

چند اہم اسلامی آداب

Amongst The Etiquettes of

ISLĀM

A Booklet of Advice for the Life of a Muslim



By:

'Ash-Shaykh 'Abdul Fattāh' Abu Ghudda
(May Allah have mercy on him)

Published By

Al Qamar Publications & Maktaba Darul Maarif

AhleSunnah Library [nmusba.wordpress.com]

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First Edition Rajab 1436 A.H.

April 2015

Published by: Al Qamar Publications

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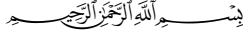
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Preface to the Urdu Translation

(Chand Aham Islāmi Ādāb by Mawlānā Dr. ‘Abdur Razzāq Iskandar of Karachi, Pakistan)

All praises are due to Allah who guided us to this and we would not have been guided had Allah not guided us. I send blessings and salutations upon our master, Muhammad ﷺ who conveyed the message, fulfilled the trust and advised the community. Blessings and salutations upon his family, companions and those who followed his path till the day of Judgement.

Allah completed this religion by means of the Messenger ﷺ and He announced the finality of His preferred religion. He said,

“This day: I have perfected for you your religion. And I have completed My grace upon you. And I am well-pleased for you with Islam – (The Peace) – as your religion.”¹

The religion of Islam encompasses every facet of life, whether it is beliefs or acts of worship, dealings or character and etiquettes. A person can only be a perfect

¹ Surah al-Mā'idah: 3.

Muslim when he believes in and practices on all these facets.

Every facet of life is important. The importance of etiquette and character is not less than worship. Accordingly, the Qur'ān has explained some etiquettes with great importance.

Therefore Allah says,

“O you who believe, you shall not enter homes, other than your own homes, until you take (welcome) permission and greet their people with peace. That is best for you – so that you may become mindful (of the benefit of Allah’s commandments).”²

Similarly, great emphasis has been laid on these etiquettes in the ahādith of the Prophet ﷺ. The Messenger ﷺ told the elder of two brothers, “Begin with the elder one, the elder one.”³

Due to the importance of Islamic etiquette and conduct, the muhadithoon generally include an independent chapter of etiquette in their books. To make things easy for the general masses, some scholars have written books or booklets in their languages on the topic of Islamic etiquette. Consequently, Hakeemul Ummah, Mawlānā Ashraf Ali Thānwi (ra) wrote the book, “Husne

² Surah Noor:27.

³ Bukhāri and Muslim.

Mu'āsharat" – Excellent Social Conduct. A young graduate of our Jāmiyah (seminary), Mawlana Muhammad Zubayr 'Abdul Majeed has written a detailed book on Islamic Etiquette. Similarly, articles on Islamic etiquette are published in religious magazines. May Allah (st) grant benefit to the Muslims from these books and articles.

Some of these etiquettes are such that the masses and the elite, all commit errors in them. Looking at these conditions, our learned scholar, Shaykh 'Abdul Fattāh Abu Ghuddah (ra) compiled a few Islamic etiquettes and gave them the name, "Min Adab al-Islam" – Among the Etiquettes of Islam. This book has been published many times in the Arab countries. The masses and the elite are deriving benefit from it.

He has also pointed out some etiquettes in which even the people of knowledge err. For example, if the host presents drinks to his guests to honour them, from whom should he begin? Should he begin on his right or from the person who is the head of the gathering and then from the latter's right?

Some scholars unconditionally prefer the right side of the host, even if the servant, driver or some ordinary person is sitting there. As proof, they present the hadith, "Begin from the right, then the next person on the right."⁴ In doing this,

⁴ Bukhari and Muslim.

they abandon the narration of “Begin with the elder one, the elder one.”⁵ Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāh, has beautifully reconciled the two narrations and said, “Begin with the one who is the head of the gathering or the one in the gathering who is senior in knowledge, piety, position or age. Then go to the one who is on his right, even though he may be an ordinary man. In this way, both the narrations are reconciled.”

When this is the condition of the Arabs, what will be the state of being ignorant of these etiquettes in our society (non Arabs)? I felt the need to translate this booklet into Urdu so that our masses, the elite and the Urdu-speaking public can also derive benefit from it.

For this purpose, we requested by telephone, permission to translate and publish this booklet from the son of the author, namely al-Ustādh Salmān Abu Ghuddah which he willingly granted with pleasure. May Allah grant him the best reward on my behalf.

In the following pages, the translation of this booklet has been presented (to you). May Allah grant me and all the readers the ability to practise on these etiquettes. Āmeen

‘Abdur Razzāq Iskandar

⁵ Ibid.

Foreword

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

All praise belongs to Allāh, with the choicest praise and glorification. Salutations and peace be upon our Master and our Prophet, Muḥammad, the noblest of salutations which his Creator bestows upon him; and also on his companions, pure followers and the virtuous – those who follow his guidance and etiquettes, the clean ones who fear Allāh. O Allāh! Grant that we may follow them in word and deed. Grant us death upon their way, and love for them when we reach the end of our allotted time.

This is a small booklet which I have named *Min 'Adabil 'Islām – Amongst the Etiquettes of 'Islām*. I have compiled in it some concise sentences on the etiquettes of the natural way of 'Islām. I have seen that many of my brethren and loved ones, whether male or female, are neglectful about them and err in recognising them. My intention in compiling this, is to remind them, not that I am better than them in regards these etiquettes, nor am I not in need of these etiquettes. It is simply a matter of mutual advising on truth and patience [Sūrah al-‘Aṣr] and implementing the clear command:

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَ يُنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

And remind, for indeed reminder benefits the believers.
[az-Zāriyāt: 55]

May Allāh grant benefit to me and them with the reminder, this booklet and whatever other means. May He befriend us through His grace and guidance in this world and the next, indeed He befriends the pious.

Written at Rīyaḍh,

1st Muḥarram 1412

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The natural system of 'Islām entails many etiquettes and virtues, pertaining to every aspect of life. They affect old and young, male and female; for as the Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ النِّسَاءَ شَقَائِقُ الرِّجَالِ

"Women are part of men."

Thus what is required from a man is required from a woman as well. The two together constitute Muslim society. It is through them that 'Islām is presented and recognised.

'Islām calls towards these etiquettes and places special emphasis upon them, in order to accomplish perfection of the believer's personality and establish harmony amongst people. There is no doubt that by adorning himself with these etiquettes and virtues, the way of the Muslim increases in beauty; his good ways are strengthened; his personality becomes beloved; and he becomes close to the hearts of people.

The etiquettes we have mentioned are amongst the essence and aims of the Sharī'ah. It does not mean that by calling them, "etiquettes" that they are some peripheral aspect of life which a person can choose to do or not, or that doing so is merely preferable.

Al-Imām al-Qarāfi رَحِمَهُ اللهُ discussed the status of etiquettes in regards deeds in his book *'al-Furūq*. He discussed that they have precedence over deeds. He wrote:

Know that implementing a few etiquettes is better than practicing many deeds. This why Ruwaym (the pious scholar) said to his son, "O my son, make your deeds like salt and your etiquette like flour."

In other words, increase your etiquettes so much that it can be compared to the ratio of flour in dough. Much etiquette with few pious deeds is better than many deeds with few etiquettes.

I say that even if some of these etiquettes are seen to be simple and self-evident, then still there is nothing strange in alerting towards them, for those amongst us who fall into error in even these obvious matters are not small in number. So one might overlook this as being part of one's Muslim personality, whereas one's personality should be distinguished with its beauty, perfection and loftiness. This is indicated in the statement of our Master, Muḥammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, when he was with some of the Noble Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ. He said to them:

إِنَّكُمْ قَادِمُونَ عَلَى إِخْوَانِكُمْ فَأَحْسِنُوا لِبَاسِكُمْ وَأَصْلِحُوا رِحَالَكُمْ حَتَّى تَكُونُوا
كَأَنْتُمْ شَامَةٌ فِي النَّاسِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُحْشَ وَلَا التَّفَحُّشَ

You are about to meet your brothers. So beautify your clothing and put your mounts in order, so that you are distinguished amongst people. Allāh does not love obscenity nor forced obscenity. (ʿAbū Dāwūd, al-ʿImām

’Aḥmad and al-Ḥākim in al-Mustadrak from Sahl bin al-Hanzhalīyah (رضي الله عنه.)

It is thus appropriate for a Muslim to be recognised as a Muslim from the good way he dresses, the orderliness of his ways and the pleasantness of his appearance. Allāh is the guide to the straight path.

1. Etiquette of entering & leaving your home with consideration & kindness

Do not bang the door when entering or leaving your home, nor leave it so that it closes by itself with force. This is negation of the delicate consideration of ’Islām, through whose association something becomes honoured. Close the door with your hand in a light manner. You may have heard what Lady ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated from Rasūlullāh

صلى الله عليه وسلم:

إِنَّ الرَّفْقَ لَا يَكُونُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا زَانَهُ وَلَا يُنْزَعُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا شَانَهُ

Kindness is not to be found in anything except that it beatifies it. It is not removed from anything except that it disfigures it. (Narrated by Muslim)

2. Etiquette of greeting your family with “as-Salāmu ‘alaykum” when entering or leaving

When entering or leaving your house, greet whichever members of your family may be in it, whether male or female, with the salutation of the Muslim, the highlight of

'Islām, *'as-salāmu 'alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuhu* – peace be upon you and Allāh's mercy and blessings. Do not divert from the Islāmic greeting to something else, such as “good morning”, “hello”⁶ or anything else like that. If you divert from the Islāmic greeting, you have destroyed it, whereas it is a symbol of Islām and identifying feature of the Muslims. Rasūlullāh ﷺ had instituted it through his word and deed. He taught it to his illustrious attendant, 'Anas ؓ. 'Anas ؓ narrated, “Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to me...”

يَا بُنَيَّ إِذَا دَخَلْتَ عَلَى أَهْلِكَ فَسَلِّمْ، يَكُونُ بَرَكَهَةً عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى أَهْلِكَ

*O my son! When you enter upon your family then offer Salām, it will be a blessing upon you and upon your family.
(Narrated by at-Tirmizī)*

Qatādah was amongst the most notable scholars amongst the Tābi'ūn. He said, “Offer Salām to your family when you enter your house, for they are the most entitled to your Salām of all those whom you greet.”

'Abū Hurayrah ؓ narrated that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

إِذَا انْتَهَى أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَى الْمَجْلِسِ فَلْيُسَلِّمْ، فَإِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَقُومَ فَلْيُسَلِّمْ، فَلَيْسَتْ الْأُولَى
بِأَحَقَّ مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ

⁶ The Shaykh had actually written “*marḥaban* – welcome” but in the environment of the western English reader, I felt “hello” to be a more relevant translation – Translator.

When one of you ends up in a gathering he should offer Salām. When he intends to stand up he should again offer Salām. The first [Salām] does not have a greater right than the last. (Narrated by at-Tirmizī)

3. Etiquette of notifying the residents when entering

Notify those in your home before you reach it and enter it. This is in order to avoid startling them or creating the impression that you are investigating some evil in them. 'Abū 'Ubaydah 'Āmir bin 'Abdillāh bin Mas'ūd said, "My father ('Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd ﷺ) would make the people at ease when he came home, by speaking and raising his voice, so that they would recognise his voice."

Al-'Imām 'Aḥmad رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, "It is recommended that a man clears his throat or shakes his sandals when he enters his house."

'Abdullāh, the son of al-'Imām 'Aḥmad said, "When my father used to return home from the Masjid, he used to strike with his legs before entering the home, and sometimes he used to clear his throat, in order to alert those at home that he was entering."

It is upon this theme, that it is narrated in al-Bukhārī and Muslim, that Jābir رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrated that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ forbade a man from returning to his family at night, without alerting them, as if he were searching for some betrayal or weakness amongst them.

4. Etiquette of people seeking permission from their family within their homes

If some family member is in his room, which is in your home, and you wish to go to him, then first seek permission to enter, lest you see him in a state which neither he would like you to see him, nor you like to see him. This is irrespective of the person's relation to you, whether the person is amongst those you can marry or not, whether it is your mother, father, daughter or son.

Al-'Imām Mālik رَحِمَهُ اللهُ narrated a *Mursal*⁷ Ḥadīth in his *Mu'atta'* from 'Aṭā' bin Yasār رَحِمَهُ اللهُ. A man asked Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, "Do I have to seek permission to enter upon my mother?"

"Yes," replied Rasūlullāh.

"But I [live] with her in the house," the man protested.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied, "You should [still] seek her permission."

The man said, "I am her attendant."

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "Seek her permission. Would you like to see her naked?"

"No," said the man.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "So seek permission to enter upon her."

A man came to 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and asked, "Do I have to seek permission to enter upon my mother?"

⁷ Mursal Ḥadīth is narrated by the Tabi'ī, not specifying the Ṣaḥābī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ - Translator.

He replied, "You would not like to see her in every state."

Zaynab, the wife of 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه, said, "Whenever 'Abdullāh used to return from some need, he would stop at the door and clear his throat, disliking that he should surprise us in some act he would detest."

In the narration of 'Ibn Mājah, at the end of the *Book of Medicine*, it is stated, "When 'Abdullāh used to enter, he used to clear his throat and make a sound."

A man asked Ḥuḏayfah bin al-Yamān رضي الله عنه, "Do I have to seek permission to enter upon my mother?"

"Yes," he replied, "If you do not seek her permission, you will see that which you do not like."

The Tābī'ī who was a son of a Ṣaḥābī, Mūsā bin Ṭalḥāh bin 'Ubaydillāh رضي الله عنه narrated, "I came with my father to my mother. He entered and I followed him. He turned and struck me so hard that I fell down on the ground. He said, "Do you enter without permission?"

Nāfi', the freed-slave of 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar رضي الله عنه said, "Whenever one of the sons of 'Ibn 'Umar attained puberty, he would separate him from his chamber, and he could not enter upon 'Ibn 'Umar except with permission."

'Ibn Jurayj narrated that 'Aṭā' bin 'Abī Rabāḥ said:

I asked 'Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, "Should I seek permission to enter upon my two sisters?"

"Yes," he replied.

I said, "But they are under my care (i.e. in my house). I provide for them and spend upon them."

He replied, "Do you wish to see them naked?"

He then recited:

وَإِذَا بَلَغَ الْأَطْفَالُ مِنْكُمُ الْحُلُمَ فَلْيَسْتَأْذِنُوا كَمَا اسْتَأْذَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ

And when children among you reach puberty, let them ask permission] as those before them have done...

[ʿan-Nūr: 59]

ʿIbn ʿAbbās ؓ said, "Seeking permission is obligatory upon every category of people."

ʿIbn Masʿūd ؓ said, "A man should seek permission from his father, mother, brother and sister."

Jābir ؓ said, "A man has to seek permission from his own child, his mother – even if she is old beyond sexual inclination – and from his brother, sister and father."

Most of these narrations are from *al-ʿAdab al-Mufrad* of al-Bukhārī and some are from ʿIbn Kathīr in his commentary to the above noble verse.

5. Etiquette & method of knocking on someone's door

When you knock on the door of your brother, friend, acquaintance or anyone you intend to go to, then knock lightly to the extent that he will be aware of the presence of someone knocking the door. Do not knock with force and violence as some wrong-doers are prone to do, or as if you are one of the guard-angels of Hell. You will frighten the person and contravene etiquette. A woman came to ʿal-ʿImām ʿAḥmad bin Ḥambal, may Allāh be pleased with him,

in order to ask a question on some aspect of religion. She knocked on his door with some force. He came out and said, “This is the knocking of the police.”

Al-Bukhārī narrated in his *'al-'Adab al-Mufrad* that the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم used to tap on the door of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم with their nails. This was due to their respect for Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم.

Such a light and delicate knock is expected when the person might be sitting near his door. If the person is further, then knock in a way that he can hear, but do not knock forcefully. This noble Ḥadīth has already been mentioned:

إِنَّ الرَّفْقَ لَا يَكُونُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا زَانَهُ وَلَا يُنْزَعُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا شَانَهُ

Kindness is not to be found in anything except that it beautifies it. It is not removed from anything except that it disfigures it. (Narrated by Muslim)

Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم also said:

مَنْ يُحْرَمِ الرَّفْقَ يُحْرَمِ الْخَيْرَ كُلَّهُ

He who has been deprived of kindness has been deprived of all good. (Narrated by Muslim)

It is appropriate that one pauses between two knocks, for a duration that is not short. The one performing *Wuḍū'* should be able to complete his ablution during that pause. The one at prayer should be able to complete his *Ṣalāh* during that pause. The one eating should be able to

consume a morsel during that pause. Some scholars have even specified that the time between two knocks should be the duration of four *Rak'āt* of *Ṣalāh*. It may be that when you commenced knocking that he commenced *Ṣalāh*.

Once you have knocked thrice consecutively and think that if he were not busy, he would come out to you, then you should leave. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

إِذَا اسْتَأَذَنَ أَحَدُكُمْ ثَلَاثًا فَلَمْ يُؤَذَّنْ لَهُ فَلْيُصْرِفْ

When one of you has sought permission thrice and permission has not been granted, then leave. (Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

When you seek permission, then do not stand at the opening of the door, but stand to the right or the left.

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ came to people's doors, he would never stand directly facing them. He inclined to the right or the left. (Narrated by 'Abū Dāwūd)

6. It is Sunnah for the knocker to inform those inside of his name

When you knock on the door of one of your brothers, and he asks, "Who is it?" then give your name clearly in the manner that he will recognise it. Do not say, "I" or "me" or "someone". These kind of words do not benefit the one behind the door in recognising the identity of the knocker. It is not correct for you to intend that the one for whom you are knocking will recognise your voice. Sounds can be

deceptive and resemble another. One voice can resemble another. Not everyone behind the door which you are knocking can recognise your voice and sense you, or distinguish between voices. One can be wrong or right when listening and distinguishing between voices.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ disliked it when someone replied, “me,” for that does not help in any way. Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate that Jābir bin ‘Abdillāh ؓ said:

I went to the Prophet ﷺ and knocked on the door. He asked me, “Who is this?”

“Me,” I replied.

The Prophet ﷺ then said, “Me? Me?” as if he disliked it.

That is why the Ṣaḥābah ؓ would properly declare their names when they were asked, “Who is it?” ’Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate that ’Abū Ḥarrir ؓ said:

One night I went out when I suddenly saw Rasūlullāh ﷺ walking alone. I started walking where the moon did not shine. He turned and upon seeing me asked, “Who is this?”

I replied, “Abū Ḥarrir.”

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate that ’Umm Ḥānī ؓ, the sister of ‘Alī ؓ and the paternal cousin of Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

I went to the Prophet ﷺ. He was bathing and Fāṭimah was covering him. “Who is this?” he asked. I replied, “I am ’Umm Ḥānī.”

7. Etiquette of accepting the visited person's excuse of not being able to receive you, whether the visit was by appointment or not

When you visit your brother and he excuses himself from accepting your visit, then accept his excuse, whether you had made an appointment or not. He knows the state of his house best, and what condition he is undergoing. He may be experiencing some special cause for preventing him or may be undergoing some difficulty which does not allow him to receive you at that moment. He may have a valid reason for inconveniencing you. The illustrious Tabi'i, Qatādah bin Di'āmah as-Sadūsī said, "Do not remain at the door of a people who have sent you away. If you have needs, they too have engagements, but they have the greater right to offer an excuse."

'Al-'Imām Mālik said, "Not every person is able to express his excuse. That is why the Predecessors used to practise upon this etiquette when visiting, that the visitor would say to the one being visited, 'Is there anything which prevents you from receiving me at the moment?' thus giving the person being visited scope to offer his excuse."

Because of the importance of this etiquette, and in order to eliminate what might afflict the hearts of some people upon hearing an excuse, Allāh Most High records in His Noble Book in regards rejected visits, seeking permission and entering:

وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمْ اذْجِعُوا فَاجْجِعُوا ۗ هُوَ اَزْكٰى لَكُمْ

And if it is said to you, "Return!" then return. That is purer for you." [an-Nūr: 28]

The etiquette which this Noble verse of the Qur'ān teaches, provides scope for an exit from the behaviour which some people adopt. Sometimes when one is not interested in someone visiting, then one says that one is not at home, whereas one is in fact at home. Thus that person lies and in so doing, teaches children the same despicable behaviour. Such behaviour ultimately cultivates enmity and hatred in the heart.

The guidance of the Noble Qur'ān prevents us from falling into any of that. It has granted the visited person latitude to politely decline his brother's visit. The Qur'ān asks him to accept his brother's excuse:

وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمْ اذْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا ۗ هُوَ أَزْكَىٰ لَكُمْ

And if it is said to you, "Return!" then return. That is purer for you." [an-Nūr: 28]

8. Etiquette of lowering your gaze when entering the person's home

Protect your gaze from seeing inside the home or something you should not see, when you seek permission to enter someone else's home. That would be a defect in you and wrong. 'Abū Dāwūd and 'aṭ-Ṭabrānī narrate that Sa'd bin 'Ubādah رضي الله عنه said:

A man stood facing the door directly, asking the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ permission to enter. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to him, "In this way, away from you." (i.e. he turned him and ordered him to turn slightly away from directly facing the opening of the door.) He then said to him, "Indeed sight is the reason for seeking permission."

'Al-Bukhārī narrated in 'al-'Adab 'al-Mufrad that Thawbān رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrated that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

لَا يَحِلُّ لِأَمْرِي أَنْ يُنْظَرَ إِلَى جَوْفِ بَيْتٍ حَتَّى يَسْتَأْذِنَ، فَإِنْ فَعَلَ فَقَدْ دَخَلَ

It is not permissible for a man to look into the inside of a house until he has sought permission. If he did [look] then he has already entered.

In other words if he did look before seeking permission then he has the status of one who has entered without seeking permission, which is forbidden.

Al-Bukhārī (in 'al-'Adab 'al-Mufrad), 'Abū Dāwūd and 'at-Tirmizī narrate from 'Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

إِذَا دَخَلَ الْبَصْرَ فَلَا إِذْنَ لَهُ

When he enters his gaze, then there is no permission for him.

'Al-Bukhārī also narrated in it, from 'Ammār bin Sa'īd 'at-Tajībī that 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb said, "He who fills his eyes with the hallway of a house (i.e. the courtyard and the inside) before being permitted to, is an open sinner."

'Al-Bukhārī, Muslim and others narrate from Sahl bin Sa'd

ﷺ:

A man was peeping (through a hole) into the chamber of the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet had a single-toothed comb which he used to comb his head. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ saw him, he said:

لَوْ أَعْلَمْتُ أَنَّكَ تَنْظُرُ لَطَنَعْتُ بِهِ فِي عَيْنِكَ، إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ الْاِسْتِئْذَانُ مِنْ أَجْلِ الْبَصْرِ

Had I known that you were looking, I would certainly have pierced your eye with this. Indeed seeking permission has been decreed because of sight.

9. Etiquette of removing and wearing your shoes when entering your house or your brother's house

Be refined in when visiting your brother's house or entering or leaving your house. Lower your gaze and voice. Leave your shoes in its place. When you have removed your sandals, place them neatly. Do not put them just anyhow. Do not forget the etiquettes of wearing and removing shoes. Put the right one on first. Remove the left one first. Our master, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

إِذَا انْتَعَلَ أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيَبْدَأْ بِالْيَمِينِ، وَإِذَا انْتَرَعَ فَلْيَبْدَأْ بِالشَّمَالِ، وَلِتَكُنِ الْيُمْنَى أَوْهَمًا

تُنْعَلُ وَآخِرَهُمَا تُنْرَعُ

When one of you puts on his sandal, let him begin with the right. When he takes [it] off, let him begin with the left. Thus let the right be the first you wear and the last you remove. (Narrated by Muslim and others)

Look at your shoes before you enter your house or your brother's house. If you see any trace from the street on them, then remove that from them. Rub them against the earth so that what clings to them is removed. 'Islām is a religion of cleanliness and graceful refinement.

10. Etiquette of the visitor in sitting and accepting his host's hospitality

Do not argue with your host or brother in where he seats you in his home. In fact, do not sit except where he seats you. If you sit as you please, you may see that which you are not supposed to see in the house, or otherwise inconvenience the inhabitants of the house. So obey the command of your host. Accept whatever he offers you by way of hospitality. It is narrated that on the occasion of the acceptance of 'Islām of the illustrious Ṣahābī, 'Adī bin Ḥātim aṭ-Ṭā'ī رضي الله عنه, that he came to Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم who honoured him with letting him sit on a pillow, whilst Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم himself sat on the earth. 'Adī narrates:

*Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم went with me until he entered his house. He took a leather pillow filled with palm fibres, and offered it to me, saying, "Sit on this."
"You should rather sit on it," I replied.
"No, you," he said.*

So I sat on it while Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ sat on the ground.

(Narrated by al-Ḥāfīz ḥ Ibn Kathīr in al-Bidāyah wan Nihāyah)

Khārijah bin Zayd went to visit ḥ Ibn Sīrīn. He found ḥ Ibn Sīrīn sitting on the ground, although there was a pillow. He wanted to sit with him [on the ground], and said, "I am pleased for myself with what you are pleased with for yourself."

ḥ Ibn Sīrīn replied, "I however am most certainly not pleased for you, in my house, with what I am pleased with for myself. Please sit where you are commanded to."

Do not sit in the special place of the master of the house, unless he invites you to do so. Our master, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

لَا يُؤَمِّنُ الرَّجُلُ الرَّجُلَ فِي سُلْطَانِهِ وَلَا يَقْعُدُ فِي بَيْتِهِ عَلَى تَكْرِمَتِهِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ

A man should not lead another man in prayer at his authority (i.e. at his home and place of authority) nor should he sit in his house on his Takrimah except with his permission. (Narrated by Muslim)

Takrimah means a special place of sitting for the master of the house – his bed, seat or the like.

Etiquette of behaviour in the host's home and avoiding scrutiny

When you have entered the house of your brother or friend, and he provides you with a place to sit or sleep therein, then do not let your gaze scrutinise it, as if you are some kind of inspector. Lower your gaze for the duration of your sitting or sleeping there. Cast your gaze only on what is necessary. Do not open anything closed, such as a storeroom, box, safe, purse or something which was hidden away. That would be contrary to the etiquettes of 'Islām and a betrayal of the trust which your brother or loved one has placed in you when he allowed you entry into his home and granted you a place by him. So recognise the etiquettes of your visit. Walk in the doors of good interaction. You will increase in love and respect with your host. May Allāh Most High guard you and care for you.

11. Etiquette of choosing the time and duration of the visit and etiquette of the visitor with the Host

It is appropriate that you choose a convenient time for the visit and that you remain for a duration suitable to your relation with the host, as well as according to the condition he may be in. Do not prolong and do not become a burden. Do not come at an inopportune time, such as times of eating, sleeping, relaxation and rest. 'Al-'Imām 'an-Nawawī (*may the mercy of Allāh Most High be upon him*) wrote in

'al-'Aẓkār, at the end of the chapter "Rulings pertaining to *Salām*":

It is strongly recommended (for a Muslim) to visit the pious, his brothers, neighbours, friends and relatives. He should honour them, be good unto them and maintain relations with them. The application of this differs according to their conditions, ranks and spare time. You should also visit them in a manner which they would not dislike, and at a time which they will be happy with. The Ḥadīth and narrations in this regard are many and well-known.

12. Etiquette of speaking during the visit, to seniors and juniors

When you speak by the person whom you are visiting, then speak what is appropriate to the situation and be brief in your speech. If you are the junior in the gathering, then do not speak unless you are responding to a question directed at you. You may also speak if you know that your speech is appropriate and will be pleasing unto them. Do be long-winded in your speech. Do not be heedless of the etiquettes appropriate to a particular gathering, and your way of talking and address.

13. Etiquette of greeting the family of the visited one and showing respect to the most senior

When you enter a gathering, then initiate *Salām* to all present. When you intend to shake hands, then commence with the most virtuous, knowledgeable, pious, eldest or

other such attributes which are held to be noble in the *Shari'ah*. Do not commence with the first person you see in the front row, even if he is to the right side, if he is not the most virtuous, and in so doing you do not commence with one virtuous, or at least more virtuous than him. If you do not know who is the most virtuous in the gathering, then commence with the person who has such an attribute which is superior to the others who are present. Most of the time his status will not be hidden. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

كَبِّرْ كَبِّرْ

[Prefer] the elder! [Prefer] the elder!

In another narration:

كَبِّرْ لِكَبِيرِ فِي السِّنِّ

[Prefer] the bigger in age. (Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

ابْدُوا بِالْكِبَرَاءِ أَوْ قَالَ بِالْأَكْبَرِ

Begin with the eldest ones. (Narrated by 'Abū Ya'lā and aṭ-Ṭabrānī in 'al-'Awsaṭ)

14. Etiquette of sitting with other guests in the host's house

Do not sit between two other attendees when you join a gathering. You should find a place at the side of either of

them, to the right or to the left. Our Master, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

لَا يُجْلَسُ بَيْنَ رَجُلَيْنِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِمَا

Someone may not sit between two men, except with their permission. (Narrated by 'Abū Dāwūd)

It is recommended that if two people make space for a third, the third should restrict his posture and not spread out in crossed-legs. 'Ibnul 'A'rābī quoted a sage as saying, "Two people are indeed wrong-doers. A man who is given the gift of advice and he flings it behind him; and a man for whom space is made in a cramped area and he sits crossed-legs."

Then when you are sitting with two people, do not cast your ears to their speech, unless it is no secret matter and nothing special to the two of them. Doing so, is a deficiency in your character, and an evil thing to do. Our Master, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

مَنْ اسْتَمَعَ إِلَى حَدِيثِ قَوْمٍ وَهُمْ لَهُ كَارِهُونَ صَبَّ فِي أُذُنِهِ الْأَنْكُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

On the Day of Resurrection, (molten) lead will be poured in the ears of one who intentionally listened to a people's talk and they disliked it of him. (Narrated by al-Bukhārī, et al.)

Know that it is most inappropriate to speak secretly to your one companion when there are three of you. The third person will feel ill at ease and distanced from the two of you. All sorts of thoughts will befall him. This is certainly

not appropriate for Muslims. Rasūlullāh ﷺ erased such behaviour from the Muslims, when he said:

لَا يَتَنَاجَى اِثْنَانٍ بَيْنَهُمَا ثَالِثٌ

Two people do not secretly communicate when there is a third amongst them. (Narrated by 'al-'Imām Mālik and 'Abū Dāwūd)

His wording was not on the prohibition tense. He did not say, “Two people should not...” Instead, he said, “Two people do not...” in the tense of negation and information. He thus announced that this is an erroneous and inappropriate act for a Muslim to commit, which is not worthy of explicit prohibition. One’s natural disposition informs one that it is wrong. Mālik and 'Abū Dāwūd narrated this Ḥadīth from 'Abdullāh bin 'Umār ؓ. 'Ibn 'Umar ؓ was asked, “And if they are four?” He replied, “Then that will not harm you.” i.e. there is no problem in that situation if you whisper and talk secretly.

15. Etiquette of a Muslim with a senior in walking, talking and all other interactions

Realise the worth and rights of a senior. When you walk with him, then walk to his right, slightly behind him. When you enter or leave, then let him precede you in entering and exiting. Fulfil his right of *Salām* and respect, when you meet him. When you engage in conversation with him, then let him speak first, before you. Listen to him with full attention and respect. If the talk is such that there will be a difference between you, then express your difference with

respect and calmly with care. Lower your voice when speaking to him. Never forget to honour him in your speech and address when you talk to him or call out to him.

Consider some of these 'Ahādīth and narrations which call towards this etiquette. Two brothers presented themselves to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to speak about an incident which occurred amongst them. The one was elder than his brother, but the younger wanted to speak first. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

كَبِّرْ كَبِّرْ

[Prefer] the elder! [Prefer] the elder!
(Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

In other words, give the elder his right, let the elder brother speak first.

Our Master, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَجِلْ كِبِيرَنَا

He is not of us who does not honour our elder.

And in another narration:

لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يُؤَقِّرْ كِبِيرَنَا وَبِرْحَمِ صَغِيرَنَا وَبِعِرْفِ لِعَالِمِنَا حَقَّهُ

He is not of us who does not respect our elder, have mercy upon our youngster and recognise the right of our learned.

(Narrated by al-'Imām 'Aḥmad, al-Ḥākim and aṭ-Ṭabrānī, from 'Ubādah bin aṣ-Ṣāmit)

16. Etiquette of the company of two who are similar in age and knowledge

Listen carefully how our Master, Rasūlullāh ﷺ, taught the youth the etiquettes of keeping company and gatherings, and consideration to the elders over the youngsters. The illustrious Companion, Mālik bin al-Ḥuwayrith ؓ, said:

We came to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and we were youth of similar age. We spent twenty nights with him. Rasūlullāh ﷺ was so merciful and kind, he thought that perhaps we were yearning for our families. He therefore asked whom we had left behind from our families. We informed him and he said:

إِزْجِعُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا فِيهِمْ، وَعَلِّمُوهُمْ وَمُرُوهُمْ، فَإِذَا حَضَرَتِ
الصَّلَاةُ فَلْيُؤَدِّنْ لَكُمْ أَحَدُكُمْ، وَلْيَوْمِكُمْ أَكْبَرُكُمْ

Return to your families and stay amongst them. Teach them and command them. When [the time for] Ṣalāh arrives then one of you should proclaim the call to Prayer, and the eldest should lead you in Ṣalāh.
(Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

Al-Ḥāfīz Ḥabīb al-Rajab 'al-Ḥambalī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ narrated in his biography of the jurist, 'Abul Ḥasan 'Alī bin Mubārak al-Karkhī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ, who passed away in 487 Hijrī, and was a

student of the jurist, 'Abū Ya'la al-Ḥambalī رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ، who was the leading scholar of the Ḥambalīs during his era:

One day I was walking with the judge, 'Abū Ya'la. He asked me, "Where do you walk when you walk with one whom you revere?"

"I do not know," I replied.

"To his right," he responded, "Give him the position of the 'Imām in Ṣalāh. Keep his left side free. When he wishes to clean his nose or remove something harmful, he can do it to his left side."

17. Etiquette of preference in hospitality – begin with the eldest or most learned then to his right

The eldest person and someone with some virtue takes preference in hospitality and being honoured. Begin with him before anyone else. Then proceed with whoever is to his right in the gathering. This is in order to practice and follow upon the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. For proof of that, you may refer to the two Ḥadīth we have previously mentioned, "*Prefer the elder! Prefer the elder!*" and "*He is not of us who does not respect our elder.*" There are many such 'Aḥādīth, some of which you may read below:

'Al-'Imām Muslim narrates in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, under the chapter of, "*Etiquettes of food and drink and rulings pertaining to the Two,*" that Ḥuẓayfah bin 'al-Yamān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, "When we were invited with Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to food, we would not put down our hands [to eat] until Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had placed his hand."

'Al-'Imām an-Nawawī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ had composed a special chapter in his *Riyāduṣ Ṣāliḥīn* on this topic. He has mentioned a large number of 'Aḥādīth in that chapter. For brevity's sake, only most of them will be reproduced here, as well as his introduction:

Chapter on honouring the learned, elders and people of virtue and giving them preference over others, the loftiness of their gatherings and the manifestation of their Status.

Allāh Most High says:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

Say, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" Only they will remember [who are] people of understanding. [az-Zumar: 9]

'Abū Mas'ūd 'Uqbah bin 'Amr al-Badrī al-'Anṣārī ؓ

narrates that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

يَوْمَ الْقَوْمِ أَقْرَبُهُمْ لِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ، فَإِنْ كَانُوا فِي الْقِرَاءَةِ سَوَاءً فَأَعْلَمُهُمْ بِالسُّنَّةِ، فَإِنْ

كَانُوا فِي السُّنَّةِ سَوَاءً فَأَقْدَمُهُمْ هِجْرَةً، فَإِنْ كَانُوا فِي الْهِجْرَةِ سَوَاءً فَأَقْدَمُهُمْ سِنًا

The most well-read in the Book of Allāh should lead the people [in Ṣalāh]. If they are all equal in recitation, then the most learned of them in the Sunnah. If they are all equal in the Sunnah, the foremost amongst them in the Hijrah. If they are all equal in the Hijrah, then the most advanced of them in age.

(Narrated by Muslim)

'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه narrates that Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

لِيَلِينِي مِنْكُمْ أَلْوُ الْأَخْلَامِ وَ النَّهْيُ، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ

Those amongst you of intelligence and understanding should be closest to me [in Ṣalāh], then those closest to them, then those closest to those, then those closest to those. (Narrated by Muslim)

Jābir رضي الله عنه narrated that Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم joined the slain men of 'Uḥud in pairs, for each grave. He would ask, "Which of the two knows the most Qur'ān?" When one of the two were indicated, he placed that one in the grave first.
(Narrated by al-Bukhārī)

'Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه narrated that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:
أَرَانِي فِي الْمَنَامِ أَتَسْوَأُكَ بِسِوَاكِ، فَجَاءَنِي رَجُلَانِ أَحَدُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْآخَرِ، فَتَاوَلْتُ السِّوَاكَ الْأَصْغَرَ، فَقِيلَ لِي كَبِّرْ، فَدَفَعْتُهُ إِلَى الْأَكْبَرِ مِنْهُمَا

I dreamt that I was cleaning my teeth with a Siwāk [tooth-stick]. Two men came to me, one of which was elder than the other. I gave the Siwāk to the younger. It

was said to me, “[Prefer the] elder” so I gave it to the elder of the two. (Narrated by Muslim)

’Abū Mūsā al-’Ash’ārī رضي الله عنه narrated that Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

إِنَّ مِنْ إِجْلَالِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى إِكْرَامَ ذِي الشَّيْبَةِ الْمُسْلِمِ وَ حَامِلِ الْقُرْآنِ غَيْرِ الْعَالِي فِيهِ وَ
الْجَافِي عَنْهُ، وَ إِكْرَامَ ذِي السُّلْطَانِ الْمُقْسِطِ

Included in honouring Allāh, is to respect a Muslim who has attained old age, one who has memorised the Qur’ān and has neither been extreme nor estranged from it and honouring the just person who has authority.

(Narrated by ’Abū Dāwūd, and it is classified as Ḥasan) Maymūn bin ’Abī Shabīb رضي الله عنه narrated: A beggar came by ’Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها and she gave him a slice of bread. Thereafter a man of [distinguished] clothing and features came by her. She made him sit and he ate. She was asked about that. She replied that Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

أَنْزِلُوا النَّاسَ مَنَازِلَهُمْ

Treat people according to their station. (Narrated by ’Abū Dāwūd and also al-Ḥākim in his “Ma’rifatu ’Ulūmil Ḥadīth” who stated, “It is an authentic Ḥadīth.”)

’Abū Sa’īd Samurah bin Jundub رضي الله عنه narrated:

I was a boy during the era of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. I memorised from him, but what prevents me from talking is that there are other men present who are older than I am.

(Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

This brings us to the end of what has been extracted from al-'Imām an-Nawawī.

Thus the Sunnah is to commence with the eldest, most virtuous or learned. In other words, the person most distinguished from the rest of the gathering, for example, by his age, or immense knowledge, exalted rank, descent from Rasūlullāh ﷺ, leadership, waging Jihād in Allāh's path, great generosity in the ways of good, etc. So the Sunnah in regards hosting and honouring is to begin with such a person, thereafter proceed with the one to his right, whosoever it may be. This will therefore combine the explicit commands of mentioned in the Ḥadīth, amongst which are the command to begin with the right whilst also to prefer the eldest, "*He is not of us who does not respect our elder*" and "*Begin with the eldest,*" etc.

Due to their weak understanding and placing texts out of context, some people incorrectly claim that it is Sunnah to begin with whoever is to the right of the host, irrespective of who he is. They base this on the Ḥadīth concerning beginning with the right. This indeed applies when those present are peers, similar in achievements, virtues and age. In that case you should commence with whoever is to the right of the host. On the other hand, if they are similar, and one is distinguished by even one feature, for example age, then begin with him. He has a distinguishing virtue and should be preferred over the others. So begin with him before the others.

'Al-'Imām 'Ibn Rushd رحمه الله wrote in his encyclopaedic and magnificent book, '*Al-Bayān wat-Taḥṣīl*:

When the states of the attendees are equal or similar, then commencement is from the right, as is appropriate to noble character. In this way one avoids giving the impression of preferring one of them to the others by beginning with him. If however there is one learned, virtuous and aged amongst them, then the Sunnah in that situation is to begin with him, wherever he may be sitting in the gathering. Thereafter pass onto whoever is to his right, as was the practice of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Milk mixed with water was brought to him. A Bedouin was to his right, and 'Abū Bakr ؓ to his left. [Rasūlullāh ﷺ] drank and then gave it to the Bedouin and said, "To the right, then the right."

Do not pass onto the left, even if that person is more entitled with commencement than the person to the right, due to his knowledge, piety and age, unless you have sought his permission for that. This is what Rasūlullāh ﷺ did. A drink was brought to him. There was a boy to his right, whilst the elders were at his left. He asked the boy, "Do you permit me to give them?"

"No, by Allāh, O Messenger of Allāh!" he replied, "I cannot give preference to anyone in regards my share from you."

Rasūlullāh ﷺ then firmly placed it in the boy's hand, indicating a declaration that [the boy] was within his right.

So beginning at the right in general, is established in Sharḥah when there is no distinguishing virtue to prefer a person over the others, as I have just discussed. If there is an attribute present, which He whose legislation is correct and natural, defines as distinguishing, noble and virtuous,

then begin with he who is most imbued with that virtue. There is no doubt that that is what is desired.

Let us consider the consequence of the claim that the host should always begin with the one to his right. It may be the smallest of children or a toddler, the head of a council, his driver – and the driver may not even be Muslim – the head of a community, a tribal chief, the actual crown of a gathering – an illustrious scholar – a leader from the nobility, the grandfather, father or virtuous uncle. Does the understanding of Islām and its etiquettes allow for ignoring the highly placed ones amongst them, in terms of beginning the hosting and honouring with them, in favour of a toddler, servant or driver, then continuing with his equals or those a little higher than him? Sometimes there may be ten or even more people to the [host's] right before reaching the eldest. The host will not reach the honoured one of the gathering except after ten or twenty other people!

Far be it from the understanding and etiquette of Islām, to embellish such a travesty as etiquette and beautiful nature. If however there is a request for a drink from a junior, someone less distinguished etc. then he becomes the person entitled to it due to his request being answered. It will begin with him due to the request being his, then whoever is to his right, even if he is the youngest of the people and the lowest in status. If however it is noticed that when his requested item – the water or whatever – is presented and someone older or more virtuous casts his attention towards the item, then begin with him in consideration of Islamic etiquette in regards preference. In

doing so, [the junior] acquires a great virtue, increases in status, rises in worth and earns reward.

18. Etiquette of the Muslim with his parents in speech, raising the voice and walking

Be on full guard in regards your respect for your father and mother. They are the people most entitled to that from you.

جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ أَحَقُّ النَّاسِ بِحُسْنِ الصُّحْبَةِ مِنِّي؟ قَالَ أُمُّكَ ثُمَّ أُمَّكَ ثُمَّ أَبُوكَ ثُمَّ أَدْنَاكَ أَذْنَاكَ

A man came to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and asked, "O Messenger of Allāh, who is most entitled to me keeping good company?"

He replied, "Your mother, then your mother, then your mother, then your father, then closest to you and closest to you."

(Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

Hishām bin ‘Urwah narrated from his father that ‘Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ saw a man walking in front of another man. He asked [the man in front], "Who is this to you?"

He replied, "My father."

He thereupon said, "Do not walk in front of him. Do not sit until he sits. Do not call him by his name."

(Narrated by al-Bukhārī in al-'Adab al-Mufrad and 'Abdur Razzāq in his Muṣānnaḥ whose wording this is)

'Al-'Imām 'Abdur Raḥmān bin 'al-Qāsim 'al-'Ataqī, the Egyptian, was a student of 'al-'Imām Mālik bin 'Anas. He was born in 132 Hijrī and died in 191 Hijrī. May Allāh's mercy be upon him. 'Ibn Wahb narrated about him that he was teaching the *Mu'atta'* when he suddenly stood up and remained thus for a lengthy time. He replied, "My mother came down [from the house] to ask [someone] something. She stood and [seeing her stand] I stood due to her standing. When she went back up, I sat."

The illustrious Tābī'ī, Ṭā'ūs bin Kaysān stated, "It is part of the Sunnah to honour four people: the learned, the aged, the ruler and the parent. It is utter coarseness for a man to call his father by his name."

19. Etiquette of being good to one's parents and this is obligatory

'Al-Ḥāfīz 'al-'Imām 'Ibn 'Abdil Barr رحمته الله, wrote at the end of his book, *al-Kāfī*, a book on the jurisprudence of the respected Mālikīs:

It is an absolute obligation to be good to one's parents. This is an easy matter for whom Allāh makes it easy. Being good to them entails: being humble towards them; speaking gently with them; not to look at them except with love and respect; not speaking louder than the two of them unless it is needed to let them hear; letting them take from one's bounties; and not to eat or drink better than them.

One should not go ahead when walking with his father. Nor should he speak before his father speaks in his gathering, when he knows he is more entitled to

[speak] than him. He should utterly strive to avoid their displeasure. He should endeavour to his utmost power to please them.

To make them happy is the best deed of goodness to parents. He should hasten to respond when both summon him or if one of them summons him. If he is engaged in optional prayers, he should hasten to complete it so that he may rush to respond to them. He should never utter a word unto them except with kindness.

On the other hand, it is their obligation to assist the child in being good to them by softness and kindness from their side.

Allāh's slaves can only attain His obedience and fulfil His obligations when He helps them to do that.

20. Etiquette of welcoming one returning from a journey and how that traveller should behave

When you set out to welcome your father, a respected relative, a friend on equal terms or a companion junior to yourself; or you instead are returning from a journey to them, then pay attention to cleaning yourself, beautifying your form and neatening your appearance, in a manner appropriate to your station if he is your junior, and appropriate to his station if he is your senior. Indeed the eye gains pleasure at seeing something beautiful, neat, and clean and in proper order. Save yourself from deficiency in physical appearance, for that cuts from the joy of the meeting. It detracts from fulfilling the right of the eye to see whom it loves and honours. We understand this import from the guidance of the Noble Prophet, the saying of the Unlettered Messenger ﷺ:

إِنَّكُمْ قَادِمُونَ عَلَىٰ إِخْوَانِكُمْ فَأَحْسِنُوا لِبَاسِكُمْ وَأَصْلِحُوا رِحَالَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ تَكُونُوا
كَأَنَّكُمْ شَامَةٌ فِي النَّاسِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُحْشَ وَلَا التَّفَحُّشَ

You are about to meet your brothers. So beautify your clothing and put your mounts in order, so that you are distinguished amongst people. Allāh does not love obscenity nor forced obscenity.

(ʿAbū Dāwūd, al-ʿImām ʿAḥmad and al-Ḥākim in al-Mustadrak from Sahl bin al-Ḥanzhalīyah ﷺ)

If possible, bring a gift with you for your host or guests, in order to have something to give in return for their gifts. The eye brightens at the beauty of a meeting. It hopes to gain benefit and feel joy, outwardly and inwardly. Exchanging gifts accomplishes that. Consider the guidance of Rasūlullāh ﷺ towards that:

تَهَادُوا تَحَابُوا

*Exchange gifts, you will love each other.
(Narrated by al-Bukhārī in al-ʿAdab al-Mufrad)*

It is known from the biographies of the pious predecessors, that when they went to meet someone coming to them, they would take a gift with, even if it was only a *Siwāk* stick.

Etiquette of the host towards his guests in regards food, drink and Wuḍū'

When a guest visits you, know what the etiquettes of hosting him are, and observe the right of honouring him. I do not mean that you should go to extremes in regards his food and drink. The Sunnah is moderation in this matter as well. What is desired, is that you honour him, without being wasteful. I mean that you should be good to him in regards his seating, conversation and sleeping. Show him the *Qiblah*, and where he can clean himself and perform Wuḍū', and all associated matters.

When you present a towel to him so that he may dry himself from the water of *Wuḍū'*; or after washing his hands before or after eating, then present a clean towel which you and your children are not using. There is no problem in you also presenting him with fragrance to perfume himself, and a mirror to look at, that he may attend to his appearance. The items he uses to clean himself should themselves be clean. Hide whatever is inappropriate for a guest and stranger to see, before he enters the bathroom.

Consider his comfort when he sleeps and rests by you. Save him from the shouting of the children and the clamour of the house, as far as you are able to. Keep the clothing of the females and anything else associated with them, far from his gaze. That is a desired honour, by which your dignity and his dignity is maintained. Decorate for him, without artificial formality. Serve him with pleasure and per your capability. Do not neglect him or show less

respect to him because of a previous relationship of love and companionship. When our predecessors used to visit each other, they made a good appearance for each other. Al-Bukhārī narrated this in *'al-'Adab al-Mufrad*.

Be like a gentle shadow when you are the one visiting a friend or relative. Do not crowd him and impose upon him. Consider his tasks and times of work. Keep the time of your visit by him as short as you can make it. Every person has tasks, obligations and responsibilities which may or may not be apparent. So be considerate in your visit. Assist him in his personal tasks, completing his work and fulfilling his obligations. Do not let your gaze wander about in an investigating manner whilst you are in his home, especially if you are invited to a room not specifically prepared for guests. Lower your gaze when you are in such a room, for you may see that which is not appropriate to see. Do not ask excessive or unnecessary questions.

21. Etiquette of a Muslim when visiting his sick brother, its reward and it being an obligation of Islām upon him

Amongst the rights of your brother is that you visit him when he is ill. In doing so, you support and water the tree of brotherhood and the bonds of Islām. It earns an immense reward which one desirous of increasing his good cannot overlook. Our Master, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمَ إِذَا عَادَ أَخَاهُ الْمُسْلِمَ لَمْ يَزَلْ فِي خُرْفَةِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ

When a Muslim visits his ill Muslim brother, he remains in the delight of Paradise until he returns.

“O Rasūlullāh!” he was asked, “What is the delight of Paradise?”

“Its fruit,” he replied.

(Narrated by Muslim and others)

Rasūlullāh ﷺ also said:

مَنْ عَادَ مَرِيضًا لَمْ يَزَلْ يَجُوزُ فِي الرَّحْمَةِ حَتَّى يَجْلِسَ فَإِذَا جَلَسَ اعْتَمَسَ فِيهَا

He who visits a sick person continues to dive into mercy until he sits. When he sits, he immerses himself in it.

(Narrated by 'al-'Imām 'Aḥmad and 'Ibn Ḥibbān in his Ṣaḥīḥ)

22. Etiquette of a Muslim when visiting the sick in regards time, clothing and speech

Do not forget that when you visit the sick that there are etiquettes expected from the visitor, so that the visit lifts the sick person's spirits and takes him away from his anxiety. This will aid in lightening his pain, without negating the reward he receives for being patient.

It is appropriate that the visitor does not extend his visit to the sick for a long duration. The conditions which the sick undergoes do not allow for lengthy visits to him. Visiting the sick should be like the sitting of the lecturer. In other words, as short as the time the 'Imām sits between the two sermons of Friday. A poem in this regard states:

أَدَبُ الْعِيَادَةِ أَنْ تَكُونَ مُسَلِّمًا وَ تَكُونَ فِي أَثَرِ السَّلَامِ مُودِّعًا

*The Etiquette of visiting the sick to be one saying Salām;
After the Salām be one departing.*

Another states:

حُسْنُ الْعِيَادَةِ يَوْمٌ بَيْنَ يَوْمَيْنِ وَ أَقْعُدُ قَلِيلًا كَمَثَلِ اللَّحْظِ بِالْعَيْنِ
لَا تُبْرَمَنَّ عَلِيلًا فِي مَسَائِلَةٍ يَكْفِيكَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ تَسْأَلُهُ بِحَرْفَيْنِ

*A good visit to the sick is one day out of two;
Sit a short while like the blink of an eye.
Do not trouble the ill with questions;
To ask him two letters is sufficient for you.*

In other words, the visitor saying to the sick, “How are you? May Allāh cure you.”

’Al-Ḥāfiẓh ’al-’Imām ’Ibn ‘Abdil Barr رَحِمَهُ اللهُ, wrote at the end of his book, *al-Kāfi*, a book on the jurisprudence of the respected Mālikīs:

One who visits a healthy person or a sick person should sit where he commands him to. A man knows best what should be hidden in his home. Visiting the sick is an emphasised Sunnah. The best visiting of the sick is the shortest in time. The visitor should not sit long with the sick, unless he is a good friend and that makes him happy.

23. Etiquette of a Muslim in visiting the sick in regards his clothing, cleanliness, speech and keeping away from vexation

It is but correct for one visiting the sick to be clean in his attire, pleasant in smell and good in his hygiene, so that the spirit of the sick may be cheered and his health revitalised. On the other hand, it is not good to go wearing fancy flashy garments, just as the fragrance applied should not be intense. That may disturb and harm the sick due to his weak tolerance and strength.

It is wholly inopportune to speak about or otherwise inform the sick person of matters which will sadden him, such as news of financial losses which affect him, mention of death, any news the sick person finds unpleasant, or any such news which will irritate the sick person, sadden him or otherwise negatively affect his health or mind.

It is not proper for the visitor to ask penetrating questions in regards the sick person's illness. Such examination will not benefit the visitor unless he is a doctor specialising in that illness. Nor should the visitor recommend a medication or food which had benefited him or about which he had heard that it benefits. That may lead the sick person to consume that item which – due to either ignorance or intensity – harms him and undoes the efforts of the doctor. It may even lead to the demise of the sick person.

It is also improper to question the doctor in the presence of the sick person, if you are not a doctor or specialist. You

could cause the sick person to start doubting his prescription.

24. Etiquette of a Muslim when forced to convey disliked news such as the death of a beloved

If you are forced to give news on something bad, an accident or the death of a relative or dear one to your friend, relative or someone similar, then it would be good of you to be sensitive when conveying the news to him. Prepare him so that the news of the disaster falls on him in as light a way as possible. So for example, when you are informing someone about a death, say, "I heard that that person was severely ill. It got worse. I have now heard that he has passed away. May Allāh Most High have mercy upon him."

Do not inform about a death, in a manner which some people do, "Do you know who died today?" or by saying, "Death has come today upon ..." It is far better for you to commence by mentioning the name of the person who had passed away, before mentioning that he had died. Should you ask, "Do you know who died today?" or say, "Death has come today upon ..." the mind of the person you are speaking to will immediately afflict him with various frightening thoughts. It may be that someone closer to him is ill, old or young, and your phrasing of your question or statement might cast him into extreme anxiety. The news will be more bearable if you begin with the person's name, "So-and-so has passed away today." Additional anxiety beyond the actual sad or bad news will be avoided.

Be careful of your wording when you divulge the news of death by fire, drowning or a mishap. Prepare him so that the blow of the news will be softened upon him. Mention the calamity in a gentle manner. Do not bang the ears of your friend, relative person in your gathering with a sudden hammering of bad news. Some hearts are too weak to bear this. Your sudden ill tidings may have severe adverse effects. Some people may even faint or lose consciousness, or their hearing and eyesight may even be affected. So when you are forced to mention sudden deaths, be delicate about how you break the news.

If there is some news you have to convey, then plan your timing appropriately. Do not inform him when he is eating, before going to sleep, at a time of some anxiety and agitation or similar conditions. Exercising wisdom and intelligence at this juncture is amongst the best of what you can adorn yourself with. May Allāh befriend you and care for you.

25. Etiquettes and effects of a Muslim offering condolences upon someone's death

When your relative or friend loses a relative, close one or dear one, then do not forget to offer your condolences upon his loss. Do not delay in this. Show that you share in his loss and grief, for that is amongst the obligation of friendship, family and Islām. If you are able to, then do join in conveying the deceased to his final resting place. You will earn an immense reward from this quiet discourse unto you, and a lesson which will tell you and remind you destination written for each of the creation.

وَكَانَتْ فِي حَيَاتِكَ لِي عِظَاتٌ فَأَنْتَ الْيَوْمَ أَوْعِظُ مِنْكَ حَيًّا

*You were a source of lessons for me during your life;
Today you are a greater lesson for me than what you were
when alive.*

Our Master, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

حَقُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ خَمْسٌ، رَدُّ السَّلَامِ وَعِيَادَةُ الْمَرِيضِ وَاتِّبَاعُ الْجَنَائِزِ.....

*The rights of a Muslim over another Muslim are five:
Replying to Salām; visiting the sick; following funerals....
(Narrated by 'al-Bukhārī and Muslim)*

Rasūlullāh ﷺ also said:

عُودُوا الْمَرْصِيَّ وَاتَّبِعُوا الْجَنَائِزَ تُذَكِّرُكُمْ الْآخِرَةَ

*Visit the sick and follow funerals, they will remind you of
the Hereafter.
(Narrated by 'al-'Imām 'Aḥmad)*

26. Etiquette of condolences, commiseration, and praying for mercy and forgiveness for the deceased

When you offer condolences and sympathise with your brother, relative or someone you know who has been afflicted with loss, then it is recommended that you pray for your deceased brother in a manner similar to what our Master, Rasūlullāh ﷺ, prayed for 'Abū Salamah رضي الله عنه

when he passed away and Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ consoled with his family:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِأَبِي سَلَمَةَ وَارْفَعْ دَرَجَتَهُ فِي الْمُهْدِيِّينَ وَاخْلُفْهُ فِي عَقِبِهِ فِي الْعَابِرِينَ
وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَلَهُ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ اللَّهُمَّ افْسَحْ لَهُ فِي قَبْرِهِ وَنَوِّرْ لَهُ فِيهِ

*O Allāh, forgive 'Abū Salamah, raise his rank amongst the guided ones and succeed him after him amongst those who remain – i.e. be there for his progeny who remain behind – and forgive us and him, O Cherishing-Lord of all the worlds. O Allah! Grant him spaciousness in his grave and fill it with light for him.
(Narrated by Muslim)*

It would be good to keep your talk with the one being consoled to matters which will lighten his grief. Mention the reward of the loss and being patient upon it. Mention how the life of this world is limited and comes to an end, and that the Hereafter is the permanent abode. It would also be good if you could quote some relevant Verses of the Noble Qur'ān and 'Aḥādīth which remind us of that. You may also mention some of the eloquent statements of the Pious Predecessors. So for example, recite amongst these of what Allāh Most High says:

...وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ (155) الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ
رَاجِعُونَ (156) أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

... glad tidings to the patient. Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we shall return." Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Cherishing-Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided. [al-Baqarah: 155-157]

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۗ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّوْنَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۚ فَمَنْ زُحِرَ عَنِ النَّارِ
وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ ۗ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your [full] compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So he who is drawn away from the Fire and entered into Paradise has attained success. And what is the life of this world except the chattels of delusion. [Āl-‘Imrān : 185]

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ (26) وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

All on [earth] will perish and [only] the Countenance of your Cherishing-Lord, Possessor of Majesty and Honour will remain. [ar-Raḥmān: 26-27]

Mention statements of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, such as:

اللَّهُمَّ أَجْرِي فِي مُصِيبَتِي ، وَأَخْلِفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا

O Allāh! Reward me in my loss and replace it with something better. (Narrated by Muslim and others)

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا أَخَذَ وَلَهُ مَا أَعْطَىٰ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى

To Allāh belongs what He took and to Him belongs what He gave. Everything is according to a stated time by Him.

(Narrated by 'al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

Or you can say similar words to what Rasūlullāh ﷺ said when bidding farewell to his departed son, 'Ibrāhīm
ﷺ:

إِنَّ الْعَيْنَ تَدْمَعُ وَالْقَلْبَ يَحْزَنُ، وَلَا نَقُولُ إِلَّا مَا يُرْضَى رَبَّنَا،

وَإِنَّا بِفِرَاقِكَ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَمَحْزُونُونَ

*Indeed the eye sheds tears and the heart grieves, but we do not say except that which pleases our Cherishing-Lord. We are indeed most sad at your departure, O 'Ibrāhīm.
(Narrated by 'al-Bukhārī and Muslim)*

It is also appropriate that amongst the sayings of the Predecessors in regards condolences and lightening of grief, which you mention, is the saying of our Master, 'Umar ؓ, "Everyday people say that this one has died and that one has died. Most definitely there will be a day when it will be said that 'Umar has died."

Mention the statement of the righteous Khalīfah, 'Umar bin 'Abdil 'Azīz رَحِمَهُ اللهُ، "The man who does not have a living father between him and his father 'Ādam, is already drowning in death."

You may quote the illustrious Tābi'ī, 'al-Ḥasan 'al-Baṣrī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ، "O son of 'Ādam! You are composed of a set amount of days. Whenever a day passes, part of you passes."

He also said, "Allāh has not made a relaxation for the believers besides Paradise."

Mālik bin Dīnār رَحِمَهُ اللهُ, the student of 'al-Ḥasan 'al-Baṣrī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, "The wedding feast of those who fear Allāh is on the Day of Resurrection."

A poet said:

وَإِنَّا لَنَفْرَحُ بِالْأَيَّامِ نَقَطَعُهَا وَكُلُّ يَوْمٍ مَضَى يُدْنِي مِنَ الْأَجَلِ

*We rejoice at the days we have passed through;
Yet each day that passes brings death ever nearer.*

Amongst the most delicate of poems in regards condolences is:

إِنَّا نَعَزُّبِكَ لَا أَنَا عَلَى ثِقَةٍ مِنَ الْحَيَاةِ وَلَكِنَّ سُنَّةَ الدِّينِ
فَمَا الْمَعْرَى بِبَاقٍ مِثِّيهِ وَلَا الْمَعْرَى وَإِنْ عَاشَا إِلَى حِينِ

*Indeed we do not condole with you convinced;
That we shall live, but because it is the way of our religion.
Neither the one condoled remains after the deceased;
Nor the condoler even if both live for long.*

Another appropriate poem on the occasion is:

نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا كُلَّ يَوْمٍ وَلَيْلَةٍ وَلَا بُدَّ مِنْ يَوْمٍ نَمُوتُ وَلَا نَحْيَا

*We live and die every day and night;
The day will certainly come when we die and do not live.*

Another poem which paints a most true picture of life and the heedlessness of its end:

وَإِنَّا لَنَحْيُ الدُّنْيَا كَرَكَبٍ سَفِينَةٍ نَّظْنُ وَوُقُوفًا وَ الزَّمَانُ بِنَا يَجْرِي

We are like travellers on a ship;

We think we stand still while time sails us away.

I have mentioned these noble Verses, 'Aḥādīth and statements appropriate to condolences, because I witnessed some people uttering most inappropriate statements in the gathering meant to condole with the person who has just lost someone near or dear and whose heart is broken at that moment. These kind of statements make the bereaved's heart heavy and is disliked by a grieving heart. This is contrary to decent taste, and etiquette in 'Islām.

27. Etiquette of sitting and talking in regards lowering the voice, topic of discussion and when the speaker addresses him

Amongst the etiquettes of a gathering, is that when you address your guest or any other person, you should keep your voice kind and soft. Raise your voice when speaking only as per need. Speaking louder than needed is disrespectful to the one you are speaking to. It points to how little honour you have for him. It is important to observe this etiquette with your friend or peer; one you know or do not know; your junior or your senior. It is even more emphasised to observe this respect for one's parents,

those who stand in their place or those people whom you should respect amongst the virtuous and the elders. Here are some texts which will show this:

In the Qur'ān, Luqmān the Wise ﷺ, advises his son:

وَاعْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ

Lower your voice... [Luqmān: 19]

In other words, keep it soft and do not raise your voice when you speak to people. Unnecessary loudness of voice is disliked and ugly.

Allāh says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ
كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ (2) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَعْضُونَ
أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ
وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

O you who have believed! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless and you do not realise. 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-Hujarāt: 2-3]

In *Ṣaḥīḥ 'al-Bukhārī* ‘Abdullāh bin ‘az-Zubayr رضي الله عنه narrates that after the revelation of the above, ‘Umar bin ‘al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه started to speak to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, like one whispering a secret. He would not speak loud enough to hear, so Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم used to ask him [what he had said]. He was so extreme in lowering his voice that he had to be asked about some of the words he had said.

‘Al-’Imām Muḥammad bin Sīrīn was a Tābi’ī and an illustrious leader amongst the jurists. In his biographical sketch of him, ‘al-Ḥāfīz ḥabīb ‘aḏ-Ḍahabī رحمته الله narrated that Bakkār bin Muḥammad said that ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Awn said, “If a man should have seen Muḥammad bin Sīrīn with his mother, he would not have recognised him. He would have thought him to be some sick person due to the softness of his speech with her.”

‘Abdullāh bin ‘Awn ‘al-Baṣrī was a student of ‘al-’Imām Muḥammad bin Sīrīn and a notable ‘Imām. In his biographical sketch of him, ‘al-Ḥāfīz ḥabīb ‘al-’Imām ḥabīb ‘aḏ-Ḍahabī رحمته الله narrated, “His mother called him. He replied in a voice louder than hers. Fear overcame him for doing so, so he freed two slaves.”

The famous reciter of one of the modes of the Qur’ān, ‘Āṣim bin Bahdalah ‘al-Kūfī said, “I went to ‘Umar bin ‘Abdīl ‘Azīz. A man was speaking by him with a raised voice. ‘Umar then said, ‘Silence! Stop! A man’s speech should be so much that his brother or one sitting with him can hear him.”

28. Etiquette of listening with attention to your companion's speech even if you already know it

It is also an etiquette of the gathering that should your companion speak of a matter, thinking that you do not know about it, but you in fact already know about it, then do not embarrass him by making your knowledge known to him. Similarly if he conveys some news, then do not join him in giving the news, desirous that those present should know that you already know this news. That would be most inconsiderate and disrespectful of you. The illustrious 'Imām, 'Abdullāh bin Wahb 'al-Qurashī, the Egyptian, was a companion unto the likes of 'al-'Imām Mālik, 'al-Layth bin Sa'd and 'ath-Thawrī, etc. He said, "Very often I hear a man narrating a Ḥadīth, which I had heard before his parents had united (i.e. before his birth and existence), but I remain silent before him, as if I had never heard it before."

'Ibrāhīm bin 'al-Junayd said that a wise man said to his son, "Learn the beauty of listening with attention, just as you learn the beauty of speech. Listening carefully; turning your face towards him and looking at him; and not joining him in a speech you already know, is your way of giving the speaker respite to convey his message to you."

'Al-Ḥāfiẓh 'al-Khaṭīb 'al-Baghdādī composed the following poem on this topic:

وَلَا تُشَارِكْ فِي الْحَدِيثِ أَهْلَهُ وَإِنْ عَرَفْتَ فَرَعَهُ وَأَصْلَهُ

Do not join in people's speech;

Even if you know its every branch down to the root.

29. Etiquette of seeking clarity on unclear matters to you, or matters of differences, when to argue and arguing in a good way when learning

Amongst the etiquettes of a gathering is that when the person speaking to you says something unclear to you, then be patient until he completes his speech. You may question him with delicacy and bring up the question in a good way. Do not cut his speech whilst he is talking. That contravenes the etiquette of listening respectfully and creates dislike within a person. The exception is a gathering of lessons and teaching. Such a gathering has a different protocol. Here it is in fact good to question and differ once the teacher has completed his statement or explained a certain meaning. However, you should differ with all due respect and with intelligence. The Khalīfah, 'al-Ma'mūn, said, "Knowledge acquired through differing is firmer than knowledge acquired through mere following."

'Al-Haytham bin 'Adī was a scholar, expert in literature and historian. He was a courtier of the Khalīfah 'Abū Ja'far 'al-Manṣūr, 'al-Mahdī, 'al-Hādī and ar-Rashīd. He said that the wise ones said, "Amongst evil character is to take over a man's speech and to object in order to cut his words."

Etiquette of questions and answers in a gathering from others to you and from you to others

Another etiquette of gatherings is that when your companion is asked a question, do not hasten to answer on his behalf. You should not say anything about it, unless you have asked him first if you may do so. That would help preserve respect, is nobler to your personality and raises what you have to say and your status. The illustrious Tābi‘ī, Mujāhid bin Jabr, narrated that Luqmān the Wise said to his son, “Beware of answering when someone else was asked the question, as if that is some bounty you have gained or prize you have won. In doing so, you belittle the one who was questioned and are harsh towards the questioner. You show the foolish ones that instead of forbearance, you are just as foolish as them and have bad manners.”

ʿAsh-Shaykh ʿIbn Baṭṭah was a Muḥaddith and Ḥambalī jurist. He said:

I was with ʿal-ʿImām ʿAbū ʿUmar the Ascetic. (The memoriser of ʿAḥādīth, the great scholar, the expert in literature, Muḥammad bin ʿAbdil Wāḥid ʿal-Baghdādī who was called, “The Boy of Tha‘lab.”) He was asked a question and I hastened to answer the questioner. ʿAbū ʿUmar the Ascetic turned to me and said, “Do you know what a meddling invasive person is?” (In other words you have meddled). He thus embarrassed me.

30. A word to Muslim sisters in regards the Etiquettes of times of visiting, their gatherings, their speech and what is appropriate to speak

A brief word to my dear believing Muslim sister – when you intend to visit some family or believing friends, then be sure to choose the correct day for your visit, as well as appropriate beginning and end times. There are times when visiting is good, and there are times when visiting is not good, even if it be between family and friends.

Let your way of visiting be like a welcome shade, delicate and light. Do not be a heavy tiresome burden. Do not be invasive nor prolong the visit. Visits are a means of maintaining ties and watering friendships and relations. The visit is pleasant when light and short. A long tiresome visit is burdensome. Talks and night-chats then inevitably move from good valuable speech to cheap worthless prattle. The illustrious Tābi‘ī, Muḥammad bin Shihāb ‘az-Zuhrī said, “When a gathering becomes long, Satan gets a share in it.”


If not the entirety of your talk during the visit, then at least the bulk of it, should be beneficial speech. Stay far from gossip, backbiting, frivolous and idle speech and anything else which is just a waste of time when visiting an intelligent Muslim sister.

Etiquette of entering a place where people are sleeping, whether in your house or your brother's house

If you enter a place where people are sleeping, then have consideration for them, whether it is day or night. Be soft in your motions and voice by them. Do not be noisy in your sounds, your entering and your leaving. Be kind and considerate. Surely you have heard the statement of Rasūlullāh ﷺ:

مَنْ يُحْرَمِ الرَّفْقَ يُحْرَمِ الْخَيْرَ كُلَّهُ

He who has been deprived of kindness has been deprived of all good. (Narrated by Muslim)

The illustrious Ṣaḥābī, 'al-Miqdād bin 'al-'Aswad 'al-Kindī  narrated:

We would set aside for Rasūlullāh ﷺ his share of milk. He would come at night offering Salām [in a voice which was soft] as not to awaken the one asleep, [but loud enough] so that the one awake could hear him.

(Narrated by Muslim and 'at-Tirmizī)

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ stood for Tahajjud at night, he would recite in a voice appealing to the one awake, without keeping awake the one falling asleep.

31. Etiquette of attending the marriage ceremony and preparing for it

If you are invited to attend the marriage ceremony or wedding celebrations, then do so. Participating in this is a noble Sunnah, as long as there are no factors present which are prohibited in the Sharī‘ah. The natural way of the Islāmic Law counts marriage as an act of worship and obedience. It is therefore recommended to conduct the ceremony in the Masjid. The jurists have explicitly stated this. The Ḥadīth also states:

أَعْلِنُوا هَذَا النِّكَاحَ وَاجْعَلُوهُ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ وَاضْرِبُوا عَلَيْهِ بِالذُّفُوفِ

Publicise marriages, perform them in the Masājid (mosques) and announce them with the Daff [ʿArabic tambourine]

(Narrated by ʿat-Tirmizī and ʿIbn Mājah)

ʿal-ʿImām ʿAḥmad, ʿal-Ḥākim and others also narrate what supports the narration of, “Publicise marriages.”

Another Ḥadīth states:

فَصَلِّ مَا بَيْنَ الْحَلَالِ الصَّوْتِ وَالدَّفِّ فِي النِّكَاحِ

[Announcing] the marriage by voice and Daff separates between the permissible [marriage] and prohibited [adultery]

(Narrated by ʿAḥmad, at-Tirmizī, ʿan-Nasāʿī and ʿIbn Mājah)

Rasūlullāh ﷺ thus allowed women to beat the *Daff* at weddings, and there is no difference of opinion on this. In regards males, according to some scholars, the more authentic view is that it is also allowed.

This is to announce and publicise the marriage, that people near and far may know of it. The Sharī'ah has a most lofty aim in such announcements, including distinguishing between filthy prohibited relationships and pure permissible marriages. As has been mentioned, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "*[Announcing] the marriage by voice and Daff separates between the permissible [marriage] and prohibited [adultery].*"

The scholars have mentioned that "voice" means to announce the marriage and mention it amongst the people. It also includes the ululating cries [found amongst some Arabs]: the *Zaghradah* of the females and *Tardīd* of the males.

By presenting yourself at the ceremony, you are helping to fulfil the purpose of the announcement, and increase the testimony of the wedding. You are participating with your believing brother or sister in a pious deed which protects half the religion of both parties – fear Allāh in the other half! The joy which the relatives and pious friends display at their union is a means of honouring both husband and wife. [These guests] should supplicate for their righteousness, success, good fortune and ability from Allāh to perform good deeds. These are amongst the obligations of Islāmic brotherhood amongst the Muslims.

When you are invited to a wedding, then your intention of accepting it should be that you are going to witness a blessed and good invitation; the initiation of a happy union decreed by Islāmic Law, to which we have been commanded to attend by Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Do however observe the etiquettes which have been indicated before this. Beautify yourself within the ambit of Islāmic Law, when attending this noble and wholesome gathering. The Ṣaḥābah ﷺ used to attend to their appearance when visiting each other. Let your speech be appropriate and joyful when you begin speaking or join in a conversation. Do not speak on such matters which will sadden the listeners and depress their hearts. A believer is intelligent and wise.

It is recommended that you congratulate whichever of the two from the bridal party, with the words of Rasūlullāh ﷺ:

بَارَكَ اللهُ لَكَ وَبَارَكَ عَلَيْكَ وَجَمَعَ بَيْنَكُمَا فِي خَيْرٍ

May Allāh bless you and bestow blessings upon you and join the two of you in good.

(Narrated by 'Abū Dāwūd and at-Tirmizī and authenticated by Ibn Mājah and 'al-Ḥākim)

Do not say the words of congratulations which some utter, “May you live in harmony and beget sons.” This dates from the era of pre-Islamic Ignorance and was banned by Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Allāh has instead blessed us with the Du‘ā’ of the Noble Messenger ﷺ which has been mentioned. Another Du‘ā’ from the Sunnah is:

بَارَكَ اللهُ لَكُمْ وَبَارَكَ عَلَيْكُمْ

*May Allāh bless you and bestow blessings upon you
(Narrated by 'an-Nasā'ī and 'Ibn Mājah)*

'Ā'ishah  narrated:

The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ married me. [My mother] fetched me and took me to the house. There were women from the 'Anṣār in the house. They said:

عَلَى الْخَيْرِ وَالتَّبَرُّكِ وَعَلَى خَيْرِ طَائِرٍ

*Upon goodness and blessings and good fortune.
(Narrated by 'al-Bukhārī)*

That Law which is disposed towards the natural state, has permitted women to sing at weddings, as long as the songs are within permissible ambits. They may beat the *Daff* whilst reciting. These songs should not extol romance, physical beauty, or for example praise the female's cheeks, the man's physique or in any way promote lewdness. Let them instead recite clean and refined words which manifest happiness and joy at the blessed marriage.

'Ā'ishah  narrated:

A woman was taken in her marital procession to a man from the 'Anṣār. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

يَا عَائِشَةُ مَا كَانَ مَعَكُمْ هُو؟ فَإِنَّ الْأَنْصَارَ - أَيُّ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ - يُعْجِبُهُمُ اللَّهُو

*O 'Ā'ishah, what entertainment did you have with you?
For indeed the 'Anṣār (the people of 'al-Madīnah) love their entertainment. (Narrated by 'al-Bukhārī)*

Entertainment here means songs and beating of the *Daff*.

After mentioning this Ḥadīth, 'al-Ḥāfīz ḥ Ibn Ḥajar, states in *'al-Fath 'al-Bārī*:

In the narration of Sharīk [one of the narrators of the Ḥadīth], according to 'aṭ-Ṭabrānī in 'al-'Awsaṭ, also from 'Ā'ishah:

The Prophet then said, "Did you send a girl with her to beat the Daff and sing?"

I asked, "What should she say?"

He said, "She should say..."

أَتَيْنَاكُمْ أَتَيْنَاكُمْ فَحَيَّانَا وَحَيَّاكُمْ
 وَلَوْلَا الذَّهَبُ الْأَحْمَرُ مَا حَلَّتْ بِوَادِيكُمْ
 وَلَوْلَا الحِنْطَةُ السَّمْرَاءُ مَا سَمِنَتْ عَدَارِيكُمْ

We have come unto you, we have come unto you; long life unto us, long life unto you.

If not for red gold she would not have come to your valley.

If not for brown wheat your virgins would not be fattened.

[Translator's note: Mahr (dowry) is a requirement for a valid marriage. Ancient societies in general and the Arabs in particular found plump women more attractive than slim women].

So the women may sing along these clean and refined lines. As for songs of love, romance and lewdness, these should be avoided and are forbidden.

Conclusion

These were but a few of the etiquettes of 'Islām. They are the etiquettes of your fathers and grandfathers. I have presented them to you in a clear and understandable manner, so that you may act and implement them. The best field for implementation is your own home, the home of your brother, your own person and the person of your brother. So do not neglect to establish what etiquettes you can amongst you and your brethren, claiming that there are no formalities between family and brothers. In fact, the people most entitled to your kindness and consideration are your own family and companions. We have previously narrated:

جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ أَحَقُّ النَّاسِ
بِحُسْنِ الصُّحْبَةِ مِنِّي؟ قَالَ أُمَّكَ ثُمَّ أُمَّكَ ثُمَّ أَبُوكَ ثُمَّ أَدْنَاكَ ثُمَّ أَدْنَاكَ

A man came to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and asked, "O Messenger of Allāh, who is most entitled to me keeping good company?"

He replied, "Your mother, then your mother, then your mother, then your father, then closest to you and closest to you."

(Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

So my dear brother, do not neglect the people most entitled to the goodness of your company. Do not show preference to others instead, for to do so is to deceive yourself; wrong the right which is upon you; and avoid the

guidance of our Master, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Seek Allāh's assistance in gaining His pleasure and observing the etiquettes of His Sharī'ah. He befriends and cares for the pious.

May Allāh look after you, your family and your loved ones. May He assist you in implementing His command and obedience; and following His Nabī صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and having genuine love for Him, through His favour and generosity.

Allāh's salutations and much, much peace upon our Master and Prophet, Muḥammad, and upon his family and companions. All praise belong to Allāh. Cherishing-Lord of the worlds.

I have written this for you, hoping for your Du'ā' in return,

'Abdul Fattāḥ 'Abū Ghuddah

و الحمد لله و صلى الله على النبي الكريم

Notes