

Noble Morals

Written by His Eminence Shaykh, the erudite scholar

Muhammad ibn Sālih al-'Uthaymīn

May Allah forgive him, his parents, and all Muslims

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Introduction

Praise be to Allah, we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our selves and from our bad deeds. Whoever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whoever He leads astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allah, alone, with no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, his family and Companions and those who follow them with good conduct until the Day of Judgment.

To proceed, this booklet, dear reader, is originally a lecture delivered by his eminence, our Shaykh Muhammad ibn Sālih al-'Uthaymīn (may Allah have mercy upon him) in the summer center affiliated to 'Unaizah Institute. The lecture was part of his successful educational endeavor to offer his students genuine advice and scholarly and practical instructions to embrace the virtues and adopt proper Islamic manners, following the example of our Messenger Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him).

The title of the lecture was 'Good Morals' but it was published on 1417 A.H under the title 'Noble Morals' under the supervision of Shaykh Khālid Mustafa Sālim abu Sālih, may Allah reward him.

In compliance with the rules, guidelines and instructions set by his eminence, our Shaykh, Muhammad ibn Sālih al-'Uthaymīn (may Allah have mercy upon him) for the production of his works, documentation and comparison between this booklet and the original audio lecture have been finalized to prepare it for printing and publication; and all praise is due to Allah.

Hence, this edition is the only authorized one and we ask Allah Almighty to make it beneficial.

We ask Allah, Exalted and Glorified, to crown our endeavors with success and make them sincere for His sake alone. May Allah reward our Shaykh the best for his efforts exerted for the good of Islam and Muslims, elevate his rank and admit him into His spacious Paradise; for indeed He is All-Hearing and Near. All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and all his Companions and those who followed them with good conduct till the Day of Judgment.

The scientific committee

in the Charitable Organization of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Sālih al-'Uthaymīn

1/6/1428 A.H.

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Praise be to Allah, we praise Him, seek His help and forgiveness and repent to Him.

We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our selves and from our bad deeds. Whoever Allah guides, none can lead astray

and whoever He leads astray, none can guide.

I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, Who has no partner,

and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

Allah sent him with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religions. Allah sent him imminently before the Hour as a bearer of glad tidings, warner, caller to Allah by His permission and as a luminous lantern.

He conveyed the message, fulfilled the trust, communicated sincere advice to his nation and strove duly in the cause of Allah until he passed away.

Allah guided whomever He willed from His servants to answer the Prophet's call and follow his guidance. Whereas He let down, by His wisdom, whomever He willed from His servants so they arrogantly refused to obey him, denied his revelation and resisted his commands, thus ended up with loss and deep misguidance.

To proceed, it is my pleasure to address the topic of noble morals in this meeting. ¹

Scholars defined morals as man's internal image, because humans have two images:

1- Apparent image: which is manifested in one's physical appearance, which, as we know, is either beautiful, ugly or in-between.

2- Inner image is also divided into good and bad one, expressed in the word 'morals'. In short, morals are the inner image upon which the human is shaped.

Are morals intrinsic or acquired?

The answer: There are intrinsic as well as acquired morals, just as morals are natural, they are acquirable as well. In other words, one may be created with commendable morals and still acquire others through training. Hence, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said to Ashajj 'Abd al-Qays: "You have two characteristics which Allah likes: gentleness and deliberation." He asked: "Have I acquired them or has Allah created them in my nature?" He replied: "Allah has created them in your nature." The man then said: "Praise be to Allah Who has created in my nature two characteristics which Allah and His Messenger like." This proves that upright and virtuous morals are intrinsic as well as acquired. However, intrinsic morals definitely outclass the acquired ones, because intrinsic morals become part of one's nature and require no effort to practice. After all, it is a blessing from Allah that He gives to whomever He wills, yet anyone who is void of intrinsic morals can acquire them by continuous practice and training – and we will elaborate this later.

One issue poses itself here: who is better; a man with intrinsic upright morals or another who resists his urges to acquire upright morals? Which one outranks and gains a greater reward than the other?

In answer to this question, there is no doubt that individuals with intrinsic morals are more perfect in terms of their adoption of such morals or the very presence of those morals in them. They require no hardship or trouble nor do they lack those morals in any situation, simply because such morals are intrinsic, natural and ever-present. Such people have noble morals all the time and everywhere in all situations. In this regard, they are undoubtedly more perfect. On the other hand, morals acquired

¹ This meeting was in the summer center affiliated to 'Unaizah Institute.

through adaptability, treatment, practice or training bring one a reward for his striving against his own self. But as far as the perfection of morals is concerned, they are significantly lesser than the first type.

In case one is blessed with both types of morals, the intrinsic and the acquired, that is more perfect. There are four categories of people in this regard:

- 1- People deprived of noble morals.
- 2- People with intrinsic morals who went no further.
- 3- People with intrinsic morals who sought to add acquired ones.
- 4- People lacking intrinsic morals but gained it through acquisition.

In short, people with intrinsic morals are more perfect, whereas those who acquire it through hardship gain the reward of striving against their own selves.

One relevant issue is noteworthy: Are there any morals that fell outside the scope of the Qur'an and Sunnah? What is the means to learn about them?

The answer is found in the Prophet's (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) saying: "I was only sent to perfect noble morals." All previous legislations that Allah Almighty designed for His servants encourage virtuous morals. For this reason, scholars maintained that upright morals are unanimously encouraged by all the divine legislations. However, this perfect Shariah brought by the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) represents the ultimate form of noble morals. For example, the law of retribution; should one seek retribution if someone assaulted him? Retribution, as reported, is mandatory in the Jewish law and the victim has no say on that, whereas the Christian law mandates forgiveness. Our Shariah, in contrast, maintains a perfect balance in this regard, because it instructs both retribution and forgiveness. Certainly, holding the culprit accountable reflects resolution and resists evil, while forgiving him shows kindness and serves as a favor for the forgiven individual. All praise is due to Allah for bestowing upon us a perfect Shariah that offers the victim the choice between forgiveness and retribution, each to be exercised when necessary.

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Areas of Noble Morals

Many people inadequately presuppose that good conduct is not inclusive of one's behavior towards the Creator but only limited to interaction with people. However, good conduct is inclusive of one's behavior towards Allah and the people as well.

Good conduct applies to one's relationship with Allah, Exalted and Glorified, as well as one's relation with people; this issue is noteworthy.

First: Good conduct with Allah, Exalted and Glorified:

This combines three aspects:

- 1- Receiving the statements of Allah with acceptance.
- 2- Receiving the rulings of Allah with implementation.
- 3- Receiving Allah's destiny with patience and contentment.

Good conduct with Allah Almighty revolves around these three aspects.

1- Receiving the statements of Allah with acceptance such that one does not entertain any doubt or hesitation in accepting the statements of Allah, Exalted and Glorified, because they are backed by omniscient knowledge. Allah Almighty is the most Truthful, as He Almighty said about Himself: {And who is more truthful than Allah in statement?} [Al-Nisā': 87]

Acceptance of Allah's statements entails trusting, defending and striving with them without entertaining the least doubt or hesitation about the reports from Allah and His Messenger (may Allah' peace and blessings be upon him).

Embracing this aspect of good conduct empowers one to refute any misconception introduced by people with prejudice against the statements of Allah and His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), whether they are from the Muslims who introduced innovations in the religion of Allah, or non-Muslims who put forth misconception at the hearts of Muslims.

For example, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported in Sahih Al-Bukhāri that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "If a fly falls into the drink of any one of you, he should dip it (in the drink) and then remove it, for in one of its wings there is disease and in the other there is cure." This report addresses an issue of the unseen told by the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) who does not speak out of desire but rather out of revelation from Allah Almighty, because he is a human being who typically knows nothing about the unseen. Allah Almighty said: {Say, O Muhammad, "I do not tell you that I have the treasures of Allah or that I know the unseen, nor do I tell you that I am an angel. I only follow what is revealed to me."...} [Al-An'ām: 50] This report must be met with good conduct such that we receive it with acceptance, coupled with certainty that what the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said is the truth in spite of objection raised by some, because we are certain that anything opposing the authentic reports of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) is definitely false, following the saying of Allah Almighty: {...And what can be beyond truth except error? So how are you averted?} [Yunus: 32]

Another example is related to the reports about the Day of Judgment.

The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The sun will come so close to people on the Day of Judgment that it will be just a mile away." Whether or not this 'mile' is the regular distance measure or that of a kohl stick, this distance between the sun and people will be very narrow though people do not get burnt by its heat, despite the fact that this life would cease to exist if the sun were to approach us in this world as much as a fingertip.

Someone may wonder: how could people continue to exist for a moment when the sun approaches them that closely on the Day of Judgment?

How can we adopt good conduct towards this Hadīth?

Good conduct in this regard is to accept it without entertaining any doubt, constriction or hesitation about it. We must know that the report of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) is the truth.

By no means can we compare life to the Hereafter due to the existence of such a huge difference. We know that people will stand on the Day of Judgment for about fifty thousand years. By the current life's standards, is it possible that people can stand for fifty thousand years?

The answer is a definite no, thus proving the fundamental difference. Accordingly, the believer accepts such a report willingly and confidently, understands it and feels good about it.

2- Receiving the rulings of Allah with acceptance and implementation such that no rejection is made to any one of them, otherwise it would be misconduct with Allah, Exalted and Glorified, irrespective of the cause of rejection; be it mere denial, arrogance or negligence. This goes against adopting good conduct with Allah, Exalted and Glorified.

For example, the difficult righteous deeds we observe during the month of Ramadan. Fasting is hard because one abandons his routine of eating, drinking and having intercourse. However, any well-behaved Muslim with Allah, Exalted and Glorified, accepts such an assignment, or, in better words, accepts such an honor. It is a favor from Allah, Exalted and Glorified, whom one accepts with an open heart and contentment such that one fasts long hot days with pleasure, only because he is well-behaved with his Lord. On the contrary, an ill-behaved individual with Allah reacts to such act of worship with displeasure and hatred. Had he not been afraid of bad consequence, he would not have been committed to fasting. Another example: prayer is definitely burdensome for some people,

especially the hypocrites, according to what the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The most burdensome prayer for the hypocrites is the 'Ishā' (night) prayer and the Fajr (dawn) prayer." Believers, on the other hand, do not find prayer burdensome. Allah Almighty said: {And seek help through patience and prayer; and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive to Allah, those who are certain that they will meet their Lord and that they will return to Him.} [Al-Baqarah: 45-46] Prayer is an easy act of worship for the believers. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "My comfort has been provided in prayer." Good conduct with Allah, Exalted and Glorified, regarding prayer is to observe it with a delighted and tranquil heart so that you feel happy while praying and await its time with love. This makes you long for the Zhuhr (noon) prayer after you perform the Fajr prayer, and long for the 'Asr (afternoon) prayer after performing the Zhuhr prayer, and so on with the rest of prayers. Then, when you end your day with the 'Ishā' prayer, you start longing for the Fajr prayer. This way, your heart is always attached to those prayers, the thing that certainly reflects good conduct with Allah Almighty. A third example is about transactions. Allah has prohibited Riba (usury) explicitly in the Qur'an, as He Almighty said: {...But Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest...} [Al-Baqarah: 275] He also said about it: {...So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allah. But whoever returns to dealing in interest or usury - those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein forever.} [Al-Baqarah: 275] Allah threatens those who deal in usury, after already receiving the prohibitive admonition and learning the relevant ruling, with eternity in Hellfire; we seek refuge in Allah. The believer accepts such ruling willingly, contently and submissively. Others, however, do not accept it and feel constricted about it to the extent that they may circumvent it, because, as we know, usury involves securing a definite profit whereas it is, in fact, a profit for one person and a loss for another. That is why Allah Almighty said, {...But if you repent, you may have your principal - thus you do no wrong, nor are you wronged.} [Al-Baqarah: 279] 3- Showing patience and contentment in the face of Allah's decrees. It is the third aspect of good conduct with Allah. We all know that the decrees of Allah, Exalted and Glorified, are not all favorable to people. Is everything Allah decrees favorable to us, I mean by "favorable" that we incline and feel convenient with? Actually, no.

Illness, for example, is not favorable to man because everyone likes to be healthy.

Likewise, poverty is not favorable because everyone likes to be rich, and so is ignorance as everyone likes to be knowledgeable. However, the decrees of Allah, Exalted and Glorified, diversify in light of His wisdom. Some of them are favorable and naturally convenient to man while others are not. So, what is good conduct towards the decrees of Allah?

Good conduct towards Allah's decrees is to feel pleased and content towards such decrees. In addition, you should know that Allah, Exalted and Glorified, has decreed it exclusively for a superior objective and praiseworthy end for which He deserves praise and thanks.

So, good conduct in this case refers to one's content, submission and tranquility. For this reason, Allah praised the patient people saying: {...Give good tidings to the patient, who, when disaster strikes them, they say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return."} [Al-Baqarah: 155-156]

Second: Good conduct with people:

Some scholars, including Al-Hasan al-Basri (may Allah have mercy upon him) defined good conduct here as the abstention from harm, extending kindness and cheerfulness.

First: abstention from harm is by refraining from harming others physically, financially or in terms of their honor. Infliction of harm on others is not a token of good conduct, rather it is a reflection of ill conduct.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) declared the prohibition of this ill conduct in the largest public gathering with his Ummah saying: "Verily your blood, your properties and your honor are as sacred and inviolable as the sanctity of this day of yours, in this month of yours and in this town of yours." If someone assaults others by stealing their money, cheating, betraying, beating or transgressing, insulting or backbiting them; this goes against good conduct with people, because this person did not abstain from harming others. The sin is even more serious when such harm is directed at someone to whom one is morally indebted. Ill treatment of one's parents, for example, is significantly more serious than ill treatment of others; ill treatment of one's

relatives is more serious than treating non-relatives inadequately, and ill treatment of neighbors is more serious than treating non-neighbors inadequately. Hence, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "By Allah, he is not a believer! By Allah, he is not a believer! By Allah, he is not a believer." He was asked: 'Who is that, O Messenger of Allah?' He said: 'One whose neighbor does not feel safe from his harm.'"

Second: extending kindness is to show generosity. Some people mistakenly think it is limited to giving out money, but it extends to include offering oneself, prestige, and wealth.

When we see someone fulfilling people's needs, helping them and handling the affairs beyond their reach, spreading his knowledge and charitably giving out money to people, such person merits our description of good conduct because he is extending kindness. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Fear Allah wherever you are, and follow a bad deed with a good one so that it erases it, and deal with people with good conduct." One means of good conduct with people is to forgive them when they wrong or harm you. Allah has praised those who forgive people. He said regarding the inhabitants of Paradise: {Who spend in the cause of Allah during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon people - and Allah loves the doers of good.} [Āl-'Imrān: 134]

Allah Almighty said: {...And to pardon is nearer to righteousness...} [Al-Baqarah: 237]

Allah Almighty said: {...And let them pardon and overlook...} [Al-Noor: 22]

Allah Almighty said: {...But whoever pardons and makes reconciliation - his reward is due from Allah...} [Al-Shūra: 40]

Everyone who is in contact with people must face harm. His attitude towards such harm should be forgiving and pardoning. He should be certain that his forgiveness, pardoning and well-conducted reaction will transform the enmity between him and his fellow Muslims into friendship. Allah Almighty said: {Good and bad deed are not equal. Repel evil by that which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity will become as though he was a devoted friend.} [Fussilat: 34] The word 'thereupon' here expresses an instant action as a result. {...And thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity will become as though he was a devoted friend.} [Fussilat: 34] However, not all people can achieve this end. Allah Almighty says: {But none is granted it except those who are patient, and none is granted it except one having a great portion of good.} [Fussilat: 35] Does this imply that pardoning the offender is always praiseworthy and encouraged? This understanding is probably suggested by the verse, but it should be known that pardoning is only praiseworthy if it is advantageous otherwise retribution is better. Therefore, Allah Almighty said: {...But whoever pardons and makes reconciliation - his reward is due from Allah...} [Al-Shūra: 40] In this verse, pardoning is tied to reconciliation. There are instances when pardoning does not effect reconciliation. It is probable that the offender is well-known for his evil and corrupt behavior, in which case pardoning will allow him to continue with his evil and misbehavior. In this case, it is better to exact retribution because it would result in reconciliation. Shaykh al-Islam ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy upon him) noted: "Reconciliation is obligatory while pardoning is recommended. If pardoning affects reconciliation negatively, this means that a recommended action has taken priority over an obligatory one, which is not approved by the Shariah." He (may Allah have mercy upon him) said the truth. On this occasion, I would like to bring the attention to something many people do while intending kindness. Someone may cause an accident leading to the death of someone else. The kin of the killed person may waive the blood money, so the killer does not have to pay it. Is waiving the blood money praiseworthy and considered good conduct in this case? Or are there other details that should be taken into consideration?

There are other details that should be taken into consideration. We should consider the situation of the offender who caused the accident? Is he known for impulsiveness and carelessness? Is he someone who is just so irresponsible that he would hit someone [by car] because he can pay the blood money? Or is he someone who caused this accident despite being completely cautious and careful, but that accident was destined to happen?

If he is of the second type, then pardon takes precedence, but it should be checked whether or not the deceased has a debt before considering pardon. If the deceased has a debt that cannot be settled except by the blood money, then pardon will not be possible in that case, because debt has priority

over inheritance. Pardon in this case would not be recognized. This issue escapes many people. Heirs receive their rightful portion of inheritance from this blood money of the deceased. They cannot be paid, however, except after the debt is settled. Therefore, when Allah mentioned claiming inheritance, He said: {...After any bequest he may have made or debt...} [Al-Nisā': 11]

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In brief, pardoning people is a good conduct featured under the category of extending kindness, which is either to give something away or waive something. Pardon here is waiving one's right.

Third: showing a cheerful face, the opposite of showing a frowning face. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Do not belittle any good deed, even if it is meeting your brother with a cheerful face."

The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Do not belittle any good deed, even if it is meeting your brother with a cheerful face."

Cheerfulness makes whomever you meet happy. It facilitates friendliness, love and helps developing a rapport between you and whoever you meet; try it and you will see the results.

A frowned face, on the other hand, drives people away from you. They do not feel comfortable sitting or conversing with you. It may cause serious illness which is called blood pressure.

Cheerfulness is one of the most effective preventative treatments for this illness.

Doctors advise anyone with such illness to steer away from causes of anger, because it deteriorates his condition. Cheerfulness defeats this illness because one becomes lighthearted and loved by people.

Those are the essential pillars of good conduct with people.

One more form of good conduct is good companionship with friends, relatives, and family such that one neither imposes constriction upon them nor feels constricted by them. One should make them feel happy as much as he could within the parameters of the Shariah of Allah. This restriction is a must,

because some people do not feel happy except by disobeying Allah, we seek refuge in Allah from such state. We disagree with this type of behavior. However, good conduct involves making your relatives, friends, and family happy within the parameters of the Shariah.

That is why the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The best of you is the one who is best to his family, and I am the best of you to my family."

Unfortunately, many people behave well with strangers but not with their family, which is wrong and twisting facts. How could one behave well with strangers while misbehave with his relatives? One may argue that it is typical to dispense with formalities with one's relatives and thereby misbehaves? In response, this is inappropriate because relatives are the most entitled to one's good companionship. A man asked the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him): "O Messenger of Allah, who is most entitled among people to my good companionship?" He said: "Your mother." The man said: "Who comes next?" He said: "Your mother." The man asked again: "Who comes next?" He replied: "Your mother." The man further asked: "Who comes next?" He said: "Your father."

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Some people switch this around and misbehave with their mothers while treating well their wives. In this case, they give priority to good companionship with his wife over being dutiful to his mother.

In brief, good companionship with family, friends and relatives is a form of good conduct.

In these Summer Centers, we should take advantage of the presence of the youth to train them adopt good conduct. By means of this, the Center becomes an institution of teaching and education, because knowledge without [proper] education may bring more harm than benefit. However, education side by side with teaching yields its intended result. For this reason, Allah Almighty said: {It is not for a human prophet that Allah should give him Scripture and authority and prophethood, then he would say to people, "Be servants to me rather than Allah," but instead, he would say, "Be pious scholars of the Lord because of what you have taught of the Scripture and because of what you have studied.} [Āl-'Imrān: 79]

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So, the benefit of knowledge is to become a pious individual who teach people the Shariah of Allah. We hope that those in charge of such Centers develop them into an arena of competition for upright morals, including good conduct.

At the beginning, we mentioned that good conduct is either intrinsic or acquired and that the former is more perfect than the latter. We provided a proof where the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said to Ashajj 'Abd al-Qays: "Allah has created them in your nature." Intrinsic good conduct is ever-present whereas the acquired conduct is not always present, because the latter requires practice, effort and attentiveness to recall it when necessary. A man came to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and said: "Advise me!" The Messenger of Allah replied: "Do not be angry!" He repeated many times: "Do not be angry!" The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The strong person is not the one who can overpower others; rather, the strong person is the one who controls himself when he gets angry." A strong man is not the one who beats people and defeats them, but instead he is the one who can control himself when angry. The one who overpowers and controls himself when angry is the truly strong one. This is one of the noble morals.

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In the instance you become angry, do not release your anger. Rather, seek refuge in Allah from the accursed devil. If you were standing, sit down; and if you were sitting, lay down. When anger flares up, make ablution until it drains out.

In short, intrinsic good conduct is better than the acquired one because it is an innate characteristic of the individual and seamlessly recallable, whereas the acquired one could be missed in some situations.

Good conduct is acquirable, which, in other words, requires a training to sharpen it. There are means to acquire it:

First: to study the texts that praise good conduct in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). This will encourage one to embrace such praised conduct.

Second: to accompany people known for good conduct. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) underscored this in his saying: "The example of the righteous companion and the evil companion is like that of the musk-seller and the one who blows the bellows (a blacksmith). As for the musk-seller, he will either give you some as a present, or you will buy some from him or you will just receive a good smell from him. Whereas the one blowing the bellows will either burn your clothes or you will receive a nasty smell from him."

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All the youth should accompany those known for good conduct and steer away from inferior conduct and bad actions. This friendship will school their efforts to achieve good conduct.

Third: to reflect on the consequences of ill conduct, because it is blameworthy. One with an ill conduct is disliked and deserted by people and is given repellent descriptions. Once one realizes this, he will stay distant from it.

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The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) is the role model.

We have the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) as a role model as he was the most well-mannered human being ever;

because Allah Almighty said about him: {And indeed, you are of a great moral character.} [Al-Qalam: 4]

The incidents that took place during the era of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) indicate his noble morals. He even treated children with good conduct such that he used to play and pamper them.

One time, he said to one of the children: "O Abu 'Umayr! What did the Nughayr (little bird) do?" Abu 'Umayr was a nickname of a child who had a little bird like a sparrow. The bird died and the child felt sad. So, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) tried to comfort him saying: "O Abu 'Umayr! What did the Nughayr (little bird) do?"

Another example is when a Bedouin came and urinated inside the mosque. People reprimanded him and condemned his action, but the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) told them to stop. After the Bedouin had finished, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) ordered the removal of the impurity by pouring a bucket of water over it. Then he called the Bedouin and said to him: "These mosques are not places meant for urine and filth, but are only for prayer and the recitation of the Qur'an." or so he (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said.

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or so he (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said.

Good conduct in this story is apparent. He refrained from reprimanding the Bedouin and did not have him beaten. Instead, he left him without interrupting his urination, then advised him that mosques are not meant for what he did. Instead, they are meant for prayer, remembrance of Allah and recitation of the Qur'an.

A man came to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) during Ramadan and said: "I am ruined O Messenger of Allah!" The Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) asked him: "What has ruined you?" The man replied: "I had intercourse with my wife during the day in Ramadan while fasting." The Prophet said to him: "Are you able to free a slave?" The man said: "No." The Prophet said: "Can you fast two consecutive months?" He said: "No." The Prophet then asked him: "Can you provide food for sixty poor people?" He said: "No." Then the man sat down. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) brought a basket of dates, gave it to the man and said: "Give this as charity." The man said: "To someone who is poorer than us! There is no one in this city who is in need of these dates more than us!" The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) laughed until his molar teeth could be seen and said to the man: "Go and feed your family with them."

The good conduct of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) in this story is apparent because he did not reproach the man nor did he insult or rebuke him due to his tolerance and wisdom. He saw this man coming with a repentant, remorseful and fearful attitude. He evaluated the situation and concluded that he did not deserve to be reprimanded. He was just in need of learning the truth in a gentle manner.

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Question: Many people maintain that westerners are of better morals than Muslims with regard to their dealings and business transactions, while cheating, lying and wrongful swearing to sell goods are rampant among Muslims. What is the cause of this? Does their industrial civilization have a significant impact on forming their morals?

The answer is found in the the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) saying: "Were people to be given everything that they claim, some would (unjustly) claim the properties and blood of others. However, the onus of proof is on the plaintiff." The common belief that westerners adopt good morals in their dealing with others is untrue, because their ill behavior is witnessed by all those who lived with them and assessed them justly rather than with veneration. A poet once said:

"Were people to be given everything that they claim, some would (unjustly) claim the properties and blood of others. However, the onus of proof is on the plaintiff."

The common belief that westerners adopt good morals in their dealing with others is untrue, because their ill behavior is witnessed by all those who lived with them and assessed them justly rather than with veneration. A poet once said:

Just as the eye of contentment overlooks all faults* the eye of discontentment manifests all wrongdoings.

Many of the youth who traveled to the West informed me of actions indicating the worst of morals. Their honest treatment, as far as their business transactions are concerned, is the fruit of their materialism rather than morals. The more one deals honestly in his business transactions, the more people will come to him, buy and promote his goods. They do not do this out of high morals but because they are materialists who believe that honest treatment is one of the best advertising techniques to increase their wealth. However, they are as Allah, Exalted and Glorified, described them: {Indeed, they who disbelieve among the People of the Scripture and the polytheists will be in the fire of Hell, abiding eternally therein. Those are the worst of creatures.} [Al-Bayyinah: 6] I do not think

there is a more expressive description of the disbelievers than that of Allah. He described them as the worst of creation. How could it be possible to expect any selfless act of goodness from people whom Allah described as the worst of creation. I do not think this will ever happen. However, their honest and straight treatment harbors an ulterior motive, namely, securing materialistic gains, otherwise anyone who witnesses their oppression, unfairness, and transgression against people in many instances will realize the truth of Allah's Almighty saying: {They are the worst of creation.}

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As for the cheating, lying, and dishonest treatment among many Muslims, that is because of shortcoming in their submission and faith which is proportionate to the extent of their inconsistency with the Shariah.

The violations committed by some Muslims and their inadequate behavior in such matters do not mean that there is a deficiency in the Shariah itself, because it is perfect. Those individuals have initially wronged themselves, then the Islamic Shariah, then their fellow Muslims and then the non-Muslims whom they deal with. They have wronged themselves only. A rational person does not justify the wrongdoings of the doer by accusing the legislation that he belongs to.

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Therefore, I hope that all Muslims organize a major campaign to resist such inadequacies, like dishonesty, cheating, deception, etc., which are all rejected by Islam.

Question: Who is better; a man with good conduct but with deficient religiosity or another one with near-perfect religiosity but with ill conduct? What is the relationship between this and the Prophet's (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) saying: "Good conduct has encompassed all the good in this life and the Hereafter," in his answer to Umm Salamah?

The answer: there is no doubt that perfect religiosity entails perfect morals, as authentically reported from the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) that he said: "The believers with the most perfect faith are those with the most excellent morals." Accordingly, anyone with deficient morals will have deficient religiosity because they complement one another. Good conduct manifests in dealing with the Creator and the creation. The influence of a well-mannered individual over others, as far as inviting them to Islam is concerned, is greater than that of a religious but ill-mannered individual. If a dutiful worshiper is honored to have good conduct, this will be perfect. As for assessing a dutiful worshiper with ill manners, this is unmeasurable. We ask Allah to make us committed to His

Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) inwardly and outwardly, to cause us die while in such state, to take care of us in this life and the Hereafter and to let not our hearts deviate after He has guided us and to grant us from Him mercy, indeed, He is the Bestower.

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