



**SOCIAL  
ETIQUETTES IN ISLAM -II**

**UNIT: 19**

**SOCIAL ETIQUETTES  
IN ISLAM-II**

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**ISLAMIC CORRESPONDENCE COURSE**  
**(English)**

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## FOREWORD

Muslim communities all over the world are faced with a variety of challenges in their Dawah activities. One major challenge relates with the area of education. It is not easy to develop, in every community, an educational institution which may provide professional assistance and back up to members of community in acquiring Islamic knowledge and information. In some Muslim communities full time educational institutions have been established. In others, educational needs of the community are met through weekend programmes, seminars, symposia and other such activities.

Some Muslim communities have given serious thought to programmes of distance teaching, however, such programmes have not been materialized with proper know-how and professional assistance.

The Dawah Academy, at a humble level, is in the process of developing a series of correspondence courses in English and other languages. In order to develop a suitable introductory course on Islam as the way of life, we are introducing, at this point, material selected from existing Islamic literature.

Our next step will be to produce our own material in view of the needs of Muslim communities in various parts of the world. This will have two levels: first general level and second a post-graduate course on Islam. The present selection from Islamic literature deals with first level. This covers a variety of topics dealing with Islam as a complete way of life. We hope this course will provide initial information on important aspects of Islam.

We will greatly appreciate critical comments and observations of participants on this course. This will help us in development of our own material for both levels of study. Please do not hesitate to write to us if you have some suggestions to improve the material or methodology. Address all your observations at the following:

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## SOCIAL ETIQUETTES IN ISLAM II

### Etiquettes of Bringing up The Children

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

رب هب لي من لدنك طيبة انك سميع الدعاء (آل عمران - ٣٨)

*Rabbi hablī min ladunka dhurriyyatan tayyibatan innaka sami‘-ud-du‘a*

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

3. Do not feel downcast on the birth of a child. Strictly guard against feeling remorse or considering the birth of a child as a burden on account of financial hardship, ill-health or for any other reason.
4. Do not procure an abortion. Abortion or killing a child after birth are both acts of heinous barbarity, gruesome cruelty and extreme cowardice and entail ruination in this world and hereinafter. God affirms:

قد خسر الذين قتلوا اولادهم سنفها بغير علم

*Qad khasi-ralladhīna qatalū aulādahum safahan bighair-i-‘ilm.*

(6:140)

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

In an impressive condemnation of human short-sightedness, God has clearly forbidden the genocide of children:

ولا تقتلوا اولادكم خشية املاق نحن نرزقهم واياكم ان قتلهم

كان خطا كبيرا (فى اسرائيل - ٣١)

*Walātaqtulū aulādakum khashyata imlāq nahnu narzuquhum wa iyyākum innā qatlahum kāna khitaa‘n kabīra.*

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

On one occasion a companion (God be pleased with him) enquired from the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), “O Prophet of God (peace and blessing of Allah be upon you)! Which is the greatest sin”? The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: “Polytheism”. The companion (God be pleased with him) again asked: “And what next” The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) observed: “Disobedience to parents”. The companion (God be pleased with him) enquired the third time: “And which sin is the greatest next to it?” In answer to this, the Holy Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: “To kill your children fearing that they will share your sustenance.”

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

الله لا اله الا هو الحي القيوم لاتخذه سنة ولا نوم له ما فى السموت وما فى الارض من ذا الذى يشفع عنده الا باذنه يعلم ما بين ايديهم وما خلفهم ولا يحيطون بشىء من علمه الا بما شاء وسع كرسيه السموت والارض ولا يوده حفظهما وهو العلى العظيم (البقره- ٢٥٥)

*Allahu lā-illaha illahu-al-hayyul qayyum lā ta'khudhuhū sinatun wa lānaum lahu ma fīssamāwāti wa mā fil ard man dhalladhī yashfa'u indahu illa bi-idhnihī y'alamu mā baina aidīhim wa ma khalfahum wa la yuhītuna bi-shai'im-min 'ilmihī illa bimā shā'a wasī'a kursiyyu-hus-samāwati wal arda wa lā yaūduhū hifzuhumā wa huwal-'aliyyul 'azīm* (2:255)

Allah! There is no God save Him, the Alive, the Eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtaketh Him, unto Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is that intercedeth with Him save by His leave? He knoweth that which is in front of them and that which is behind them while they encompass nothing of His knowledge save that what He wills. His throne includeth the heavens and the earth and He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime, the Tremendous”.

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

ان ربكم الله الذى خلق السموت والارض فى ستة ايام ثم استوى على العرش يغشى الليل النهار يطلبه حثيثا والشمس والقمر والنجوم مسخرات بامره الا له الخلق والامر تبارك الله رب العالمين - ادعوا ربكم تضرعا وخفية انه لا يحب المعتدين (الاعراف ٥٣، ٥٥)

*Inna rabbaku-mulla-hulladhī khalaqas-samāwati wal-arda fī sittati-ayyāmin thummastawā 'alal 'arshi yughshilail-annahāra yatlubuhū hathīthan wash-shamsa walqamara wannu-juma musakharatin bi-amrih. Ala lahulkhalqu wal-amru. Tabarakallahu rabbul 'alamīn Ud'au rabbakum tadarru'an wa khufyah inna hū lā yuhibbul mu'tadīn.* (7 : 54-55)



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

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

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

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

In his work entitled *Tuhfa-tul-Wadud*, ‘Allama Ibn Qayyim observes: The significance of this act is that the proclamation of the Greatness and Glory of God should be the first to reach to ears of a human being. And the affirmation of belief which he will render in full consciousness later in order to enter the fold of Islam should be conveyed to him in the very first day of his life as a man is prompted to recite *Kalimah Tauhid* (Affirmation of belief

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<sup>1</sup>“*Umm-ul-Sibiyān*” refers to Epilepsy which develops in children due to polluted air. The children faint under the effect of this ailment.

in One God) at the time of his death. Another advantage of saying the *Adhan* and *Iqamat* in the ears of the child is that the devil, who lives in ambush planning to entrap the human being in trials, flees on hearing the sound of *Adhan* and before the devil can draw the soul of the child towards himself, the child is called towards Islam and worship of God.

7. After the *Adhan* and *Iqamat* get a date chewed by some pious man or woman and paste its pulp on the palate of the infant and ask that man or woman to offer a prayer invoking grace and blessings of God upon the child. Hadrat Asma (God be pleased with her) reports: "When 'Abdullah ibn Zubair (God be pleased with him) was born I put him in the lap of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked for a date, chewed it and applied his sacred saliva inside the mouth and pasted the chewed pulp of date on the palate of 'Abdullah ibn Zubair (God be pleased with him). Afterwards, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) offered a prayer invoking grace and blessings of God upon the child."

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

When Hadrat Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (may God be merciful to him) was blessed with a child, he asked for Meccan

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

date which was available in the home and requested a pious lady Umm 'Ali (may God show her mercy) to perform the *Tahnik*.

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

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

(*Abu Dawud*)

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

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

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

(*Muslim*)

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

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

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

11. Get the male child circumcised on the seventh day after birth. However, if for some reason the operation is put off, it is obligatory to get the circumcision performed before the male child reaches the age of seven. Circumcision is part of Islamic faith.

12. When the child learns to speak, teach him first of all to recite:  
*La ilaha illallahu.* (There is no god but Allah). The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed:

"When your offspring starts speaking, teach him to recite:— *La ilaha illallahu.* (There is no god but Allah and never

fear about his end. When the milk teeth are uprooted, order your child to observe prayers”.

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

الذى له ملك السموات والارض ولم يتخذ ولدا ولم يكن له شريك فى  
الملك وخلق كل شىء . فقدره تقديرا

*Alladhi lahu mulkussamāwāti wa lam yattakhidh waladan wa lam yakun lahu sharīkun fil mulki wa khalaqa kulla shaiin faqaddarahu taqdīrā.*

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

13. Feed the child on your breast-milk. The mother owes this obligation to the child. The Holy Qur’an has made repeated references to this favour of the mother to her child and has enjoined the pious to treat their mothers with extraordinary devotion in return for their favour. It is the duty of the mother to inculcate in the soul of the child belief in One God, devotion to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and love of religion along with the drops of her milk which she feeds to the child. She should make sure that the heart and soul of her child completely assimilates the spirit of religion. Do not ease your burden by transferring the duty of rearing the child to a nurse.

Perform this pleasant obligation of religion yourself and enjoy spiritual satisfaction and ecstasy.

14. Avoid frightening the children. The fright instilled in the mind of the child in the early years overshadows his mind and intellect for the remainder of his life and these children usually prove incapable of achieving extraordinary success in life.
15. Make it a point not to shout at, reproach or rebuke children on every trifling matter. Make an affectionate endeavour to train the children to form good habits with devotion and good sense instead of expressing annoyance or contempts on the faults of children. However, act in such a way that children must remain in fear that you will not tolerate any of their actions which do not conform to the dictates of religion.
16. Always treat your children with affection, love and tenderness. Keep them happy by providing for their needs and requirements according to your means. Promote sentiments of loyalty and devotion in your children.

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

Ahnaf ibn Qais (God be pleased with him) answered: "Amir-ul-Mominin, the offspring are the fruit of our hearts, a support for our backs; we are like the sky providing a protective shade over them; we are like a soft and harmless ground on which they recline. It is they who give us the incentive to perform great deeds. Hence if they demand anything from you, fulfil their demand with a generous heart. If they are stricken with sorrow,

alleviate their grief. Consequently they will love you and appreciate your paternal concern. Do not be an intolerable burden on them to the extent that they should in annoyance wish that you were better dead than alive and hate to come near you”.

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

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

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

On one occasion *Aqra'* ibn Habis (God be pleased with him) came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was at that time engaged in fondling Hadrat Hassan (God be pleased with him). *Aqra'* (God be pleased with him) felt rather surprised and submitted, “O Holy

Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) do you also fondle children. I have ten children and have never shown fondness to even one of them” — The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) raised his eyes and taking a look at Aqra’ observed: “If God has deprived your heart of kindness and affection, what can I do!”

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

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

18. Concentrate all your efforts to train and educate your children in piety and honesty and consider the greatest sacrifice too little to achieve this purpose. This is an obligation laid upon you by religion; it is a favour you owe to your children; and it is the



greatest good that you can do to yourself. The Holy Qur'an affirms:

ياايهاالذين آمنواقوانفسكم واهلكم نارا

*Yā-ayyuhalladhīna āmanu qū anfusakum va ahlīkum nārā.*

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

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

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

*(Mishkat)*

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

*(Muslim)*

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

When the children attain the age of seven years, teach them 'Namaz' and urge them to observe prayers. Take them to the mosque with you to arouse their interest. If the children neglect to observe prayers when they have attained the age of ten, administer suitable punishment to them. By word and action make it absolutely clear to them that you will not tolerate their evasion of saying prayers.

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

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

21. Always keep your children clean and neat. Take care that they are clean, neat and bathed. Keep their dress pure and clean. However, avoid excessive adornment or ostentation in dressing up children. Keep the dress of a female child simple and clean. Do not spoil the nature of your children by dressing them up in gaudy and flamboyant clothes.
22. Do not point out the faults of your children in the presence of others and strictly abstain from degrading or hurting the self-respect of your children.
23. Do not express your dismay at reforming your children in their presence. Instead praise them generously even for their ordinary virtues in order to boost up their morale. Make constant endeavours to encourage them, and to foster self-confidence and

boldness in them so that they may strive for the highest goals in the field of life.

24. Keep telling the children the stories of the Prophets (peace and blessings of Allah be upon them), tales of the pious people (God be pleased with them) and episodes of the courageous feats of the illustrious companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This must be considered an essential means of training, civilizing, character-building and arousing love for religion among the young and despite countless other preoccupations you must find some time to talk on these subjects with your children. Recite to them the Holy Qur'an in a sweet rhythmical voice frequently and on occasions relate to them the stirring stories and traditions of the life and work of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In the manner, you should try to inculcate in the hearts of the young warm sentiments of true love and devotion to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).
25. Let the children distribute food or money to the poor with their own hands sometimes so that the virtues of liberality, generosity and charity to the poor may develop in their hearts. On occasions, let brothers and sisters distribute shares of food or other eatables among themselves without your aid. This will create in them an awareness of the rights of others and accustom them to fair-dealing.
26. Do not comply with each illegitimate or non-genuine desire of the children. By means of patience and commonsense teach them to give up this habit. Be strict with them at times and do not turn them into obstinate and self-willed youngsters by showering excessive love upon them.

27. Avoid thundering and shouting at the highest pitch of your voice and urge the children to speak softly in a moderate tone and abstain from shouting or railing at each other.
28. Inculcate the habit of self-help in children. They should not look to the servants to do every little job for them. This habit makes the children lazy and crippled in some ways. Foster the habits of sturdiness, hard work and strenuous application among the children.
29. In the event of an altercation taking place among children, do not lend undue support to your own child. You must realise that the sentiments which you cherish in your heart for your child are exactly the same which other people have for their children. Keep in view the faults of your own child and in all untoward circumstances try to pinpoint the error and fault of your own child and then make an earnest endeavour to eliminate these childish shortcomings in a wise manner by exercising constant vigilance.
30. Show equal treatment to all your children and avoid going to extremes in the matter of behaving towards children. If you are naturally drawn towards a particular child then, of course, it can't be helped. Yet in behaviour and dispensation of requirements you must show equal treatment and evenhanded justice. Do not show distinctive favour to a child to the dismay of other children. This will foster inferiority complex, hatred and frustration and all this will finally erupt into rebellious conduct. These evil sentiments greatly retard the development of natural faculties of a child and leave an adverse effect on the moral and spiritual growth of the child's personality.

On one occasion Hadrat Bashir (God be pleased with him) took his son Hadrat No'man (God be pleased with him) to the

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

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

Hadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Amir (God be pleased with him) relates an episode from his own life as follows: "One day when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was present in our house, my mother called for me and said: "Come

here. I have something for you". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was watching. He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed to my mother, "What is it that you want to give to the child?" My mother submitted: "I wish to give him a date". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "If you had called the boy on the pretext of giving him something and in fact did not give him anything on his arrival, surely this sin of falsehood would have been added to the scroll of your deeds". *(Abu Dawud)*

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

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

33. Train and bring up your girls with a sense of great pleasure, spiritual satisfaction and in the spirit of religion. In return for this pious service anticipate from God that He will admit you to the uppermost level of Paradise". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed: "The man who patronises three daughters or three sisters, educates them and teaches them good manners and behaves kindly towards them till

they become independent of his care by the will of God, is entitled by God to enter Paradise". Thereupon a person submitted: "If there be only two daughters or two sisters?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed: "The same reward will be given for similar conduct toward two daughters or two sisters." Hadrat Ibn A'bbas (God be pleased with him) observes: "Had the people enquired about the reward for rearing one girl in this manner, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would have given the same glad tidings".

*(Mishkat)*

Hadrat 'Aishah (God be pleased with her) narrates, "One day a woman accompanied by two small girls came to visit me and begged me to give her something. I had only one date which I handed over to her. The woman divided the date into two halves and gave one half to each girl, leaving nothing to eat for herself. Afterwards she stood up and went out. The same moment the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) entered the house. I related the whole matter to him (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). On hearing the case, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "Any man who is put to trial on account of daughters being born to him and he comes out of the trial successful by virtue of showing good treatment to his daughters, these girls will serve him as a shield against the fire of Hell on the Day of Judgement".

*(Mishkat)*

34. Do not look down upon the female child, nor show preference to the boy over the girl in any matter. Treat both with equal love and behave towards both in an equal manner. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed: "Anyone who is blessed with the birth of a girl and does not look down upon her; neither shows preference to the boy over the girl nor

considers the boy in any way superior to the girl, such a man will surely be admitted into Paradise by God". *(Abu Dawud)*

35. Give the prescribed share to the girl out of your property willingly. This share is ordained by God and no one has the authority to increase or decrease the amount of this share. It does not behove a pious believer to make excuses in the matter of paying the share of the girl or to feel content by giving away some fraction of it according to his own personal views. Such an action is a breach of covenant with God as well as tantamount to offering an insult to the religion (God forbid!).
  
36. Along with these practical measures, say prayers from the depths of your soul and with sincere devotion of heart for your offspring. We may trust the Munificent and Kind God that He will not let earnest prayers offered by the parents out of the depth of their soul go unanswered.



## Etiquettes of Visiting the Patient

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"He who enquires after the health of an ailing Muslim brother will find a dwelling place on the highest level of Paradise". *(Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad)*

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

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

*(Tirmidhi)*

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

Hadrat 'Āisha bint Sa'ad (Allah be pleased with her) reports that her father related: "Once while in Mecca I fell gravely ill. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah upon him) came to enquire after my health. I submitted: "O Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! I am leaving behind a great deal of wealth and I have only one daughter. Should I will away two third of my wealth and leave one-third for my daughter". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "No". I submitted: "Should I then will away half of my property and leave half portion for my daughter"? The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "Yes, will away one third of your wealth and this is enough". Afterwards, the Holy Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) placed his hand on my forehead and passed it over my face and belly and then said the following prayer:

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

*(Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad)*

Hadrat Zaid b. Arqam (Allah be pleased with him) relates: "Once my eyes became sore. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) visited me to enquire after my

health and said : “Zaid what do you do when you are suffering from sore eyes”. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: “If you observe patience and endurance while you are afflicted with sore eyes, God shall admit you into Paradise as a reward for this”.

Hadrat Ibn ‘Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) states: “Whenever the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) visited a patient to enquire after his health the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to sit at the head of the ailing person and repeat the following prayer seven times:

اسال الله العظيم رب العرش العظيم ان يشفيك

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

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

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

Hadrat Jabir (Allah be pleased with him) reports that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) paid a visit to an old lady Umm as-Saib (God be pleased with her) to enquire after her health. Umm as-Saib (Allah be pleased with her) was shivering with intense fever. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired: “How are you feeling”? The lady submitted: “May God curse this fever which is oppressing me”. On hearing this, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: “Don’t curse the fever.

It purges the pious of sins just as the furnace smelts the iron and purifies it of rust”.  
(*Al-Adab-ul-Mufrad*)

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

اللهم اذهب الباس رب الناس اشفه وانت الشافي لا شفاء  
الا شفاء ك شفاء لا يغادر سقما (بخاري مسلم)

*Allahumma adhibil-ba’sa rabb-an-nāsi ishfihi wa antash-shāfi lā shifa’a illa shifa’uka shif’an lā yughādiru saqama.*

(*Bukhari, Muslim*).

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

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

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

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

Hadrat Ibrahim b. Abi Habla (God be merciful to him) relates: "Once my wife fell ill. In those days I used to pay frequent visits of Hadrat Umm al-Darda (God be pleased with her). Whenever I called on her, she used to enquire: "Say, how is your wife?" I answered: "She is still indisposed". Thereafter, she used to send for food. I sat down and dined at her home and then came back. One day, when I called on her and she enquired about my wife's health. I replied: "By the grace and favour of God, she has nearly recovered from her illness. Hadrat Umm al-Darda (God be pleased with her) thereupon observed: "When you used to say that your wife was unwell I used to arrange a meal for you. Now that she has gained her health, I need not arrange a meal for you".

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

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

Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came out of his house saying: "Thanks God Who saved the boy from Hell-Fire".  
(*Bukhari*)

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

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

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

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

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

## **ETIQUETTES OF MEETING EACH OTHER**

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



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

it with your own hands. If the other person does the same for you, thank him and pray for him:

مسح الله عنك ما تكره

*Massahallahu 'anka ma takrah.*

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

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

## ETIQUETTES OF BUSINESS

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

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

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

begging from others which might leave a stigma of begging on thy face on the Day of Judgement”.

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

6. Take your customers into confidence so that they may trust you as their well-wisher who will never deceive them. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed: "He who lived on lawful earnings, observed my Sunnah and did not cause mischief to the people will be admitted to Paradise". The people submitted: "O Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ! There is a great number of such people at the present time". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "Such people will exist even after me".

*(Tirmidhi)*

7. Be punctual. Arrive at your place of business in time and remain there steady. The Holy Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed: "Set out in search of livelihood and lawful earnings early in the morning, for work in the morning is auspicious and brings prosperity".
8. Work hard and demand hard and sincere work from your employees. Discharge your obligations towards your employees with selflessness and generosity and in a liberal and polite manner. Avoid scowling at them frequently or adopting an attitude of suspicion towards them in every matter. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "God never blesses a nation with piety where the weak do not get their right".
9. Be polite and liberal to your customers. Never be harsh to those who ask for loan from you neither disappoint them, nor press them unduly hard for return of your loan. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has affirmed:

"May God bless the person who observes politeness and courtesy in business-dealings and in demanding his money back."

*(Bukhāri)*

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

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

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

the dealers on weights and measures, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) warned:

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

ويل للمطففين الذين اذا اكتالوا على الناس يستوفون  
 واذا كالوهم او وزنوهم الا يظن اولئك انهم مبعوثون ليوم عظيم يوم يقوم  
 الناس لرب العالمين

*Wailullil mutaffifinal-ladhīna idhaktalū ‘alan-nasī yastaufūna wa idhā kalūhum auwazanūhum yūkhsirun’ alā yazunnu ū’lāika annahum mab’ūthūna liyaumin azīm. Yauma yaqumunnāsu li-rabbil’ālamīn.*

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

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

“O traders and businessmen! There is every chance of exaggeration and lie in selling your commodities. Hence compensate (your faults) by spending as much as you can (to help the poor and needy) (Abu Dawud)

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

يايها الذين امنوا هل ادلكم على تجارة تنجيكم من عذاب اليم تؤمنون  
 بالله ورسوله وتجاهدون في سبيل الله باموالكم وانفسكم ذلكم خير لكم ان  
 كنتم تعلمون (الصف ١٠-١١)

*Yā ayyuhalladhīna āmanū hal adullukum ‘ala tijaratin tunjikum  
 min ‘adhābin alīm. Tu‘minūna billāhi wa rasulīhi wa tujāhidūna  
 fī sabīlillāhi bi-amwālikum wa anfusikum dhalikum khairullakum  
 in kuntum ta‘lamūn. (61: 10-11)*

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



## ETIQUETTES OF REPENTANCE

1. Never lose hope of acceptance by God of your repentance and petition for forgiveness. Whatever the magnitude of your sins, purify your soul by offering repentance and be hopeful of God's mercy. Despair is the characteristic of unbelievers. It is the distinctive trait of the believers that they repent the most and under no circumstances do they lose hope of God's clemency. It is disastrous to succumb to dismay and lose hope of Allah's Mercy and clemency considering the magnitude of sins. The most outstanding quality of the favourites of Allah is that they do not stick to the wrong and guilt but admit their fault clearly and unconditionally. They are never supposed to be above faults and omissions, but when they commit any fault and realise the wrong done, they do all within their means to beg forgiveness from Allah and to purify themselves of that fault and misdeed.

والذين اذا فعلوا فاحشة او ظلموا انفسهم ذكروا الله فاستغفروا لذنوبهم ومن  
يعترف الذنوب الا الله ولم يصروا على ما فعلوا وهم يعلمون (آل عمران - ١٣٥)

*Walladhīna idhā fa'alū fāhishatan au zalamū anfusahum  
dhakarullāha fastaghfarū lidhunū bihim wa man  
yaghfirudhdhunūba illallāhu wa lam yasirru 'alā mā fa'alū wahum  
y'alamūn.* (3 : 135)

“And those who when they do an evil thing or wrong themselves remember Allah and implore forgiveness for their sins—who forgiveth sins save Allah only? —and will not knowingly repeat (the wrong) they did”

And God affirms in another verse:

ان الذين اتقوا اذا مسهم طائف من الشيطان تذكروا فاذا هم مبصرون

(الاعراف - ٢٠١)

*Innalladhina-t-taqau idhā massahum tāifum minashshaitāni tazakkarū fa-idha-hum mubsirūn.* (7: 201)

“Lo! those who ward off (evil) when a glamour from the evil troubleth them they do but remember (Allah’s guidance) and behold them seers”.

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

“All human beings without exception are sinful, but the best sinners are those who repent the most”. (Tirmidhi)

In the Holy Qur’an, God has mentioned it as a distinct virtue of the believers that they offer penances before God at dawn and repent and seek His Forgiveness and God has urged the believers that they should rest assured that God shall cover their sins with His Forgiveness and Clemency, for He is All-Forgiving and the Most Affectionate towards His creatures.

واستغفروا ربكم ثم توبوا اليه ان ربي رحيم ودود (سورة - ٩٠)

*Wastaghfirū rabbakum thumma tūbū ilaihi inna rabbi rahūmun wadud.* (11:90)

“Ask pardon of your Lord and then turn unto Him (repentant). Lo! my Lord is Merciful, Loving.

2. Always be hopeful of God’s Blessings and rest assured that however great your sins may be, God’s Munificence is wider and all-encompassing. When a person who has committed a greater volume of sins than the surf of the sea feels ashamed and offers

sincere penance before God, He distends to his entreaties and grants him refuge under His Mercy.

يعبادى الذين اسرفوا على انفسهم لا تقنطوا من رحمة الله ان الله يغفر  
الذنوب جميعا انه هو الغفور الرحيم و آتبيوا الى ربكم واسلموا له من قبل  
ان ياتيكم العذاب ثم لا تنصرون (الزمر' ٥٣-٥٤)

*Ya ibadi-yalladhīna asrafū 'ala anfusihim la taqnatū min rahmatillah. Innallaha yaghfirudhdhunūba jamīya. Innahu huwal ghafūrrahīm. Wa anību ila rabbikum wa aslimū lahu min qabli an ya'tiyakum-ul 'adhabu thumma lātunsarūn. (39 : 53, 54)*

O My slaves who have been prodigal to their own heart! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah who forgiveth all sins. Lo! He is the Forgiving the Merciful. Turn unto Him repentant; and surrender unto Him before there come unto you the doom, when ye cannot be helped”.

3. Whenever you feel shame and remorse and at whatever stage of your life, consider this feeling and realisation a special favour of God and be sure that the doors are always open for repentance. God accepts repentance of His slaves as long as they are alive. However, when they are at the threshold of death and are about to pass over to the next world, the time for offering repentance expires. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed:

“God accepts the repentance of His slave, but only before the slave has breathed his last.”

The brothers of Hadrat Yusuf (peace be upon him) pushed him into a dark well and felt sure that he was dead. In other words, they stood guilty of the murder of a Prophet. They soaked Yusuf's shirt in blood and presented it as positive evidence of

Yusuf's death to their father Hazrat Ya'qub (peace be upon him). They assured him that a wolf had devoured Hadrat Yusuf (peace be upon him) — Many years after the commission of this grave offence when the sense of guilt prevailed upon them, they went to their father remorsefully and requested him: "Dear father, pray to God on our behalf and intercede with Him to grant us forgiveness". The Messenger of God Hadrat Ya'qub (peace be upon him) did not disappoint his sons by confronting them with the question: "Your offence is grave. Many years have elapsed since you committed this heinous crime, why ask for forgiveness now"? Instead he undertook to offer a prayer to God that He should grant them salvation and assured them that God would certainly forgive them, for God is the Most Forbearing and Most Compassionate.

قالوا يا اباانا استغفر لنا ذنوبنا انا كنا خطئين (يوسف-٩٤)

*Qālū yā abānastaghfir lanā dhunūbanā innā kunnā khāti-'in.*

(12 : 97).

"They said. O our father! Ask forgiveness of our sins for us, for Lo! we are sinful."

قال سوف استغفر لكم ربى انه هو الغفور الرحيم (يوسف ٩٨)

*Qāla saufa astaghfiru lakum rabbī innahu hu-walghafūr-urrahīm*

(12 : 98)

"He said: I shall ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Lo! He is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "There was a man in ancient days who had committed ninety-nine murders. He enquired from people: "Who is the greatest scholar of the time?" The people gave him the name of a God-fearing monk. The man approached the monk and said. "Respected Sir, I am guilty of ninety-nine murders. Can my repentance and petition for forgiveness be accepted?" The monk replied "No, you stand no chances for forgiveness." In utter dismay the man killed the monk too. Now he had completed a

century of murders. He again went round asking the people as to who was the greatest religious scholars on the earth. The people gave him the name of another monk. The man approached the monk to offer repentance. He related his problem in detail and enquired from him: Sir, I have committed a hundred murders. Tell me can my repentance be accepted? Is there any scope for my salvation?" The monk replied: "Why not? Nothing stands in the way of acceptance of your repentance. Go to such and such country. You will find a few venerable slaves of God engaged in prayers and devotions to Him. Join them and devote yourself to the worship of God and never return to your homeland, as this place is no more virtually suitable for you (In other words, it is impossible for you to remain firm upon your vow of repentance and to strive to reform yourself while living in this place.)" The man set out according to the directions of the monk. He had hardly covered half the distance when death overtook him. Now the angels of grace and the angels of torment fell into a dispute. The angels of grace argued, "This man repented of his sins and went a long way to offer submission to God" The angels of torment countered: "No, he has not yet performed a single act of virtue——thus the argumentation between the angels went on. In the meantime an angel appeared in the shape of a human being. The angels requested him to settle their dispute. He gave his verdict: "Measure the distance on both sides and determine which side is nearer; the place from where he set out or the place where was he going". When the angels measured the distance on both the sides, it came out that the destination was nearer as compared to the distance he had so far covered. Thus Allah had in fact forgiven him.

*(Bukhari, Muslim)*

Confess your sins only before God; beseech Him only for forgiveness; express your sense of humility, helplessness and guilt only before Him. Humility and prostration is a tribute which man

should pay only to God. The unfortunate one, who pays this tribute of humility and prostration to other human beings who are as helpless and humble before God as he himself, becomes insolvent and is left with nothing to pay as tribute to God. Such a man is condemned to disgrace and ignominy. He goes to everybody in search of honour and respect but he gets none.

God affirms:

وربك الغفور ذو الرحمة لو يؤاخذهم بما كسبوا المعجل لهم العذاب بل لهم  
موعد لن يجدوا من دونه موثلاً (الكهف، ٥٨)

*Wa rabbukal ghaḥfūru dhurrahmah lau yuākhdhu-hum bimā kasabu  
la'ajjala lahumul adhāba bal-lahum mo'idun lan yajidu min dunihi  
mau'ilā.* (18:58)

“Thy Lord is the Forgiver, Full of Mercy. If He took them to task now for what they earn, He would hasten on the doom for them; but there is an appointed term from which they will find no escape.”

The Qurān' affirms:

وهو الذيب يقبل التوبة عن عباده ويعفو عن السيئات ويعلم ما تفعلون  
(الشورى، ٢٥)

*Wa-huwalladhi yaqbaluttabata 'an ibadihi waya'fū anissayyi-āti wa  
way'alamu ma taf'alūn.* (42:25)

“And He it is Who accepts the repentance from His bondmen, and pardoneth the evil deeds and knoweth what ye do.”

In fact, one must himself be convinced that there is only one way to salvation and whoever is denied that approach, is condemned to ignominy and destitution for ever. The befitting attitude of mind in a believer is that whatever the degree of his offence he should only offer penitence to God and shed tears of shame only before Him. There is none except Allah Who only has

the authority to grant pardon. So much so that even if someone tries to propitiate the Prophet excluding Allah. He will be deprived of favour before Allah and will be discarded outright. The Prophet of Allah is also a slave of God soliciting His favour and mercy. The Prophet has been appointed to the exalted office by virtue of his surpassing humility among the creatures of God and he makes greater penances of God in comparison with others.

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

“O people! Seek forgiveness of God for your sins and return to Him. Look at me. I offer prayers to God for salvation hundreds of times in a day.” (Muslim)

Concerning the hypocrites. God affirms:

يحلِفون لكم لترضوا عنهم فان ترضوا عنهم فان الله لا يرضى عن القوم  
الفاستقين (توبه ٩٦)

*Yahlifūna lakum litardau 'anhum fa-in tardau 'anhum fainnallaha  
lā yardā 'anil qaumil fāsiqin.* (9: 96)

“They swear unto you, that ye may accept them, Though ye accept them. Allah verily accepteth not wrong doing folk.”

The terrible episode of Hadrat Ka'ab b. Malik (God be pleased with him) as related in the Holy Qur'an gives us a lesson that man should suffer hardships and endure all trials, but he should never think of abandoning submission to God. The trials that come in the way of Islam and the maximum pain and suffering he has to bear in the way of Allah are means to purify and illumine the life of man and to elevate his rank. This humiliation is the sure means of securing eternal prestige and he who abandons submission to Allah and seeks dignity elsewhere shall find it

nowhere. Such a man will meet with disgrace everywhere and no eye on earth or in the sky shall regard him with respect.

وعلى الثلاثة الذين خلفوا حتى اذا ضاقت عليهم الارض بما رحبت و  
ضاقت عليهم انفسهم وطنوا ان لا ملجأ من الله الا اليه ثم تاب عليهم  
ليتوبوا ان الله هو التواب الرحيم (التوبة: ١١٨)

*Wa'alaththalāthatil-ladhīna khullifū hatta idhā dāqat 'alaihimul ardu bimā rahubat wa dāqat 'alaihim anfusuhum wa zannu an la malja' minallahi illa ilaih. Thumma tāba' alaihim liyatūbu Innallaha huwattawwab-urrahīm. (9: 118)*

“And to the three also (did he turn in mercy) who were left behind, when the earth, vast as it is was straitened for them and their own souls were straitened for them till they bethought them that there is no refuge from Allah save towards Him. Then turned He unto them in mercy that they (too) might turn (repentant unto Him). Lo! Allah! He is the Relenting, the Merciful”.

The three referred to above are Hadrat Ka'ab b. Malik, Hadrat Murarah ibn Rabi' and Hadrat Hilal b. Ummaya (God be pleased with them). The example of their penitence serves as a beacon light for the believers as long as the world exists. Hadrat Ka'ab b. Malik (God be pleased with him) who had lost his eyesight in old age and used to walk with the help of his son, had himself related the instructive episode of his exemplary penitence to his son which has been preserved in the Books of Tradition:

‘When the preparations were being made for the battle of Tabuk and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to call upon the people to join the war I regularly attended all his meetings. Whenever I heard him speak, I made a resolve that I would join the war. However, on returning home I relapsed into laziness. I



thought there was plenty of time yet and I had all the provisions of the journey. Moreover, I was in good health and could afford the best mount. There was nothing that could delay me in joining the battle. In this mood, I continued to postpone my departure until all holy warriors had reached the field of battle and I lingered on in Medinah entrapped in indecision and lethargy.

‘Soon the reports began to pour in that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was returning and one day I heard that he had arrived in Medinah and was staying as usual in the mosque. So I went to the mosque. On arrival I found that the hypocrites were trying to convince the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) of the genuineness of their excuses on oaths. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) heard their insincere speeches and indicated his acceptance of their lame excuses by observing ‘May God forgive you’.

‘When my turn came, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired: ‘Say, what prevented you from coming?’ I saw that his smile had a trace of annoyance, so I spoke the truth. “O Messenger of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! As it happened I had no excuse. I was healthy and prosperous and possessed the mount. It was my lethargy and negligence which deprived me of this privilege”.

‘On hearing me speak the truth, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: “Well, then, go and wait the verdict from Allah”. I got up and went among the people of my tribe. The people of my tribe

railed at me and said: "Why did you not offer some plausible excuse. You have always been in the forefront in the service of Islam". However, when I found that two other friends of mine had also told the truth, I felt at ease and determined to hold firmly to the truth.

'Afterwards, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) issued a general proclamation that no one should speak to us. As soon as this proclamation was issued forth, the attitudes in Medinah suddenly changed for me. I became a helpless stranger among my own kith and kin. No one in the society exchanged greetings or entered into a conversation with me. One day, I felt extremely depressed and went to a childhood friend and cousin Abu Qatada (God be pleased with him) I offered him salam, but he did not reciprocate. I, then, said: "Abu Qatada! I ask you in the name of God, tell me, am I wanting in love for God and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)" Qatada (God be pleased with him) remained silent. I repeated my question, but he made no answer. When I asked him in the name of God for the third time, he said: "God and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) know better". My heart overflowed with a surge of emotion and I burst into tears and returned home with the burden of my grief enhanced. It was during those days that a Syrian trader in the bazar delivered to me a letter from the monarch of Ghassan'. The Christian monarch had written: "It has come to our knowledge that your chief is subjecting you to extreme repression. You are not a lowly person. We know the worth of a man like you. Come to us. We shall treat you as befits your status and rank". As soon as I read the letter, my tongue uttered:

“Here, is another calamity that has befallen me”. And I threw the letter into the hearth.

‘Forty days had passed in this state when a courier of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) delivered his command that I should separate from my wife also. I enquired: “Shall I divorce her”? The answer came: “No, just live separately from her”. I despatched my wife to the home of her parents and told her: “Now, wait for the verdict from God”.

‘On the fiftieth day after dawn prayers, I was sitting on the roof of my house highly dejected, stricken with extreme grief and considering life as no longer bearable, when suddenly someone shouted to me: ‘Ka‘ab! Congratulations’. On hearing this, I understood that the hour of my deliverance had come and fell in prostration to my God. Later people rushed towards me. They came in crowds and congratulated me. I rose and went straight to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). I saw his august face glowing with happiness. When I moved forward and greeted him, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: ‘Kaab! Congratulations! This is the happiest day of your life”. I submitted: “Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you), is this clemency a favour from you or from God?” The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: “This is a favour from God” and then recited the verses of Surah Taubah (9)’.

5. Do not delay in offering repentance. Nobody knows when his life will end, and the next moment will bring death to him or his life shall continue. Always remember your fast approaching end and

continue to cleanse the impurity of sins from your heart and soul and mind and speech.

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

“God extends His mercy during the night so that the person who committed a sin during the day should return to Him in the night. God extends His mercy during the day so that the person who has committed a sin during the night may return to his Lord in the day time and seek His forgiveness until the sun rises from the east”. (Muslim)

The expression ‘God extends His mercy, means that God beckons His sinful slaves towards Himself and desires to cover their sins with His blessings. If the person has committed a sin under the pressure of a temporary impulse, he should immediately turn towards his Kind and All-Forgiving God and should lose no time, for sin begets sin. The Satan constantly lies in ambush for the human being and never misses an opportunity to lead man astray.

6. Offer repentance with such true and deep sincerity of heart that the entire course of your life is altered and after repentance you may appear an entirely different man.

God decrees:

يا ايها الذين امنوا توبوا الى الله توبة نصوحا عسى ربكم ان يكفر عنكم  
سيئاتكم ويدخلكم جنت تجري من تحتها الانهار يوم لا يخزي الله النبي  
والذين امنوا معه (التحريم: ٨)

*Yā ayyuhalladhīna āmanū tūbū ilallahi taubatan nasūhā asā rabbukum an yukaffira ‘ankum sayyiātikum wayudkhilakum jannātin tajrī min tahtihal anhāru yauma lā yukhzillāhun nabīyya walladhīn āmanū ma’ ahū.* (66:8)

“O ye who believe! Turn unto Allah in sincere repentance! It may be that your Lord will remit from you your evil deeds and bring you into Gardens underneath which rivers flow on the day when Allah will not abase the Prophet and those who believe with him.

In other words, offer such sincere and true repentance that not a trace of any temptation to return to the sin remains in your heart or mind. Such a repentance has three or four ingredients. If the sin relates to a transgression of God’s right, repentance should have three elements:

- (1) Man should be sincerely ashamed of his sins.
- (2) Man should firmly resolve to avoid sin in future.
- (3) And man should put his heart and soul in the task of reforming and embellishing his life.

If a man has committed a sin which involves the violation of human right, repentance should consist of a fourth element also:

- (4) Man should restore the right of another human being or seek forgiveness of the person whose right he has violated.

This is the repentance which really cleanses the man of all his sins. His soul is cleared of sin and adorned with pious deeds, is presented before Allah and is awarded a dwelling place in His Paradise.

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

“When man commits a sin, his heart is stained with a dark spot. Now if he—

- renounces the sin;
- is ashamed of his sin and seeks salvation;
- and turns to God with a firm determination to avoid sin in future;

God illumines his heart. But if he again commits sin, the dark spot is enlarged until it covers the whole of his heart. This is the rust about which God affirms in His Book:

كل بل ران على قلوبهم ما كانوا يكسبون (طائفين ٣١)  
*Kalla bal rāna 'alā qulūbihim mā kānū yaksibūn.*

“Nay, but that which they have earned is rust upon their hearts.” (83 : 14)

7. Take a firm resolve to remain true to your repentance and be vigilant day and night that the commitments you have made before God are duly fulfilled. Test the firmness of your resolve by constant efforts to purify and reform yourself. If, despite all your efforts to guard against evil, you slip and commit an offence, do not lose hope even then. On the contrary seek refuge in the Mercy of God and offer fervent prayers to him: ‘O Creator! I am weak and infirm. Do not banish me in disgrace from Your threshold. For, I can seek asylum nowhere except in Your Mercy’.

Repentance of a wrong-doer invites the pleasure of God. Taubah (Repentance) literally means ‘return, to turn to’. When thoughts and emotions go astray and one gets entrapped in the quicksand of sin, his connexion with God is severed and he is so far removed from God as if he is lost to God. And when such a man returns and turns to God in utter shame for his sins, it is as

if a lost slave has come back to his master. This situation has been graphically described by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the following eloquent allegory:

“If one of you loses his camel in a waterless desert with all his provisions of food and water laden on the lost camel — and having vainly searched for the camel in all directions of the desert he despairs of his life and lies down under a tree awaiting death and in this state he suddenly beholds his camel laden with all the provisions standing by his side, imagine then his happiness! —the happiness of your Lord and Creator far surpasses the happiness of this man when His lost slave returns and having gone astray resumes allegiance to Him”. *(Tirmidhi)*

On another occasion, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) elucidated the same fact by means of another impressive allegory :

Some prisoners of war were brought before the Holy Prophet. The group included a woman who had lost her infant. The maternal instinct so overpowered the woman that she found no peace or rest unless she picked up and breastfed any baby she found near her. On seeing the woman in such state the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired from the Companions (God be pleased with them) : Can you imagine that this woman will fling her baby into fire with her own hands?” The Companions submitted : “O Messenger of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ! Leaving apart the matter of throwing the child herself, she would stake her life to save the child if it were falling by itself”. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) thereupon observed :

“God is by far even more Compassionate and Kind to His slaves than this woman is considerate towards her child”.

8. Offer repentance to and seek forgiveness of the Lord continuously. There are countless offences which a man commits from morning till evening; sometimes man is not even conscious of these transgressions. Do not imagine that repentance is called for only when a capital sin has been committed; man needs to repent and pray for his salvation at all times, because he is liable to make a slip at every step. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself used to repent and pray for his salvation seventy or even hundred times in a day. *(Bukhāri, Muslim)*
  
9. Do not look down upon a sinner who repents and reforms his life. Hadrat ‘Imran b. al-Hassan (God be pleased with him) has reported an incident of the time of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) : “A woman of the tribe of Juhainah presented herself before the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). She had become pregnant as a result of an unlawful relation. She submitted: “O Messenger of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)! I deserve punishment for adultery. Enforce the Shariah in my case and punish me”. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent for the guardian of this woman and observed him: “Treat this woman well and when she has delivered the child, bring her to me”. When the woman returned after delivery of her child, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded that her garments should be tied fast around her body (so that the garments may not slip off during stoning and her physical veil may not be torn off) and when this had been done, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered that she should be stoned to death. The order was carried out. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) later offered funeral prayers for her. Hadrat ‘Umar (God be pleased with him) submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): “O Messenger of Allah (peace



and blessings of Allah be upon him)! This woman committed the offence of adultery and you are saying funeral prayers for her". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) thereupon observed: "She repented and offered repentance of such magnitude that if it were portioned among seventy men of Medinah, it would secure their salvation. Did you see any one better than the one who presented the gift of life to God"?

10. Say the 'finest prayer' to God. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed to Hadrat Shaddad ibn Aus (God be pleased with him) 'This is the *Sayyed-ul-Istaghfār*' ('the finest prayer').

اللهم انت ربي لا اله الا انت خلقتني وانا عبدك وانا على عهدك ووعدك  
ما استطعت اعوذ بك من شر ما صنعت ابوء لك بنعمتك على وابوع بذنبي  
فاغفر لي فانه لا يغفر الذنوب الا انت (بخاري، ترمذی)

*Allāhumma anta rabbī lā ilāha illā anta khalaqtanī wa anā  
'abduka wa anā alā 'ahdika wa wa'adika mastata'tu aūdhu bika  
min sharri mā sana'tu abū'u laka bini 'matika 'alayya wa abū'u  
bidhandbī faghfirli fainnahū la yaghfirudh-dhunūba illā anta.*

(*Bukhārī, Tirmidhi*)

"God! Thou art my Creator! There is no deity except Thee. Thou created me and I am Thy slave. I shall remain faithful to the pledge of devotion which I have given to Thee to the best of my capability. I seek asylum with Thee against the fearful consequences of my sins. I acknowledge all the blessings Thou hast conferred on me and I confess that I am a sinner —Hence, O My Creator. Forgive my sins. Who else except Thee will forgive my sins?"

*Note: The above material has been taken from Muhammad Yusuf Islahi' Etiquettes of Life in Islam, Lahore, Islamic Publications, 1985.*