

5. Social Manners

5.1 RESPECT AND FAVOUR THE ELDERLY Recognize the status of the elderly and give them due respect. When walking with them, walk slightly behind, to their right. Let them enter and exit first. If you meet them, greet them properly and respectfully. If you discuss something with them, let them speak first, and listen to them attentively and graciously. If the conversation involves debate, you should remain polite, calm, and kind-hearted and you should lower your voice. Never forget to remain respectful.

Let me review with you some of the Prophet's sayings and traditions that uphold these polite manners. Imam Bukhari and Muslim¹ reported that Abdullah bin Sahl made a trip with Mahisa bin Masoud in Zayed to Khaibar. When they were to about to return, Mahisa found Abdullah had been murdered. He went to the Prophet with his older brother, Howaisa and the victim's brother, Abdul Rahman bin Sahl. Mahisa who witnessed the incident started to talk, but the Prophet said, "the elder, the elder." At that, Howaisa spoke and then Mahisa

Another story emphasizes this behaviour further. When he was young, Abdullah bin Omar was at a gathering of the Prophet and his senior companions like Abu Bakr and his father. The Prophet asked his companions, "Tell what is the tree that does not shed its leaves and which is like the Muslim." The companions started suggesting names of desert trees. Abdullah bin Omar thought it was the date-palm. Since he was the youngest, and seeing Abu Bakr and Omar silent, he shied away and said nothing. The Prophet told his companions: "It is the palm tree". Later, Abdullah told his father that he knew the right answer but shied away. Omar said to his son "For you to have said it then worth a lot."

Imam Ahmad, Al-Hakim and Al-Tabarani reported that 'Ubada bin Al-Sami^t stated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "Whoever does not respect our elders is not one of us." Another version reported: "Whoever does not respect our elders, is not compassionate to our youth, and does not give our scholars due honour, he is not one of us."

This should not be taken to belittle the youth or look down on them. Imam Bukhari reported that Ibn Abbas narrated that Omar was allowing him to attend his court with seniors who attended Badr. Some of them felt uneasy and asked, "Why are you permitting him to attend when he is as young as our children?" Omar replied, "He is [knowledgeable] as you well know." Another version elaborates that Omar asked the seniors to explain Sura Al-Fatiha and only Abdullah in Abbas explained it correctly. Ibn Abbas said, "I thought he asked the question just to

demonstrate my knowledge to them.”

5.2 THE ELDERLY ARE TO LEAD PRAYERS The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) taught the youth the manners of companionship and the custom of giving precedence to elders. Al-Bukhari and Muslim reported that the honoured companion Malik bin Al-Hwairith (RA) said: “I was with a youth group that visited the Messenger of Allah in Madina for twenty nights. The Messenger of Allah was very kind and compassionate. He sensed that we might have missed our families back home and he asked us about whom we had left behind. When we informed him, he said: ‘Go back to your families, live with them, teach them Islam and tell them of the good deeds. At the times of prayer, let one of you call the Azan, and have your eldest lead the prayer.’ “

The Prophet (PBUH) specified in this particular case that the eldest should lead the prayers since they were equal in their knowledge and learning. Being older in such a case merits leading the prayers. If a person is more knowledgeable, then he should lead the prayer since knowledge is an honor higher than age as could be seen in the Hadiths on this subject.

If the prayers were offered at a house, the host is entitled to lead it. Out of respect, he may request a person who is more knowledgeable, older or more prominent. If the guest declines, the host should not hesitate to lead the prayers. Imam Ahmad reported in his Musnad² that Abdullah ibn Masoud visited Abu Musa Al-Ashari. When it was time to pray, Abu Musa asked Ibn Masoud, “Please lead the prayers since you are older and have more knowledge.” Ibn Masoud said, “No, you lead the prayer. This is your house and praying area. You should lead the prayer.” Abu Musa did lead the prayer then.

5.3 WALKING WITH THE ELDERLY To illustrate this point, I will cite jurist ‘Ali bin Mubarak Al-Karkhi (–487H), who studied under Imam, Abi Y’ala Al-Hanbali, himself a jurist and judge and the chief Shaikh of the Hanbali School of Law: ³ “One day, Judge Abu ‘Yala said to me, while walking with him: ‘If you walked with someone you honour, where would you walk?’ I said: ‘I do not know.’ He said, ‘Walk to his right. Place him at the position of Imam in the prayer. Leave his left side clear in case he needs to spit or to get rid of dirt.’ “⁴

¹ Bukhari 4:80; 8:29 and Muslim 5:100

² 1:46

³ Ibn Rajab Al-Hanbali. Zayl Tabaqat Al-Hanabila, 1:87.

⁴ If you have to spit, depending on the circumstances, you may prefer to use a handkerchief or a tissue to keep your surroundings clean. However, if this is not possible, the Sunna dictates that you should spit to your left. Al-Tabarani reported that while sick, Mu’az bin Jabal (RA), almost spat to his right, but then remembered not to. He said: “I never spat to my right side since I accepted Islam.” The narrators of this Hadith are trustworthy, as cited in *Majma’ Al-Zawa’id* by Al-Haithamy.

An interesting story in this regard happened among three Muslim scholars. They were Judge Ahmad bin Omar bin Suriah (249-306 A.H.), Faqih Mohammad bin Dawood Al-Zaheri (255 - 297 A.H.), and Linguist Naftawih (244-323 A.H.). They were walking along together when they came to a very narrow passageway, and each wanted the other to go ahead. Ibn Suraih said, “A narrow street brings ill manners.” Ibn Dawood responded, “Though it points out status.” Naftawih said, “When friendship prevails, formalities disappear.”

The story does not tell who went ahead of the others, but it is likely that it was Ahmad bin Suriah since he was a judge and a prominent Imam at the time and ranked above his two companions. He may have said “A narrow street rings ill manners” apologizing out of politeness for going ahead. He could not have said it if any of the two moved ahead since that would have been impolite. There is a possibility that Naftawih went ahead since his words could be an apology for doing that since he is the least ranked. It is just wonderful to see such perfect behaviour and nice apologies.

5.4 THE ELDERLY ARE TO BE SERVED FIRST Give precedence to the elderly or to dignitaries, ahead of anyone else. After that, you may proceed with those on their right if you want to follow the practice of the Prophet (PBUH). The evidence supporting this manner in addition to the two Hadiths mentioned above, is illustrated in many Hadiths, some of which are cited below:

Imam Muslim reported in his Sahih⁵ in the Chapter on the Manners and Rules of Eating and Drinking, that Huzaifa bin Al-Yaman (RA) said: “Whenever we were invited to a meal with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), we would not reach the food with our hands before he reached for it.”

To emphasize the importance of these manners, Imam Al-Nawawi, in his book *Riyad Al-Salihin*,⁶ cited a large collection of Hadith and devoted a whole chapter to the subject of “Respecting Scholars, the Elderly and the Dignitaries. Giving them Precedence and the Best Seat. Acknowledging their Preeminence.”⁷ In the following paragraphs, I will reiterate some of these.

⁵Note that the Prophet PBUH labeled as an outcast a person who does not give the elderly their due respect. The importance of such manner could not be overestimated in life and social relationship. To ignore this manner is against human nature and is very annoying and frustrating.

⁶Page 206, edition 1380H.

⁷In his book *Dalil Al-Falihin* (2:205), the eminent scholar Ibn ‘Illan stated the following: “Respect of scholars entails honouring them even if they are not old. The ‘elderly’ are those who are old in age even if they are not scholars. The dignitaries are those known for generosity, good manners, courage and other noble traits. Precedence is to be given to them over others who do not enjoy such qualities. You must give them the best seat even if, out of modesty, they do not ask for it. The messenger of Allah PBUH used to sit at the nearest vacant seat. Acknowledging their eminence means giving them due respect.

The above expression implies that in a meeting they should be ranked according to the following: the scholars; the elderly; and others. This should be followed if the ruler is not present, otherwise, the ruler

Allah said in the Quran: “Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who possess understanding that receive admonition.”⁸

Imam Muslim reported that ‘Uqba bin ‘Amr Al-Badri Al-Ansari (RA) stated that the Prophet (PBUH) said: “Those who are best at reciting the Quran should lead a group’s prayer. If they are equal, then those most versed in the Sunna should lead; if they are equal, then a person who migrated first [from Makka to Madina] should lead; if they had migrated at the same time, then an elder should lead.”

Imam Muslim reported that Ibn Mas’od said that the Prophet (PBUH) said: “Let your wise and mature⁹ pray immediately behind me, then those who trail behind them, and then those who trail behind them.”

Imam Al-Bukhari reported that Jabir bin Abdullah (RA) said: “After the battle of Uhud, the Prophet (PBUH) buried two martyrs in one grave. He asked, ‘which one memorized more of the Quran?’ Upon being told which it was, he laid him first facing Qibla.”

In addition, Muslim reported that Abdullāh bin Omar (RA) stated that the Prophet (PBUH) said: “I dreamt I was brushing my teeth with Sewak when two men approached me. I handed the Sewak to the younger but was instructed to hand it to the older. Accordingly, I handed it to the older.”

Imam Abu Dawood¹⁰ reported as a fair Hadith that Abu Mūsa Al-Ash’ari (RA) stated that the Prophet (PBUH) said: “Part of paying homage to Allah is to respect an elder whose hair has turned gray, or a [regular] reader of the Quran, or a just ruler.”

This desired behaviour towards elders is so important that the Prophet made it a part of respecting and venerating Allah. To ignore it is a gross misbehaviour. At its forefront comes respect and reverence of the just ruler. A revered poet enumerated a group of rules and stipulated that whoever broke these rules should be slapped on the neck. The eight rules are:

Disrespecting a grand ruler

ought to be given precedence over anyone else, because it is the ruler’s due right.”

⁸ Al-Zumer, 39:9.

⁹ This Hadith allows that the wisest be closest to the Imam. This stems from respect. Ibn ‘Illan said: “This distinction is not limited to prayers. In every gathering, the Sunnah is to place the distinguished next to the Imam or the principal. This applies to all types of gatherings and assemblies whether at lectures, court, remembrance of Allah, etc. People are to be ranked according to their degree of knowledge, piety, wisdom, social status, age and competence.”

¹⁰ This refers to a person who knows the Quran by heart and does not exceed limits in exercising its rules. The deserter of the Quran is a person who abandons reading and practicing its commands.

Entering a house without being invited to do so.
Giving orders/directions at another's house.
Taking an undeserved seat of honour.
Insisting on discussing a topic with others.
Interrupting two others.
Asking charity from a person of low character.
Seeking a favour from an enemy.

Abu Dawood and Al-Hakim reported as an authentic Hadith that Maimūn bin Abi Shabīb recounted that a beggar stopped the Prophet's wife Aisha (RA) and she gave him a piece of dry bread. At another time, a properly-dressed, well-groomed man asked her for food. She let him sit and offered him a meal. When asked about that, she replied that the Prophet (PBUH) said: "Treat people according to their status."

Imam Al-Nawawi concluded this chapter by citing a Hadith as reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in which Samura bin Jundub (RA) said: "Though I was a young child at the time of the Prophet, I used to listen to what he said and memorize it. Nothing prevents me from narrating my knowledge except the presence of men older than me."

In conclusion, the Sunnah is to start according to the following order of merits: age, knowledge, social status, lineage, veterans of Jihad, generosity or similar virtues. Further, the Sunnah of hospitality, is to start with the most prominent, then to move to those on the right in order to harmonize the custom of starting on the right with the custom of starting with people of virtue.

Some people who misunderstand the real meaning of some texts of the Sunnah claim that the Sunnah is to start with those on your right whoever they are. They base this on Hadiths that stress starting from the right. But this is only true when the group is in all ways equal in character, status or age. However, if one of them is distinguished with a merit such as old age, then the Sunnah is to start with this person.

In his book *Al-Bayan wa Tahsil*¹¹ Imam Ibn Rushd said: "As a rule, if the status of those present is equal, one should start on the right, as with every desirable act. However, if a scholar, an honourable person or an elder is present, the Sunnah is to start with such a person and then move to his or her right in a counter clockwise fashion. The Messenger of Allah was offered milk mixed with water while a Bedouin was sitting on his right, and to his left, was sitting Abu Bakr. The Prophet drank some and handed it over to the Bedouin saying, "From the right, then to the right."

¹¹ 18:554.

Do not proceed to the left in an anti-clockwise fashion, even if the person to the left is of a higher status, unless those on the right agree to pass their turn. The Messenger (PBUH) was sitting with elders on his left and a young man on his right. He was brought a drink. After drinking, he asked the young man: “Would you give me the permission to pass it to those? The boy answered: “By Allah no. I would not favour anyone with my share of your drink.” The Prophet willingly put the drink in the child hand indicating that it is his right.

The Indian scholar, Al-Mubarkfuri, in his treatise on explaining Jami` Al-Tirmizi¹² elaborated on this. When commenting on the Hadith, “the server should be the last one to drink,” Al-Mubarkfuri said, “This indicates that the server should delay his drink until all the guests are served. The same applies when fruits are being served. The most notable should be served first, and then those of the right until everyone is served.”

Al-Minawi in his explanation of Sharh Al-Shamail¹³ commented on the previous Hadith of Ibn Abbas: “This implies that the Sunna is to continue serving drinks and food with those on the right of the most noble person even if that person happened to be less important than the person on the left.”

A Hadith in Sahih Muslim¹⁴ reinforces this rule of serving the elder or the most noble first, and then those on his right. Abdullah bin Bosur said, “The Prophet visited my father and we served him with food made of dates and butter. Then he was brought dates, and he ate it and threw the pit using his middle and forefingers. Then he was brought a drink from which he drank and passed it to his right.” The words “he was brought a drink” clearly indicates that he was served first before those on his right since he was the noblest person present, and that then he passed it to those on his right. It indicates that they started with the Prophet out of respect and not because he asked for a drink. The preceding words “he was brought dates” reinforces this understanding. It is very unlikely that the Prophet, while a guest, will ask his host for food and then for drink. It could be argued that this is a possibility. Indeed, it is a hypothetical possibility that lacks evidence or probability.

An important aspect of proper manners is that some people extend help and hospitality to strangers out of faith and pure humanity. If it becomes known that the person needing help has additional virtues such as being a scholar or notable person, they will go an extra step in their generosity and providing help. This is undoubtedly evidence of right instinct and faith which

¹² 3:115

¹³ 1:304

¹⁴ 13:225

motivated such gestures.

Therefore, the general rule is to start from the right if those present are equal in merit. However, if there is a person who is well-known for a respectable trait, then start with that person.

If we were to follow the alleged rule that hosts ought to start with the person who happened to be on their right, then we could start with a young child, a servant, a driver, or a guard, at the expense of more prominent guests such as a dignitary, a revered scholar, a notable, a parent, a grandparent, or an uncle. Would it be acceptable by the Shari'a and its refined manners to forsake honouring and starting with persons of character, in favour of starting with a child, a servant, a driver and then proceed to persons of higher status? Also, it is possible that the ten persons or more are sitting on the right side before the most honourable person. To reach them at the end does not befit their status and may offend them. Islamic manners definitely do not accept this irregular conduct.

However, if someone asks for a drink, they have the right to the request before anybody else regardless of age or status, and the round should proceed with those on their right. If this person notices someone older or of higher status showing desire for the drink, he, or she may willingly give up his, or her right in favour of that person. When preferring others to yourself, you have practiced the Islamic manner of unselfishness, and you will achieve great virtue, and honour and gain great rewards.

To respect, obey and give precedence to the elderly is an old and established Arab custom. Here I would like to quote in full the advice of Qais bin Asem AL-Tamimi, a great companion. On his death bed, Qais advised his children to make their elders/seniors their leaders from whom they will also receive valuable advice and wisdom all revolving around Islamic behaviour. Qais bin Asem Al-Minqeri Al-Tamimi was one of the leaders of Tamim. Famous for his eloquent speeches, the Prophet gave him the title "Master of the desert dwellers." He was a wise and mild-mannered person. On the 9th year of Al-Hijra, he came to visit the Prophet in Medina with a delegation of his tribe Bani Tamim. When the Prophet saw him he said "This is the master of the desert dwellers." He spent his last years in Basra where he died in the 20th year of Al-Hijra.

He was very patient and lenient. Ahnaf bin Qais, a famous Arab sage, was asked, "Who taught you patience and leniency?" He answered, "Qais bin Asem Al-Minqeri. Once I saw him sitting in his courtyard talking to his guests and his tribe. A man tied-up in ropes and a dead

body were brought to him. He was told, 'This is your nephew. He killed your son.' Qais bin Asem remained calm and continued his conversation until he was finished. Then turning to his nephew, he said to him: 'You have done the worst. You have sinned toward your Lord, you harmed your relative, and murdered your cousin. You killed yourself and weakened your tribe.' He called another son and said to him, 'My son, go to your cousin and untie him, go to your brother and bury him, and go to his mother and give her a hundred camels to compensate her for the loss of her son.' "

Al-Hasan Al-Basri who met him and studied at his hand said that when Qais bin Asem was dying, he called his thirty-three children, and advised them as follows: "Oh my sons, fear Allah and remember what I will say, for no one will give you more sincere advice. When I die, make your seniors your leaders. Do not make your juniors your leaders for if you promote your seniors you will maintain your father's memory. Do not make your juniors your leaders for if you do so people will not only disrespect your seniors, but will look down at you. Do not wail on my death for I heard the Prophet forbidding wailing. Look after your wealth for it enlightens the generous and obviates the need to be mean. Do not beg people for that is the worst of wealth. Avoid bad traits which may please you once, but displease you many times.

Qais then called for his quiver, and asked his eldest son, Ali, to take out an arrow. He then asked him to break it which he did. He then asked him to break two arrows and this he did. He then asked his son to bundle thirty arrows with a tie and break them all, but his son could not. He said, "My sons, you will be strong if united and weak if separated." Then he composed the following poem:

Glory is what the truthful father built and which was maintained by the children.

Glory, bravery and leniency are best adorned with chastity and generosity
Thirty you are, my sons, in face of calamities and trouble
You are like thirty arrows bundled in a strong tie
It will not be broken, but once separated will be easily broken
Your elders, your best mannered, should be your leaders
Your young should be protected and nurtured until your youngest matures.

5.5 MANNERS WITH PARENTS Observe complete respect and reverence to your father and mother, for they are the most worthy of your consideration. Al-Bukhari and Muslim reported that a man asked the Prophet (PBUH): Oh Messenger of Allah, who is the most worthy of my best conduct?" He answered: "Your mother! Your mother! Your mother! Then your father, then the next, and the next."

Al-Bukhari in *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad* and Abdul Razzaq in his *Musanaf* (the wording is his) reported that Hisham bin 'Urwa recounted that his father told him that Abu Hurairah (RA) saw a man walking ahead of another. He asked him: "How is this man related to you?" "He is my Father," the man answered. Abu Hurairah told him: "Do not walk ahead of him, do not sit until he sits, and do not call him by his name."¹⁵

According to Ibn Wahab, a student of Imam Malik bin Anas named Imam 'Abdul Rahman bin Al-Qasim Al-'Utaqi Al-Masri (132-191 AH), said: "While Imam Malik was reading *Al-Muwata'* to me he suddenly stood up for a long while, then he sat again. He was asked why, and he answered: 'My mother came down asking me something. Since she was standing I stood up respectfully, when she went, I sat back down.' "

The revered follower Tawoos bin Kisan said: "It is part of the Sunnah to respect four persons: a scholar, an elder, a leader, and a father. It is considered rude that a man call his father by his name." At the end of his book of Malkite Fiqh *Al-Kafi*, Imam Bin 'Abdul Al-Barr said:

"Kindness to the parents is an obligatory, duty and by the grace of Allah it is an easy matter. Kindness means to be humble with them, to speak to them nicely, to look at them with love and respect, to speak in a mild tone that does not surpass theirs unless they are hard of hearing, to give them complete access to your own wealth, and to offer them the best of your food and drink.

Children should not walk ahead of their parents, nor speak ahead of them in matters that they know are their father's. Children should wholeheartedly avoid upsetting their parents and should seek their pleasure as much as possible. Making your parent's life enjoyable is one of the most virtuous acts.

Children must hasten to respond to their parents' call. If a child is praying voluntarily, he/she should shorten the prayer and respond promptly. Children should express only good words.

In return, it is the parents' duty to make it easier for their children to be kind to them by being kind and generous to their children, but without Allah's help people cannot become obedient, nor can they perform his commands."

You may encounter various difficulties while serving your mother and father, but do not

¹⁵ The tradition is to call parents by 'mother' or 'father,' not to call them by their given names.

forget that their rights are multiples of these difficulties. For this Aallah said in the Qur'an¹⁶ "Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to the parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in the life, say not a word of contempt, nor repel them but address them in terms of honour. And, out of kindness lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord bestow mercy on them as they cherished me in childhood.'" The Prophet (PBUH) said, "No child will compensate a parent unless he finds him or her a slave and he frees them."

Keep in mind that everyone likes to be the best in status, prestige and popularity, and hates to see someone better than himself or herself. Only your parents would wish that you become better than what they are. How should you treat those who prefer you to themselves and wish you better.

5.6 Tell Your Family your Whereabouts If you leave home to go to a place other than your usual work, it is advisable to inform your family where you are going. This information is very useful to have their mind at ease knowing where you are. The great follower, Qatada bin Di'ama Al-Sadousi disapproved of someone going somewhere without telling their family their whereabouts. Imam Ahmad reported that Qatada narrated that he went with Abo Ma'shar to visit Al-Sha'bi. His family said he was not home. Qatada asked, "Where did he go?" His family said, "We do not know." Qatada then said, "You mean he does not tell you where he goes?" They said, "Yes." Telling your family where you are lessens their worries besides putting you and them at ease if you were late since they know where you are.

5.7 RESPECT THE POOR If you come across a poor person at a gathering or you were visited by a poor person at home or at work, do not look down upon him or her because you consider them poor. Poverty is not a defect or a fault to be ashamed of, while lack of kindness and generosity is.

Treat poor companions or guests with honour and respect. Be pleasant while talking to them, using the best of language. Again, poverty is not a vice. Many of the poor are more honourable than the wealthy, and many who are penniless are preferred to the rich.

5.8 DEALING WITH NON-MUSLIMS If your neighbours happen to be non-Muslim you must not forget Islamic manners in dealing with neighbours. The recommendation of Islam for good relationship with neighbours is for Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

¹⁶ Al-Issra 17:23-24

You as a Muslim should demonstrate to all people the goodness of Islam with your gentle manners and kind behaviour. Bukhary and Muslim reported the Hadith of Anas “No one is a believer if he do not like for his brother what he likes for himself.” The report of Muslim said “ till he loves for his brother, or neighbour, as he likes for himself”. The scholars said that the word ‘brother’ here is said in the most common context and thus the means brothers in humanity including Muslims and non-Muslims. A Muslim would love for his non-Muslim brother, as he loves for himself, to become a Muslim to enjoy the benefits of Islam and the rewards of Allah. A Muslim would do very well when he prays for the guidance of his non-Muslim brothers as he likes for his Muslim brothers to remain Muslim and to continue their devotion and adherence to Islam.

In Sura Al-Mumtahana¹⁷ Allah said “Allah forbid you not, with regard to those who did not fight you for your faith nor drive you out of your homes, to deal kindly and justly with them: For Allah loves those who are just. Allah only forbids you with regard to those who fought you for your faith and drove you out of your homes and support others in driving you out, for turning to them for friendship and alliance. Those of you who do that are doing wrong.”

There is nothing to prevent us from being kind, generous and helpful to non-Muslims as long as they do not demonstrate verbal or tangible animosity towards Islam. Hopefully, this will remove barriers to introduce them to join Islam and Muslims.

This positive attitude does not mean going along with non-Muslims and abandoning our distinct personality. It means we must fair, kind and moderate with ourselves and our neighbours in all matters. In interpreting this, Imam Qortubi said: “This constitute a consent by Allah to maintain amicable relationship with those who did not antagonize Muslim or attack them.

Imam Qortubi cited the opinion of Abdul Rahman bin Zayed who said that this rule was in the beginning of Islam when fighting was not required, but later it was annulled. Imam Qortubi also cited Qatada who said this verse had been annulled by another verse in Sura Al-Tawba (9:5) “But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and the slay the pagans wherever you find them..”

After citing these two opinions and other similar ones, Imam Qortubi concluded by saying: The majority of interpreter are said that it is a valid verse that has not been annulled. They cited the story reported by Bukhary and Muslim of Asma’ bint Abi Bakr when she asked

¹⁷ Al-Mumtahana 60:8-9

the Prophet if could entertain and be kind to her non-Muslim mother who visited her in Madina and the Prophet said “Yes.”

It was said that this verse was revealed in this incident. Al-Mauardi and Abo Dawood reported that Amer bin Abdullah bib Al-Zubair narrated that his father told him that before Islam Abu Bakr divorced his wife Qutaila who was the mother of Asma. When the truce was held between the Prophet and the pagans of Quraish, the mother visited her daughter in Madina and brought her an ear-ring and other gifts. Asma was reluctant to accept the gifts before asking the Prophet. In answer to her question Allah revealed this verse.

When Allah says “to deal kindly and justly with them” Al-Faraa said that Allah meant those who did not fight you alluding to Khoza tribe who made an agreement with Muslims not to fight them or assist those fighting them. Allah ordered Muslims to be kind and faithful to them as per the terms of the agreement.

Al-Kadi Abu Bakr ibn Al-Arabi said that the expression of *qist* is not derived from justice but from share, meaning you may give them a portion of your money to maintain cordial relationship. For justice is a duty toward all whether they were friends or foes.

Imam Bukhari and Imam Ahmad reported that Anas bin Malik that a Jewish boy used to serve the Prophet, preparing his ablution and to hand him his shoes. The boy became ill. The Prophet went to visit the boy and he was gravely ill with his father sitting at his head. The Prophet invited him to Islam by telling him to say: There is no God but Allah. The boy looked at his father who kept silent. The Prophet repeated his request and the boy looked at his father again who told him “Obey Abo Al-Kasim.” The boy, just before dying, said “I bear witness that no God but Allah and that you are His Messenger.” The Prophet said “Thank Allah for enabling me to save him.”

Hafiz Ibn Hajar said that this Hadith indicates many rules; that Muslims are allowed to employ non-Muslims, to visit them while sick. It also directs us to maintain cordiality. It allows the employment of the youth, to offer them Islam if they were mature to make a choice, and to accept their conversion if they embraced Islam.

Hafiz Al-Badr Al-Aini said this Hadith indicted the consent to visit ill non-Muslims especially if they were neighbours since it demonstrated the kindness of Islam and may encourage them to embrace it. The Hadith also allows the employment of non-Muslims and the coridality to them. It also consent employing the youth.

You may console non-Muslims on mourning using appropriate expressions. Imam Al-Kadi Abo Yosuf said, in the end of his book *Al-Kharaj*, that he asked Abo Hanifa about how to console a Jew or a Christian who lost a child or relative. Abo Hanifa said to say “Allah decreed death for all His creations. We ask Allah to make death the best fate to wait for. We all belong to Allah and to Him we all shall return. Be patient and endure this calamity.

Abo Yosuf said we learned that a Christian who used to attend the lectures of Al-Hasan Al-Basri died. Al-Hasan went to console his brother. He said: May Allah reward you for this calamity as He reward your fellows. May Allah bless our death and make it the best fate to wait for. Be patient against the misfortunes. You may say these kind words and remind them of death as the inescapable fate with which we can do nothing about but acceptance and patience.

Imam Ibn A’bdin in his book *Rad Al-Muhtar*¹⁸ that the Shafite said: You may console Muslims when at the death of a non-Muslim relative. On such occasion you may say: May Allah increase your rewards and patience. You may console non-Muslims on the loss of a Muslim relative. On such occasions you may say: May Allah forgive your deceased and give best condolence.

¹⁸ 1:604