AKH WORLD DA'WAH FOUNDATION

Islamic Character & Manners

COURSE 104 · SIX-LESSON STUDY HANDBOOK

Sincerity · Honesty · Patience · Brotherhood · Family · Good Character

Free introductory independent-study resource · Chicago

Educational material only. Not a fatwa, certification, or substitute for qualified teaching. Please seek scholarly review before formal instructional use.

Contents

1. Sincerity & Good Intentions

2. Honesty & Trustworthiness

3. Patience & Gratitude

4. Brotherhood & Reconciliation

5. Respecting Parents & Family

6. The Rights of Muslims & Good Character

How to use this handbook

Read one lesson at a time. Open the cited Qur'an and hadith references when you have internet access, complete the knowledge review, and reflect on the independent-study exercise. If studying offline, note the reference numbers for later consultation.

Sincerity & Good Intentions

Learning objectives

Understand intention

Explain why the purpose behind an action matters.

Recognize sincerity

Describe worship and service performed seeking Allah's pleasure.

Practice reflection

Apply intention-checking to daily activities without becoming preoccupied or anxious.

1. What is niyyah (intention)?

Niyyah refers to one's purpose or aim in an action. Two actions may look alike outwardly, yet differ in purpose. A person might donate to help others, seek praise, or both; learning to examine motives is part of building good character.

In Sahih al-Bukhari 1 , the Prophet (peace be upon him) teaches that actions are judged in relation to intentions. Read the complete narration and its example of migration.

2. What is ikhlas (sincerity)?

Ikhlas means devoting one's worship sincerely to Allah, rather than making recognition by other people the goal. The Qur'an connects worship with sincere devotion in Surah Al-Bayyinah 98:5 .

Sincerity matters in prayer and charity, but also in learning, teaching, family responsibilities, and community service. Seeking sincere intentions does not require avoiding all praise or publicity; the question is whether praise becomes one's underlying aim.

3. The danger of showing off (riya')

Riya' describes performing acts of worship to be seen or admired by others. It is important to resist this temptation without accusing others of insincerity: only Allah fully knows what is in people's hearts.

Read Qur'an 107:4-6 , which warns about showing off in prayer.

4. Renewing intentions in everyday life

Before a good deed, ask: "What good am I seeking, and why?" During the action, gently redirect your attention if you notice a desire for applause. Afterwards, avoid excessive self-congratulation; thank Allah and continue doing good.

Serving neighbors, teaching basic Islamic knowledge, or supporting vulnerable people should be done with dignity, consent, and respect. Good intentions are not a substitute for honesty, competence, or proper safeguards.

5. Sincerity and the foundation's mission

For a Da'wah organization, sincere service means providing accurate information, respecting people's freedom of belief, handling donations transparently once fundraising begins, and avoiding personal glory. The Qur'an teaches inviting to Allah with wisdom and good instruction in 16:125 .

Knowledge review

A person's intention, purpose, or aim in carrying out an action.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1, narrated by Umar ibn al-Khattab.

Sincere devotion to Allah rather than making people's approval the object of worship.

Showing off in acts of worship to gain recognition.

No. Outward actions can be evaluated, but a person's inner intention is not fully known to us.

Pause before a good deed, consider your purpose, and redirect your attention toward sincere service.

Independent study

- Read Qur'an 98:5 and summarize how sincerity relates to worship.
- Read Sahih al-Bukhari 1 in full; write down the lesson from the migration example.
- Choose one act of kindness this week and reflect privately on your intention before and after doing it.

Primary references

- Qur'an 98:5 - sincere devotion
- Sahih al-Bukhari 1 - intentions
- Qur'an 107:4-6 - showing off
- Qur'an 16:125 - inviting with wisdom

Source: https://quran.com/98/5

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1

Source: https://quran.com/107/4-6

Source: https://quran.com/16/125

Honesty & Trustworthiness

Learning objectives

Tell the truth

Explain why honesty matters in speech and action.

Honor a trust

Recognize responsibilities when property, information, or duties are entrusted to us.

Keep commitments

Practice clear, responsible promises and accountability when plans change.

1. Truthfulness (sidq)

Sidq is truthfulness: speaking accurately, avoiding deliberate deception, and being honest about what one does and does not know. The Qur'an instructs believers to be with the truthful in 9:119 .

Honesty includes admitting mistakes, correcting misinformation, and giving people accurate information even when a misleading statement might bring a short-term advantage.

2. Trustworthiness (amanah)

An amanah is something entrusted to someone: property, a responsibility, confidential information, or an agreed task. Qur'an 4:58 commands the return of trusts to those entitled to them and justice when judging.

For a community organization, trustworthiness means keeping proper records, being accurate about services actually offered, respecting privacy, and maintaining appropriate oversight when accepting funds in the future.

3. Keeping promises and being accountable

Before making a promise, consider whether it is realistic. If a commitment cannot be met, explain promptly, seek a fair solution, and do not hide the problem. The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned against a pattern of lying, breaking promises, and betraying trusts in Sahih al-Bukhari 33 .

This warning encourages personal accountability; it is not permission to declare particular individuals hypocrites based on an isolated failing.

4. Honesty in trade and communication

Describe products, prices, conditions, and limitations accurately. Avoid concealing defects, exaggerating results, or implying a program is operational before it exists. This applies to fundraising appeals, course descriptions, volunteer work, and ordinary business dealings.

Qur'an 83:1-3 warns against dishonesty in measurement and fair dealing.

5. Trust in relationships and community service

Respect confidentiality while recognizing that serious safety issues may require appropriate disclosure. Ask permission before sharing someone's story. Admit uncertainty instead of inventing answers, and refer matters requiring expertise to qualified people.

Trust grows when people observe consistent actions over time, not simply impressive words.

Knowledge review

Truthfulness in speech and conduct.

Something entrusted to a person, such as property, a duty, or information.

Qur'an 4:58.

Sahih al-Bukhari 33.

Communicate promptly, explain accurately, and seek a fair solution rather than concealing the problem.

Accurately describe which programs are active, maintain clear records, and avoid unsupported claims about donations or impact.

Independent study

- Read Qur'an 9:119 and 4:58. Write one practical application for each.
- Read Sahih al-Bukhari 33 and identify the three warning signs it describes.
- Choose one promise or responsibility this week. Make a simple plan to fulfill it and communicate promptly if circumstances change.

Primary references

- Qur'an 9:119 - truthfulness
- Qur'an 4:58 - trusts and justice
- Qur'an 83:1-3 - fairness in dealing
- Sahih al-Bukhari 33 - lying, promises, and trust

Source: https://quran.com/9/119

Source: https://quran.com/4/58

Source: https://quran.com/83/1-3

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:33

Patience & Gratitude

Learning objectives

Understand sabr

Explain patience as principled self-control and perseverance.

Practice shukr

Identify ways to thank Allah through speech and responsible action.

Apply both

Respond constructively to difficulties and recognize blessings without denying hardship.

1. What is sabr?

Sabr refers to patience, restraint, and remaining steadfast in what is right. It may involve perseverance in worship, avoiding wrongdoing, and navigating tests without surrendering one's principles. Allah calls believers to seek help through patience and prayer in Qur'an 2:153 .

Patience is active: one may seek medical care, protection, mediation, or other appropriate help while remaining faithful and thoughtful.

2. What is shukr?

Shukr is gratitude to Allah for His blessings. It includes acknowledging blessings, praising Allah, and using one's resources responsibly. In Qur'an 14:7 , gratitude is linked with Allah's promise of increase.

Gratitude need not erase pain. A person can be thankful for support or safety while also honestly acknowledging a difficult situation.

3. Faith in ease and hardship

The Prophet (peace be upon him) described the believer's situation as remarkable: gratitude in prosperity and patience in adversity can both be good for the believer. See Sahih Muslim 2999 .

This hadith teaches a spiritual response, not a guarantee that every hardship will immediately end or that someone must hide distress.

4. Patience in speech and relationships

When angry, choose words carefully, avoid insults and retaliation, and consider a calm conversation or fair third-party assistance. Patience does not mean abandoning boundaries or remaining silent about injustice.

When able, forgive without requiring others to escape accountability. Reconciliation is most useful when paired with safety, honesty, and fair treatment.

5. Simple habits of gratitude

- Each day, name three specific blessings without comparing your life to others.
- Say alhamdulillah sincerely and reflect on its meaning.
- Use one blessing - time, knowledge, or possessions - to benefit another person.
- When a plan fails, identify a constructive next action and seek appropriate support.

Knowledge review

Patient restraint and steadfastness in doing what is right, including seeking appropriate help when needed.

Gratitude to Allah expressed through acknowledgment, praise, and responsible conduct.

Qur'an 2:153.

Sahih Muslim 2999.

No. Seeking safety and appropriate assistance is compatible with patience.

Thank Allah, recognize a specific blessing, and use it responsibly to benefit someone.

Independent study

- Read Qur'an 2:153 and 14:7. Write one practical application of each verse.
- Read Sahih Muslim 2999 and describe the two responses mentioned.
- Over three days, write one moment requiring sabr and one blessing for which you expressed shukr. Identify a helpful action you took.

Primary references

- Qur'an 2:153 - patience and prayer
- Qur'an 14:7 - gratitude
- Sahih Muslim 2999 - gratitude in ease, patience in difficulty

Source: https://quran.com/2/153

Source: https://quran.com/14/7

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2999

Brotherhood & Reconciliation

Learning objectives

Understand brotherhood

Identify the Qur'anic call to mutual care and peacemaking.

Seek justice

Explain why fair reconciliation must address harm honestly.

Guard speech

Recognize the harms of suspicion, spying, and backbiting.

1. Brotherhood in faith

Qur'an 49:10 describes believers as brothers and calls for reconciliation between them. Brotherhood includes respect, concern for others, and an effort to resolve disputes without humiliating anyone.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also taught that a Muslim is the brother of another Muslim and should neither wrong nor abandon him. See Sahih Muslim 2564a .

2. Reconciliation must be just

Peacemaking is not simply asking people to stop arguing. Qur'an 49:9 connects reconciliation with justice. Seek accurate information, listen fairly, acknowledge wrongs, and consider repair or restitution where appropriate.

Forgiveness is virtuous, but it should not be used to pressure someone into silence or to excuse repeated harm. Where safety or legal rights are involved, seek suitable professional assistance.

3. Avoid suspicion and backbiting

Qur'an 49:12 warns against excessive suspicion, spying, and backbiting. In disputes, verify claims rather than passing on rumors. Speak about others with fairness and restraint.

Seeking advice, reporting wrongdoing, or requesting protection may require disclosing relevant facts; this should be done carefully and for a legitimate purpose, not as gossip.

4. A fair way to address disagreements

- Make your intention sincere: seek justice and repair, not victory or embarrassment.
- Hear each person's account without circulating unverified accusations.
- Describe the specific behavior and its effects without insults.
- Consider accountability, practical remedies, boundaries, or appropriate mediation.

- Agree on reasonable next steps and revisit the agreement when necessary.

Qur'an 4:114 commends efforts to bring reconciliation between people.

5. Community application

In a mosque, nonprofit, or volunteer project, disputes over responsibilities or money should be handled with clear records, transparent expectations, due process, and respect. Good intentions do not replace accountability.

When a dispute involves violence, coercion, threats, or exploitation, prioritize safety and appropriate authorities or qualified services rather than informal mediation alone.

Knowledge review

Brotherhood and efforts to reconcile believers who are in conflict.

Fair peacemaking acknowledges harms and rights; it does not merely suppress disagreement.

Qur'an 49:12.

No. Repair, protection, and boundaries may still be necessary.

Listen to both sides, verify information, speak respectfully, or agree on fair steps for repair.

No. Safety and appropriate support come first.

Independent study

- Read Qur'an 49:9-12 and identify three duties that strengthen community ties.
- Read Sahih Muslim 2564a and write a paragraph on protecting another Muslim's rights.
- Consider a hypothetical disagreement among volunteers. Write a five-step plan for a just resolution without sharing anyone's private information.

Primary references

- Qur'an 49:9 - reconcile justly
- Qur'an 49:10 - believers are brothers
- Qur'an 49:12 - suspicion and backbiting
- Qur'an 4:114 - reconciliation
- Sahih Muslim 2564a - rights of Muslim brotherhood

Source: https://quran.com/49/9

Source: https://quran.com/49/10

Source: https://quran.com/49/12

Source: https://quran.com/4/114

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2564a

Respecting Parents & Family

Learning objectives

Honor parents

Recognize duties of good conduct and respectful communication.

Maintain family ties

Explore practical ways to show care without neglecting fairness.

Understand boundaries

Distinguish respectful kindness from unqualified obedience.

1. Kindness to parents

Qur'an 17:23 commands worship of Allah alone and kind treatment of parents. It emphasizes gracious speech, especially as parents grow older. Qur'an 17:24 teaches humility and supplication for them.

Respect is reflected in words and daily behavior: listening carefully, avoiding contempt, offering practical help when possible, and remembering one's parents in du'a.

2. The special status of mothers

In Sahih al-Bukhari 5971 , the Prophet (peace be upon him) repeatedly names the mother as most deserving of good companionship, followed by the father. The narration emphasizes the profound obligation to care for parents and especially acknowledges a mother's sacrifices.

Both parents deserve good treatment. Specific responsibilities may vary with personal circumstances and should be discussed with a qualified teacher when uncertain.

3. Gratitude and family ties

Qur'an 31:14 joins gratitude to Allah with gratitude toward one's parents and recalls a mother's difficulty in pregnancy and nursing.

Family ties can be strengthened through thoughtful contact, checking on relatives, fulfilling reasonable promises, maintaining privacy, offering appropriate material or practical help, and showing care during illness or hardship.

4. Kindness is not unconditional obedience

Qur'an 31:15 makes an important distinction: one does not obey a parent in associating partners with Allah, yet continues to accompany parents in this world with suitable kindness.

By extension, religious respect should not be misused to justify coercion, violence, exploitation, or ignoring safety. A person may maintain boundaries, seek help, and respond with dignity without accepting harm.

5. Everyday family character

- Speak respectfully, even when disagreeing.
- Offer help according to ability and actual needs.
- Protect family members' privacy and avoid spreading their faults.
- Practice fairness in financial dealings and caregiving.
- When tensions arise, aim for a calm and safe conversation or appropriate mediation.
- Make du'a for family members and look for sincere ways to repair ordinary misunderstandings.

Knowledge review

It commands kindness to parents and respectful speech, particularly in their old age.

The mother, before mentioning the father.

Gratitude to one's parents.

No. Qur'an 31:15 says not to obey that command while continuing appropriate kindness.

Examples include thoughtful communication, helping with needs, keeping reasonable promises, protecting privacy, and offering du'a.

No. Appropriate boundaries and safety measures can coexist with respectful conduct.

Independent study

- Read Qur'an 17:23-24 and list three forms of good treatment.
- Read Qur'an 31:14-15 and explain the difference between kindness and obedience.
- Reflect privately on one safe, practical act of kindness toward a family member this week.

Primary references

- Qur'an 17:23 - kind conduct and speech toward parents
- Qur'an 17:24 - humility and supplication
- Qur'an 31:14 - gratitude to parents
- Qur'an 31:15 - appropriate limits and kindness
- Sahih al-Bukhari 5971 - good companionship

Source: https://quran.com/17/23

Source: https://quran.com/17/24

Source: https://quran.com/31/14

Source: https://quran.com/31/15

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5971

LESSON 06 OF 06

The Rights of Muslims & Good Character

Learning objectives

Know core rights

Identify six rights mentioned in an authentic narration.

Develop adab

Use kind greetings, sincere advice, and respectful conduct.

Serve justly

Offer care while respecting dignity, boundaries, and safety.

1. Brotherhood expressed through action

Qur'an 49:10 calls believers brothers and urges reconciliation. Brotherhood is more than a slogan: it calls for fairness, compassionate conduct and sincere concern, especially when relationships are strained.

2. Six rights in Sahih Muslim

In Sahih Muslim 2162b , the Prophet (peace be upon him) describes six rights of a Muslim upon another Muslim:

- Offer the greeting of salam when meeting.
- Respond appropriately to an invitation.
- Give sincere counsel when asked for advice.
- When one sneezes and praises Allah, respond with a supplication for mercy.
- Visit a Muslim who is ill.
- Participate in the funeral procession when a Muslim dies.

These are a summarized study guide to the narration. Practical obligations and appropriate exceptions depend on context; visiting someone, for example, should respect health, consent, and safety.

3. Greetings and respectful speech

Qur'an 4:86 teaches believers to return a greeting with one equal or better. A respectful greeting is an easy, daily practice that promotes peace and mutual recognition.

Speak truthfully, avoid unnecessary humiliation, and refuse to spread private information merely because it is interesting or sensational.

4. Sincere advice without arrogance

When someone seeks advice, respond honestly and with humility. Good advice is grounded in reliable knowledge, considers the person's circumstances, and does not shame them. A friend may need a listening ear, support finding a qualified scholar, or practical assistance rather than quick judgment.

5. Caring for the sick, bereaved and vulnerable

Compassion can include a brief check-in, a respectful visit when welcomed, a meal, a message of consolation, or offering reliable information about local support. Preserve dignity and do not disclose private medical or family circumstances without permission.

6. Good character extends beyond one's own group

Serving fellow Muslims does not cancel the duty of justice and good conduct toward others. Qur'an 60:8 addresses kindness and justice toward those who do not fight people on account of religion or expel them from their homes. Practice respect toward neighbors, coworkers, and people learning about Islam.

Knowledge review

Qur'an 49:10.

Examples: offering salam, responding to an invitation, sincere counsel when asked, responding to a sneeze with a supplication, visiting the sick, and following a funeral procession.

Return a greeting with one that is equal or better.

Listen, speak truthfully and kindly, acknowledge uncertainty, and suggest qualified help when necessary.

Their preference, health and safety needs, privacy, and appropriate timing.

No. The Qur'an also instructs kindness and justice toward others; see Qur'an 60:8.

Independent study

- Read Sahih Muslim 2162b and write all six rights in your own words.
- Read Qur'an 4:86 and 60:8; consider how greeting and fairness build community trust.
- Choose one safe, respectful act of service this week and reflect privately on your intention.

Primary references

- Sahih Muslim 2162b - six rights of Muslims
- Qur'an 49:10 - brotherhood and reconciliation
- Qur'an 4:86 - returning greetings
- Qur'an 60:8 - kindness and justice

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2162b

Source: https://quran.com/49/10

Source: https://quran.com/4/86

Source: https://quran.com/60/8