from oppressing (others), for that is how to help him.’”**

In the above *hadith*, the prophet has set principles for supporting others. Accordingly, we have to:

1. Help the oppressed by standing by them until we restore their rights and remove the oppression.

2. Help your oppressing brother or friend by preventing them from oppressing others.

The manner of supporting does not include helping the oppressor to oppress others, but rather to try to prevent their oppression against others. Not all those who disagree with you are opponents. They may be your best friends who are trying to make you understand that you are wrong, and want you to stop your oppression. Satan will try to convince you that this person preventing you from oppression neither loves you nor wants good for you. However, this person could be the most faithful person to you when they support you by explaining that you are wrong.

We see this almost every day. Some of your friends, when blamed for something wrong they did, may get angry with you and accuse you of not standing by them. This is because you are telling them that they were wrong. Perhaps you may be the only one who actually supports and cares for them because you try to make them understand their mistake and stop their unacceptable behavior.

We frequently see parents who do not support their married children in the correct way during disputes with their spouse. They support their son or daughter, even if their child is the one at fault. The result is a rise in divorce rates. Many divorce cases take place only weeks or months after marriage because their families fail to understand how to give support in the right way. True support is making the husband or wife understand their mistake, reconsider their view, and apologize to the other side. If we understand the true meaning of the manner of supporting, many cases of divorce and other lawsuits that have flooded our courts could have been avoided.

The prophet said: **“Religion is sincerity (or advice).”** So we have to advise each other and never stop helping those who need our

support. We can provide support by using our power, financial aid, ability to achieve something, ability to end complaints, and so on. We have to move through the world feeling that our message is to support those who need our help. We should not hesitate to practice this good manner.

The manner of supporting others is established in the Bible, such as:

**“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep,”** (Romans 12:15).

**“Everyone helped his neighbor, And said to his brother, ‘Be of good courage!’”** (Isaiah 41:6).

**“And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me’”** (Matthew 25:40).

**“Everyone helped his neighbor, And said to his brother, ‘Be of good courage!’”** (Isaiah 41:6).

**“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God,”** (I Peter 4:10).

## 130- Consoling

Consoling is a good manner held by someone who understands the essence of the message of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Advising one another with truth and patience is a form of consolation. Allah loves to see His servants consoling one another.

Allah says: **“If good touches you, it distresses them; but if harm strikes you, they rejoice at it. And if you are patient and fear Allah, their plot will not harm you at all. Indeed, Allah is encompassing of what they do,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:120).

**“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers. If a wound should touch you – there has already touched the [opposing] people a wound similar to it. And these days [of varying conditions] We alternate among the people so that Allah may make evident those who believe and [may] take to Himself from among you martyrs – and Allah does not like the wrongdoers,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:139-140).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: **“The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever.”**

Consoling can take many forms, such as financial support, using your high position to help others, physical support, providing services, advising and guiding, praying and seeking God’s forgiveness, and feeling empathy for others.

I remember when I was a child, people used to have warmer feelings for each other than they do now. You would see neighbors and friends consoling one another in their grief and rejoicing with one another in their times of happiness. Now you can see people who do not know their neighbors, even though the Quran and the prophet's *Sunnah* (Prophet Muhammad's sayings, acts, and approvals) stress the rights of neighbors – including consoling them and standing by them.

We need to console one another. Part of this manner means people need to make things easy for each other. Yet we can see some behaviors that are not consistent with this manner. When someone dies and their relatives book a hall at a mosque to receive mourners, they may insist on shaking hands with everyone entering or exiting the hall. This could cause congestion inside the hall. It would be easier if they shake hands only with those who are arriving. That way, if someone wants to leave for any reason, they can exit without shaking hands. Allah says: **“And Allah wants to lighten for you [your difficulties]; and mankind was created weak,”** (An-Nisa 4:28).

We have to make things easy for each other. Also, if someone cannot come for any reason to offer their condolences, would a text message be sufficient? Definitely yes, in my opinion. So why do we insist that everyone must come to offer their condolences at such events?

Several verses of the Bible address the manner of consoling, such as:

**“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep,”** (Romans 12:15).

**“If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink,”** (Proverbs 25:21).

**“For whatever things were written before were written for**

**our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope,” (Romans 15:4).**

**“Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another... that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God,” (Romans 15:5-6).**

**“That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another,” (I Corinthians 12:25).**

**“Therefore comfort one another with these words,”**  
(I Thessalonians 4:18).

**“Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing,” (I Thessalonians 5:11).**

Let us make things easy for people, so that Allah will make things easy for us. Let us console one another, advise one another in truth, and advise one another in patience.

## 131- Persistence

A persistent person knows that having this manner can impact their life considerably. This person also knows that having prayers and other acts of worship prescribed at specific times throughout the day or the year is an invitation for persistence.

A Muslim is required to persist in performing prayer (*salah*), giving compulsory charity (*zakah*), observing fasting (*sawm*), and maintaining ties of kinship.

This is why I consider persistence to be a manner that you can learn through the regular performance of prayer. This helps people regularly do their work, sports, exercises, studies, maintaining bonds of kinship, and spending in charity.

We find several verses of the Bible to this effect, such as:

**“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication”**  
(Acts 1:14).

**“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers,”** (Acts 2:42).

**“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,”** (Acts 2:46).

I think the person who regularly does good deeds holds this good manner as well.

## 132- Advising

Is advising a manner? Yes. It is a state of being that accompanies a person wherever they go. They advise people in what is right, forbid them from what is wrong, love good for them, and never want them to fall into error. This is because a trustworthy adviser follows what Allah and His messenger have ordered. The prophet was sent with this manner. The evidence is in this verse: **“And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:104).

Allah, Exalted be He, has set criteria for Prophet Muhammad’s nation (*Ummah*) for how to be the best of peoples that have ever emerged among humanity, as long as they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong.

Allah says: **“You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:110).

**“They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and hasten to good deeds. And those are among the righteous,”** (Al-i-Imran 3:114).

Many other verses discuss the merit of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. Yet the first principle of this concept is to invite people to it through wisdom and good advice, as Allah has ordered his prophet to do:

**“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided,”** (An-Nahl 16:125).

**“There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion,”** (Al-Baqara 2:256).

So this must follow what Allah has guided us in the verse: **“... and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience,”** (Al-Asr 103:3).

Also, advice should be delivered leniently and not harshly.

Allah says: **“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him],”** (Al-i-Imran 3:159).

Therefore, advice here is the concept of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong and giving good instruction, and not in a way that involves harshness, rigidity, a loud voice when preaching, or haughtiness. The manner must be practiced through tolerance, leniency, simplicity, advising one another in truth, and showing what is wrong in a gentle way that motivates a positive response from the one you are speaking to.

Allah, Glory be to Him, has also recommended that we do this with good words. Allah says: **“Have you not considered how Allah presents an example, [making] a good word like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and its branches [high] in the sky?”** (Ibrahim 14:24).

We have to understand the true image of this manner. The person who practices it is not a policeman or a cleric who guides people, but rather a friend or a trustworthy adviser, one who is equal or perhaps lesser in knowledge than the people they are advising. And they advise each other with kind, motivating words.

In the application of this manner, a person may continue to advise others, hoping for a positive response, but they should not necessarily commit themselves to achieving results. This is based on the verse: **“Indeed, [O Muhammad], you do not guide whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He is most knowing of the [rightly] guided,”** (Al-Qasas 28:56).

So if we advise each other, we have to pray for the person we address and for ourselves that God may guide both of us. It is all about doing your best in advising, without pinning your hopes on the results.

The manner of advising is rooted in the Bible and we can find it in many verses, such as:

**“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye,”** (Psalms 32:8).

**“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness,”** (Galatians 6:1).

I hope people will advise one another in truth and patience, enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong. This is the path to reforming society.

Imagine if your child’s friends do not give them advice when they make a mistake. Is this not a danger to your child? If your child considers drinking alcohol, God forbid, wouldn’t you want a friend with them at that moment to advise them on the right thing to do?

In my opinion, this is the true criterion of an authentic friend. They are the one who advises me in good and encourages me to abandon whatever does not please God Almighty.

That is why the prophet has drawn our attention to this issue, saying: **“Man follows his friend’s religion, you should be careful who you take for friends.”** This advice recommends that you make friends with someone you want to be like. If they find you doing good, they will encourage you. If not, they will advise and help you to do good and avert evil.

We are all required to hold fast to this manner. It is the main reason for God making us the best community that has been raised up for mankind. May Allah guide us to this.

## 133- Cleanliness

The person who has this manner likes to be clean and pure, and likes to keep all the things around them clean as well. They like to bathe, wear perfume, and keep the spaces they inhabit clean, and they are keen to do this, doing it readily and not begrudgingly. Cleanliness is the beginning of communication with God. The ablution you make for prayer is proof that God Almighty likes purification and cleanliness.

Many verses of the Bible tackle this manner, such as:

**“Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,”** (II Corinthians 7:1).

The Old Testament of the Bible discusses in detail the methods of cleaning one’s body, such as taking a bath, washing the body and clothes, not touching impure things (Numbers 19, Leviticus 11, and Leviticus 15). The New Testament summarizes this in the verse: **“For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church,”** (Ephesians 5:29).

The New Testament moved from the concept of bodily to spiritual cleanliness, for the former is hygienic whereas the latter is spiritual and heavenly.

It says: **“Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man. ... Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man,”** (Matthew 15:11, 17-18).

The current generations must understand that cleanliness is a good manner and not something luxurious. A true believer is the one who believes that cleanliness comes from faith.

I am astonished when I see someone in a fabulous car throwing their food leftovers or bags from the window, polluting the environment and doing harm to others. This behavior is far indeed from what we are invited to do. The danger of this is that we will get accustomed to living in places where we are surrounded by dirty things scattered everywhere, to the point that they will not even notice them despite their dangers.

Cleanliness is the start of being civilized and reaching a higher level of living and health standards. God wants good for us, and therefore needs us to have cleanliness as one of our basic manners.

## 134- Being Well-Organized

Creating and managing the various aspects of our lives in an orderly way is a divine action that reveals the power of God, Who has created the universe and put it in order. Allah says:

**“It is not allowable for the sun to reach the moon, nor does the night overtake the day, but each, in an orbit, is swimming,”** (Ya-Sin 36:40).

**“Indeed, all things We created with predestination,”** (Al-Qamar 54:49).

Many Quranic verses tell us that everything with Allah is by due proportion and measure. Also, Allah has organized many things in life and set rules and controls for us to comply with, instructing us to be well-organized in our daily affairs. Prayer is prescribed to be performed with a specified number of units (*rak'at*) five times a day. Fasting and the Hajj pilgrimage are performed following a specific order and at certain times. Regarding compulsory charity (*zakah*), Allah says: **“And those within whose wealth is a known right For the petitioner and the deprived,”** (Al-Ma'arij 70:24-25).

Even intercourse between a husband and wife is forbidden at certain times, such as during the woman's menstrual period, during the fasting hours of the holy month of Ramadan, and while being in the sacred state of *ihram* that a pilgrim enters for Hajj or *Umrah* pilgrimage.

God has prescribed order for us. He has regulated the lawful foods we can eat and others we should avoid, and has set rules for the distribution of inheritance, marriage, divorce, and many other things.

All the above tell us that the well-mannered person is well-organized too. The prophet has stressed this manner. Well-organized nations have succeeded and made progress. God loves to see us well-organized, making progress, and successful.

The heavenly religions have asserted the manner of being well-organized. Here are some quotes from the Bible to this effect:

**“Let all things be done decently and in order,”** (I Corinthians 14:40).

**“Withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly,”** (II Thessalonians 3:6).

**“Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme,”** (I Peter 2:13).

**“For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies,”** (II Thessalonians 3:11).

Let us teach our children to be well-organized so that they will have this manner when they grow up, and they will be of benefit to both themselves and their nation. Arriving at school on time, doing homework, respecting law and order, and respecting traffic laws are all rules of order and organization we should comply with.

God’s messengers (peace be upon them) have invited us to this good manner. A well-organized person is one who knows the path to maintaining good character traits.

## 135- Self-Reproach

A self-reproachful person is well-mannered because they have done their best to purify themselves until they have reached the level of a reproachful soul (*al-nafs al-lawwamah*). This is a person who frequently criticizes themselves for doing anything that does not please God and His messenger. Doing so pushes this kind of person to repent and do good deeds, in order to reform. A self-reproachful soul moves a person to repent and seek refuge with God, Who swears by it:

**“I swear by the Day of Resurrection, And I swear by the reproaching soul [to the certainty of resurrection]. Does man think that We will not assemble his bones? Yes. [We are] Able [even] to proportion his fingertips,”** (Al-Qiyama 75:1-4).

Thus, God sees self-reproach as a good manner, motivating us to try to refine our souls to reach the level of self-reproaching. So if we do something wrong, we have to repent after critiquing ourselves.

Before the Quran, the Bible encouraged self-accountability in several verses, such as:

**“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you,”** (I Timothy 4:16).

**“Whoever has no rule over his own spirit Is like a city broken down, without walls,”** (Proverbs 25:28).

**“For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged,”** (I Corinthians 11:31).

Let us learn how to reassess our deeds. If we feel that we did something wrong, we have to return to God. I think this also applies to our social and business relations.

We have to reproach ourselves when we do anything wrong, reform whatever we can, render unto people their due rights, lift oppression from whoever we have wronged, etc. This is the reproachful soul, a manner that God and His messenger love.

Our children must learn that they are not immune to error. What is more important is to reassess what they have done, apologize, and amend their mistakes. Thus, they can develop a reproachful soul within themselves. This soul can protect a person who has it, and it will bring them nearer to what pleases God Almighty.

## 136- Moderation

Moderation is one of the manners that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent with, as clearly stated in Allah's saying:

**“And thus we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you. And We did not make the *qiblah* which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels. And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allah has guided. And never would Allah have caused you to lose your faith. Indeed Allah is, to the people, Kind and Merciful,”** (Al-Baqara 2:143).

In the beginning, Muslims are a nation (*Ummah*) which is characterized by the Arabic word *wasatiyah*, which denotes meanings of moderation, taking the middle way, etc. God loves to see us being moderate in our behavior and adopting this manner as an approach in our lives. Allah says:

**“And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck or extend it completely and [thereby] become blamed and insolvent,”** (Al-Isra 17:29).

**“And [they are] those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or sparingly but are ever, between that, [justly] moderate,”** (Al-Furqan 25:67).

The above verse teaches us how to maintain a moderate way of spending.

God Almighty wants us to be moderate in our expenditures, lives,

relationships, and even in eating and drinking, saying: **“And eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess,”** (Al-A’raf 7:31). This is proof that moderation is a manner or principle required in all aspects of life. We have to understand that it is a divine order and we have no option except to obey and act accordingly. So let us reassess our positions to see whether or not we have this manner, or if we are excessive in some aspects of our lives.

We must also teach this manner to our children and make sure it is one of the things we have taken into account while building their personality in a way that pleases God and His messenger. When our children have this manner, it will be reflected in their behaviors and relationships. This manner will make our children moderate in dealing with others. It will also draw them nearer to people, who will rejoice because of it.

Moderation is required in everything. We should neither abandon prayer nor stay all day long praying in the mosque. Performing the five compulsory acts of worship is sufficient. If you want to add some optional acts of worship (*naflah*), this should not affect your normal life.

You may find a lazy person who does not like to go to work, and another workaholic who exhausts themselves working two shifts a day without taking care of their health or their family. Taking a middle way is recommended. One should work and at the same time rest and give due time to one’s family.

In this context I feel compelled to mention the following prophetic *hadith*: **“It was narrated from Anas that there was a group of the Companions of the Prophet, one of whom said: ‘I will not marry women.’ Another said: ‘I will not eat meat.’ Another said: ‘I will not sleep on a bed.’ Another said: ‘I will fast and not break my**

**fast.’ News of that reached the Messenger of Allah and he praised Allah then said: ‘What is the matter with people who say such and such? But I pray and I sleep, I fast and I break my fast, and I marry women. Whoever turns away from my Sunnah [action following the example of the prophet] is not of me.’”**

Many verses of the Bible call for moderation, such as:

**“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith,”** (Romans 12:3).

**“Do not be overly righteous, Nor be overly wise: Why should you destroy yourself?”** (Ecclesiastes 7:16).

**“Do not be overly wicked, Nor be foolish: Why should you die before your time? It is good that you grasp this, And also not remove your hand from the other; For he who fears God will escape them all,”** (Ecclesiastes 7:17-18).

**“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also,”** (James 2:26).

Moderation is a good manner that keeps us away from intolerance, fanaticism, and extremism, and makes us appear reasonable and wise before others.

All our behaviors, including spending, eating, drinking, raising children, our beliefs, and even our acts of worship should be performed in moderation. We may have fallen short in regards to raising the coming generations so that they have this manner and others.

If there are calls for the development of religious discourse, priority should be given to the role of good manners as ordained for us to improve our relations. This will develop a new culture of productivity, cooperation, and moderation that will prevail across society.

## 137- Faithfulness

By faithfulness (*wafa'*), I mean the common meaning found in our lives when we recognize and appreciate someone's favor and wish to return it. This is like a child's feeling of faithfulness toward their parents, teachers, and tutors. The child feels they owe them, and wants to thank them and return their favor by any means. This is a noble character trait because it implies gratitude, appreciation, and recognition of others' rights. It combines these manners to produce a loyal, faithful person.

We usually refer to such a person in our traditional saying as "*tamar feeh el-kheir*" (he recognizes the favor). It means that the person you did a favor remembers it, feels they owe you, and wishes to return this favor to you or to your children in a way that reflects their recognition and desire to return the favor in full appreciation. This is a faithful person.

Some animals, like dogs, are also faithful. The dog is loyal to its owner who feeds and cares for it, to the extent that it may get depressed and lose the desire to live if its owner dies. Faithfulness among spouses is the recognition that their partner treats them well, and the desire to return this favor through similar treatment.

The best manifestation of this manner lies in this Quranic verse: **"Is the reward for good [anything] but good?"** (Ar-Rahman 55:60).

We have to teach our children and those around us how to be faithful, recognize the favor of others, and return this favor with a better one if possible. A traditional Arabic saying says: "I am the slave of the one who teaches me a single letter of the alphabet." This proverb reflects

the meaning of recognition and faithfulness to your teachers, a feeling that makes you like a slave to them as a way of returning the favor.

The Bible stresses the manner of faithfulness in several verses, such as:

**“When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed,”** (Ecclesiastes 5:4).

**“But if you abstain from vowing, it shall not be sin to you. That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform, for you voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth,”** (Deuteronomy 23:22-23).

**“Better not to vow than to vow and not pay,”** (Ecclesiastes 5:5).

**“Everyone helped his neighbor,”** (Isaiah 41:6).

**“For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me,”** (Matthew 25:35-36).

**“His mercy is as welcome in time of distress as clouds of rain in time of drought,”** (Sirach 35:26).

To attain the manner of faithfulness, we have to teach our children how to be grateful, respect others, appreciate whoever does them a favor, reward good for good, and recognize favors. All these are behaviors our children could practice that would help them attain the manner of faithfulness. If we do this, we will be sending good, constructive members of society out into the world; young people who can be examples of faithfulness to their country and families. These civilized manners could reform societies.

## 138- Fulfilling Contracts

This means each party to a contract is committed to fulfilling the terms and conditions stated therein.

It is a great manner that drives nations to progress. The non-fulfillment of contracts has resulted in millions of legal disputes examined before the courts.

We are sorely lacking this manner to a great extent, because we have not taught our children and ourselves that God sent prophets for this purpose. It is part and parcel of our religion. The opposite of this manner is violating our commitments or procrastinating when the time comes to fulfill them.

Allah, Exalted be He, has explicitly called for fulfilling contracts, saying:

**“O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts,”** (Al-Ma’ida 5:1).

**“And fulfill the covenant of Allah when you have taken it, [O believers], and do not break oaths after their confirmation while you have made Allah, over you, a witness. Indeed, Allah knows what you do,”** (An-Nahl 16:91).

**“And do not approach the property of an orphan, except in the way that is best, until he reaches maturity. And fulfill [every] commitment. Indeed, the commitment is ever [that about which one will be] questioned,”** (Al-Isra 17:34).

Many other verses discuss the fulfillment of contracts and pledges.

I challenge anyone to show me a lesson in school or university that

teaches this manner to our children. How then can we expect them to be committed to this manner?

The situation requires us to pay due attention to this manner, which constitutes the lifeline and backbone of religion and which is given great importance in the heavenly messages.

We find several verses in the Bible regarding this manner, such as:

**“And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two,”** (Matthew 5:41).

**“Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house,”** (Matthew 5:15).

The Bible also explains that Jephthah the Gileadite fulfilled his words (Judges 11), while Samson lost his strength and was humiliated due to his lack of discipline and failure to exercise self-control (Judges 16).

The message of this manner is that every party to a contract shall fulfill their commitments in a quantitative, qualitative, and timely manner. Some governments have succeeded in attracting investments by fulfilling their commitments with investors, and not creating hardships or demanding things that are not stated in their contracts or stipulated by law. The violation of a contract is deemed an abuse of power and constitutes the non-fulfillment of its terms and conditions.

This manner is founded on honesty, farsightedness, gaining the trust of others, building future relations, and promoting the trade name of the person, institution, or the state. This will definitely bear fruit for whoever understands how great this manner is.

Once, I was participating in a religious seminar. A revered cleric spoke about the deferred part of the dowry (*mu'akhar al-sadaq*), a sum of money which is usually recorded in marriage contracts. The

majority of the participants believed that it should only be paid in the event of divorce. But the sheikh told us that it is “the remainder of the dowry” which the bride and her family agree to defer as a kind of making things easy for the groom. The surprise for the participants was to learn that the deferred part of the dowry must be paid to the wife whenever it is available to the husband, out of his fulfillment of his pledge and contract. They also came to understand that delaying its payment is undesirable because it is a payable debt, and the value of the currency may decrease over time in a way that could affect the wife’s rights.

So let anyone who has a deferred dowry in his marriage contract hasten to pay it, in fulfillment of the contract.

Let us start holding ourselves accountable before we are held accountable. Let us ask ourselves whether we have fulfilled our contracts. This will be our first step toward having this good manner.

## 139- Giving Just Measure

The good manner of giving just measure means that you must not cheat or shortchange anyone. When you measure, you must give full measure and not any less; when you weigh, weigh with an even balance.

According to my understanding, the broader meaning relates to giving everyone their due rights. By following this manner, transactions shall be precise and will flourish, because having consistently accurate transactions encourages more business relations among the parties involved.

Allah, Exalted be He, ordered us to give just measure, saying: **“And O my people, give full measure and weight in justice and do not deprive the people of their due and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption,”** (Hud 11:85).

God sent His messengers to invite us to this manner, which implies values of honesty and truthfulness.

When an order is issued, it must be followed, and we are not allowed to do go against it. In this case, the opposite of giving just measure would be giving less than is due.

Allah says: **“Woe to those who give less [than due], Who, when they take a measure from people, take in full. But if they give by measure or by weight to them, they cause loss,”** (Al-Mutaffifin 83:1-3).

**“And do not approach the orphan’s property except in a way that is best until he reaches maturity. And give full measure and weight in justice,”** (Al-An’am 6:152).

Several verses of the Bible invite people to give just measure, such as:

**“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you,”** (Luke 6:38).

**“For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the Lord your God,”** (Deuteronomy 25:16).

**“Dishonest scales are an abomination to the Lord, But a just weight is His delight,”** (Proverbs 11:1).

Giving just measure has an explicit meaning related to selling and buying. But it also applies to all of our relations between people. The teacher who grades exams has to give every student their just marks. The doctor who is paid for treatment should give their patients due care. The engineer and construction contractor should use the quantity and quality of materials they agreed upon in the contract. The worker should give their employer their due right by producing exactly what is required. All these are forms of giving just measure. Therefore, this manner is more comprehensive than merely weighing. Every one of us should imagine we have a scale for our relations and business activity, and we should give people what they are owed so as to fulfill our agreements with them, in quantity and quality, and not any less.

Don't you agree with me that nations grow and prosper by having the manner of giving just measure? Has God willed for us anything other than this? Through our religious discourse, we must educate society about this manner – at school and in the media – so that people will become familiar with a great manner and its abundant benefits for us. Is there any reason not to?

## 140- Fulfillment of Vows

A person may vow something to God by saying: I pledge this thing for God Almighty to be satisfied with me. This vow can be accompanied with a wish, such as success on an exam, recovery from a disease, etc., or it could be in gratitude to God for surviving something, or thanking Him in general. It can also simply be a vow that is not associated with anything else except to draw near to God and thank Him.

Several examples are mentioned in the Quran regarding the fulfilment of vows, such as: “[**Mention, O Muhammad**], **when the wife of ‘Imran said, ‘My Lord, indeed I have pledged to You what is in my womb, consecrated [for Your service], so accept this from me. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing,’**” (Al-i-Imran 3:35)

God also ordered Maryam (peace be upon her) not to respond to anyone who would speak to her after she had given birth to Jesus Christ (peace be upon him). God ordered her to say that she vowed to Him abstention, saying: “**So eat and drink and be contented. And if you see from among humanity anyone, say, ‘Indeed, I have vowed to the Most Merciful abstention, so I will not speak today to [any] man,’**” (Maryam 19:26).

Allah, Exalted be He, taught us that a vow is very serious, obligatory, and must be fulfilled.

Allah says: “**And whatever you spend of expenditures or make of vows – indeed, Allah knows of it. And for the wrongdoers there are no helpers,**” (Al-Baqara 2:270).

“**They [are those who] fulfill [their] vows and fear a Day whose evil will be widespread,**” (Al-Insan 76:7).

Likewise, the Bible states:

**“When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed,”** (Ecclesiastes 5:4).

**“Better not to vow than to vow and not pay,”** (Ecclesiastes 5:5).

**“When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you,”** (Deuteronomy 23:21).

**“You will make your prayer to Him, He will hear you, And you will pay your vows,”** (Job 22:27).

**“Offer to God thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High,”** (Psalms 50:14).

Fulfillment of our vows is one of the manners Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent to perfect. This is because it denotes the important values of fulfilling a word or pledge, which are characteristics of a Muslim.

Allah says: **“And fulfill [every] commitment. Indeed, the commitment is ever [that about which one will be] questioned,”** (Al-Isra 17:34).

So let us be careful when making a vow because its fulfillment is obligatory in Islam. We must not pledge something to God unless we mean it and can fulfill it.

The person who has this manner understands this fact well. If we are required to fulfill contracts and commitments with people, what about a vow we pledge to fulfill before Allah? It is obligatory. God Almighty does not accept anything less than having a vow made to Him fulfilled. Otherwise, the punishment for it will be grave. Therefore, the person who has this manner must be very careful when making a vow. Once it is made, it must be fulfilled.

## Epilogue

Forgive me if I fell short in any regard due to the fact that my understanding is limited. If I made mistakes, this was – of course – coming from a place of goodwill. If I was too brief in my writing, this was done to keep the book from growing any longer.

I wish that our children were taught ethics in school, for such a class will prepare and raise up generations who are greatly needed by their homeland. It would also be better if ethics was taught from an Islamic-Christian perspective in one class, instead of the two different religion classes we have now. In this new ethics class, students could learn good manners, and Muslim and Christian students will get to know one another. This can build the cohesive homeland we aspire to have.

I would like to emphasize that, just as a journey has guide, good manners are the guide to Paradise. So whoever wants to make sure that they are on the right path should exert greater effort to recognize the path and understand the required manners, and see to what extent they are committed to them.

In accordance with Allah's invitation to us to reassess ourselves and pursue reform, I recommend the reader complete the exercise at the end of this book. All you need is to give yourself some time to evaluate yourself. Use a pencil to give yourself the rating you think you deserve for each manner, honestly and frankly. Ratings are arranged from Poor to Excellent. Then review your total to find the initial result that will show you where you stand in terms of your good manners. From this starting point, you should develop a plan for reform and for

drawing nearer to God. You should do this for each manner. Repeat this exercise whenever you can, so that you can measure the progress you have achieved.

Additionally, the official bodies concerned with information, education, preaching, and the media must also evaluate the morals in society in a similar way, so that they can get a sense of the real situation we face. Accordingly, there must be a studied approach to set the priorities and the methods that should be adopted by state bodies to elevate society's morals. This will benefit the public and boost the greater interests of the country. This will reflect a well-studied outlook toward better developing relationships within our society.

Finally, the state has to use its different tools to communicate with citizens directly and indirectly – whether through education, religious discourse, media, social media, or others – in pursuit of achieving the desired goals. Just as the state sets strategies to develop its economy and administration, it would be even better for us to also have a strategy to develop society.

I pray that God Almighty makes this book an act that draws me nearer to Him and that seeks His satisfaction.

**Mansour Amer**

## Self-Evaluation:

**Evaluate yourself by rating the level you feel you have achieved in each manner**

	Manner	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Result 0-10
1	Spending in the Way of God					
2	Perfection					
3	Making the Scales Heavy					
4	Respect					
5	Hoping for God's Rewards					
6	Dressing Modestly					
7	Doing Good (Benevolence)					
8	Sincerity (Faithfulness)					
9	Brotherhood (Fraternity)					
10	Politeness					
11	Satisfaction (or Satisfying Others)					
12	Asking Permission					
13	Seeking Help from God					
14	Getting Ready					
15	Uprightness (or Taking the Straight Path)					
16	Perseverance					
17	<i>Islah</i> (Settlement/Amendment/Reform)					
18	Giving Food					
19	Moderation and Not Committing Excess					
20	Apologizing					
21	Recognizing Favors					

	<b>Manner</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Result 0-10</b>
22	<b>Holding Fast to Allah</b>					
23	<b>Turning Away</b>					
24	<b>Giving Others Their Rights, with Respect</b>					
25	<b>Respecting Others</b>					
26	<b>Helping Those in Distress</b>					
27	<b>Making Space for Others</b>					
28	<b>Promoting Greeting (<i>As-Salam</i>)</b>					
29	<b>Giving to and Respecting the Petitioner</b>					
30	<b>Honoring Orphans</b>					
31	<b>Amity</b>					
32	<b>Trustworthiness</b>					
33	<b>Compliance (with God's Commands)</b>					
34	<b>Achievement</b>					
35	<b>Warning</b>					
36	<b>Listening and Paying Attention</b>					
37	<b>Altruism</b>					
38	<b>Righteousness</b>					
39	<b>Duty to Parents</b>					
40	<b>Following Excellent Patterns</b>					
41	<b>Deliberateness</b>					
42	<b>Smiling</b>					
43	<b>Bringing Glad Tidings</b>					
44	<b>Investigation</b>					
45	<b>Motivation</b>					
46	<b>Satisfaction</b>					

	<b>Manner</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Result 0-10</b>
47	<b>Taking Adornment</b>					
48	<b>Consultation</b>					
49	<b>Knowing One Another</b>					
50	<b>Cooperation</b>					
51	<b>Honoring the Sacred Ordinance of God</b>					
52	<b>Condoning</b>					
53	<b>Relieving Hardships</b>					
54	<b>Bounty (or Graciousness)</b>					
55	<b>Saying “God Willing” (Inshallah)</b>					
56	<b>Secrecy</b>					
57	<b>Reasoning</b>					
58	<b>Advising Each Other in Truth</b>					
59	<b>Humility</b>					
60	<b>Affection</b>					
61	<b>Distribution of the Estate</b>					
62	<b>Honoring God’s Words</b>					
63	<b>Making Things Easy</b>					
64	<b>Consoling Others</b>					
65	<b>Intercourse</b>					
66	<b>Loving Good Things</b>					
67	<b>Love for the Sake of God</b>					
68	<b>Caution</b>					
69	<b>Good Neighborliness</b>					
70	<b>Having Close Relationships</b>					
71	<b>Having Good Thoughts (Concerning God)</b>					

	<b>Manner</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Result 0-10</b>
72	Guarding Oaths					
73	Protecting Copyrights					
74	Forbearance					
75	Gratefulness					
76	Modesty					
77	Fearing God					
78	Lowering the Voice					
79	Repelling Evil With That Which Is Better					
80	Mentioning Good Qualities of Others					
81	Kindness					
82	Manliness					
83	Gentleness					
84	Delicate Feelings					
85	Asceticism					
86	Payment					
87	Confidentiality					
88	Representation of One's Religion					
89	Travelling					
90	Leniency					
91	Interceding					
92	Transparency					
93	Giving Testimony					
94	Gallantry					
95	Patience					
96	Truthfulness					

	<b>Manner</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Result 0-10</b>
97	<b>Purity of Heart and Loving Good for People</b>					
98	<b>Gracious Forgiveness</b>					
99	<b>Prayer</b>					
100	<b>Maintaining Bonds of Kinship</b>					
101	<b>Obedience</b>					
102	<b>Eating and Drinking</b>					
103	<b>Divorce</b>					
104	<b>Reassurance</b>					
105	<b>Justice and Fairness</b>					
106	<b>Self-Honor</b>					
107	<b>Determination</b>					
108	<b>Benevolence</b>					
109	<b>Modesty (Chastity)</b>					
110	<b>Forgiveness and Tolerance</b>					
111	<b>Work</b>					
112	<b>Visiting the Sick</b>					
113	<b>Lowering the Gaze</b>					
114	<b>Rejoicing and Making Others Rejoice</b>					
115	<b>Discernment</b>					
116	<b>Doing Good without Wishing Reward or Gratitude</b>					
117	<b>Contentment and Satisfaction</b>					
118	<b>Writing</b>					
119	<b>Restraining Anger</b>					
120	<b>Speaking</b>					

	<b>Manner</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Result 0-10</b>
121	Saying <i>masha'allah</i> – “What Allah Willed”					
122	Pledging Allegiance (to God and His messenger)					
123	Protection					
124	Reassessing Oneself					
125	Respecting Others' Privacy					
126	Hastening to Do Good Deeds					
127	Helping Others					
128	Walking					
129	Supporting					
130	Consoling					
131	Persistence					
132	Advising					
133	Cleanliness					
134	Being Well-Organized					
135	Self-Reproach					
136	Moderation					
137	Faithfulness					
138	Fulfilling Contracts					
139	Giving Just Measure					
140	Fulfillment of Vows					
<b>Calculate your score against a total of 1,400</b>						

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