



Hiru no Hoshi

No. 269

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***“O people of God!
I admonish you to
observe courtesy,
for above all else
it is the prince of virtues.”***





It was a rainy Saturday afternoon in Okinawa. The five little children were bored because they couldn't go outside and play, so they had decided to play a board game. Mother was folding clothes in her room when she heard a lot of yelling coming from the tatami room. She went in to see what the problem was.

"You're too slow! Hurry and throw the dice, Riaz!"

"Don't throw the dice on the board, stupid! You will knock over our pieces!"

"Shut up! I know what I am doing!"

"Ha! Ha! You didn't get a 1 or 2 so you can't get out!"

"Give me the dice! It's my turn!"

Mother walked in just as Shahla and Riaz were having a tug of war with the dice. The two of them fell on the game and knocked over all the pieces. The game was ruined.

"What is this? A game or a war?" asked Mother. "I don't see anyone smiling or happy, you all look angry. I thought games were supposed to be fun; isn't that why you play them?"

The children all looked up at her in surprise.

"What?" said Asma. "What are you talking about Mom?" The rest of the children looked equally confused.

"A game should have happy laughter and smiles on everyone's faces, winners and losers." explained Mother. "I know, I have a magic word that can make this angry game into a happy one. Do you want to hear what the magic word is?" asked Mother.

"Yes! What is it! What is it!" Shouted little Anisa, jumping up and pulling on Mother's sleeve.

The other children all nodded their heads, but looked a little skeptical. 'What trick was Mother playing,' they wondered.

"The magic word is.....Courtesy!" Mother said smiling.

"Mom!!" shouted Shahla, "That's not a magic word!"

"Well, OK, but it is a magic virtue, though. If you have courtesy, it can change anger, sadness, or loneliness, into happiness. Baha'u'llah said it was the Prince of all virtues."

The children all shook their heads and looked confused.

“Let me give you an example, using the conversation you were just having when I came in. Suppose Mona would have said ‘It is your turn Riaz, here are the dice.’ Instead of what she said...”

“Yeah, she yelled at me and said ‘You’re too slow, hurry and throw the dice!’ and Shahla yelled at me to not throw the dice on the board!”

“And Shahla called Riaz ‘stupid’ too!” said little Anisa smiling, thinking she was being helpful!

“Yes, well, we don’t need all the details Anisa, but thank you.” replied Mother, smiling. Now suppose Shahla had said, “Please be careful not to throw the dice on the board; it might knock over the pieces.”

“Yeah, if she would have said it nice, like that, then I wouldn’t have gotten mad, and I would have given her the dice when it was her turn!” said Riaz.

“Yes,” added Mother, “and as important as it is to use polite words, it is even more important to use a nice tone of voice. Let’s practice. Everyone say ‘Here you are.’ nicely, like you really mean it.”

“Here you are.” They all said as sweetly as they could.... Riaz being a little silly and dramatic about it.

“Now say it like you are really angry and don’t want to give it to the person, but you have to,” suggested Mother.

“**HERE YOU ARE!!!**” They all shouted, throwing imaginary things at each other.

“Ok, how about, ‘Thank you very much!’ First say it nicely with courtesy,” said Mother.

“Thank you very much!” they all sweetly said, bowing to each other.

“Now like you don’t mean it at all and are really angry!”

“**THANK YOU VERY MUCH!**” They all yelled.

They were all having fun now. They tried a few more words like that, saying them first with courtesy and then with anger.

Then Mona said, “Oh, remember the story about the two sisters, one that was always courteous, and the other that was always rude?”

“Yeah, that was a good story!” agreed Asma.

“What story? Tell me the story! Lemme hear



the story!” said Anisa, jumping up and down.

“Anisa! Remember, courtesy!” reminded Mona.

“Please tell us the story, Momo!” Anisa said in her sweetest voice. And the children all laughed.

Riaz jumped up and said, “Wait a minute, I have an idea. Since the game is ruined anyway, and it is still raining outside, let’s put on that play for Anisa and anyone else that wants to see it!”

“Yeah!” shouted all the children.

“Mona can be the courteous sister and Shahla can be the rude sister!” suggested Riaz.

“NO WAY! I want to be the courteous sister!” shouted Shahla.

“Well,” laughed Asma, “you can **start** by saying that with courtesy!”

“May I please be the courteous sister? As you can see, I need the practice,” said Shahla sweetly, and everyone laughed, even Shahla.

So it was decided: Mona would be the rude sister, Shahla, the courteous one, Asma would be the old woman by the well, and Riaz, the director. The children all scattered to get their props and costumes while Anisa went around the neighborhood inviting their friends to the performance. It was going to start after dinner, at 7 p.m.

The children worked hard all afternoon on the play, reminding each other to say things with courtesy to each other.

That night, six of their friends showed up to watch the play. Anisa was sitting on the floor with them in front of the stage, which was the space in front of a curtain that the children had hung up between the tatami room and the dining room. She was so excited because they hadn’t let her see the play at all while they were practicing. Mother had taken her shopping to keep her out of the house.

Riaz came out in front of the curtain and began the play.

“Once upon a time there were two sisters; one was always very courteous and nice to everyone, and the other was always rude!

One day the Courteous Sister was sent by their mother to go and get some water from the well in the forest.”

Shahla came out from behind the curtain dressed like a peasant girl with a scarf on her head and a bucket in



her hands. She walked to other end of the stage where Asma, dressed like a little old woman, was sitting by a big box decorated like a well.

“Hello dearie,” Asma said in a high crackly voice of an old woman.

“Hello grandmother.” said Shahla in a kind voice.

“How are you?” she asked.

“I am very tired and thirsty; could you bring up some water for a poor old woman? I am too weak to pull the bucket up myself.” Asma said in the old woman’s voice.

“Of course!” Shahla made a big show of pulling and pulling until she pulled up a bucket of water from the box. She poured a little water into a cup that was sitting by the box, and gave it to Asma. “Here you are,” she said sweetly.



“Thank you my dear.” said Asma. “Because you are so courteous and have such a kindly tongue, I am going to reward you,” continued Asma.

“Oh there is no need for reward, I wanted to help you.” said Shahla sweetly, and as she said that she put her hand to her mouth and out dropped some plastic jewels as though they had come from her mouth. (Really they came her pocket.)

Anisa and the other children gasped in surprise. Then Shahla said. “Oh, thank you, kind grandmother.” And again Shahla put her hand to her mouth and some pretty flowers fell, as if out of her mouth.

Anisa and the children grabbed the flowers and jewels that had fallen on the floor.

Shahla picked up the bucket of water and sweetly said ‘good-bye’ to the grandmother and the children grabbed the pretty plastic butterflies that fell from Shahla’s mouth.

Shahla walked over to the other end of the stage, where Mona was sitting, dressed as a peasant.

Then, Riaz explained to the audience that when the Courteous Sister got home, she told her sister and mother all about how a kind old woman had put a magic spell on her. “Every time she opened her mouth wondrous things would fall out of it!” he told them, dramatically.

Shahla pretended to talk to Mona, as jewels, roses, and other lovely little plastic things kept falling from her mouth. (She had lots of them in her pocket!) Then, both girls went back stage.

Riaz explained that the Rude Sister was jealous, so the next day she had decided that she would find the old woman and get her own reward.

Mona came walking out across the stage to where Asma was again sitting by the 'well'.

"Hey, Granny! Hey You!" Mona shouted.

Asma ignored her.

"GRANNY! Hey old lady, I am talking to you!" shouted Mona.

Asma ignored her.

"Hey old lady, are you deaf!" shouted Mona, waving her hand in front of Asma's face.

Finally, Asma said in his creaky granny voice, "Yes, my dear, could you help an old lady, and please get a cup of water from the well for me?"

"What? Do it yourself! You have two arms!" Mona shouted. "I came to get the same magic you gave my sister!! It's not fair that you gave her something and not me! I am the older sister!"

"She gave me some water." said Asma.

"OH, All right!" said Mona as she went to the box and pulled up the bucket of water, put some into the cup, and practically threw it at the old woman, spilling some of the water on the floor.

"Now give me my reward!" Mona shouted.

"Yes, you may have your reward. Here it is." And Asma nodded at her.

"What, what did you do, I don't see any jewels!" As Mona said that, she put her hand to her mouth and out dropped a spider.

"EEWWW!" shouted the children watching.

Mona screamed and jumped back. "What was that, you crazy lady?" Mona said as she put her hand to her mouth and out popped a plastic cockroach and a preying mantis.

The children all screamed and backed away, as the insects fell to the floor. Mona continued to say mean things to Asma while she pretended to run back home. Every time she said something, more and more creepy, crawly, frogs, lizards, snakes and bugs fell out of her mouth and onto the floor with the screaming children.



Mona and Asma disappeared behind the stage and Riaz came out and said, “And ever after, every time the Courteous Sister said something nice, nice things would come out of her mouth, and every time the Rude Sister said something rude, creepy things would fall out of her mouth.”

Riaz ended with, “The Rude Sister had a hard time thinking of anything not rude to say, so mostly she just kept quiet!” Riaz bowed, then Mona, Shahla, and Asma all came out from behind the curtain. They all held hands and took a bow together and recited:

“...Observe courtesy, for above all else, it is the prince of virtues.”

All the children, Mother and Father clapped and cheered.

Then, Mother served everyone cookies and hot chocolate.

The boring rainy day had turned into a learning adventure!

Ever after, anytime anyone would say something rude or in a rude way, one of the children or Mother would slap the table or floor and say “Oh, a cockroach fell out of your mouth!” And they would remember to speak with courtesy.



Quiz

1. What are the children doing when the story begins?

2. What was the weather like that made the children stay inside?

3. What are Riaz and Shahla fighting over?

4. What was Mother's magic word (virtue) to turn anger into happiness?

5. What is the Prince of all Virtues?

6. Can someone be rude even though they used nice words like "Thank you" or "Here you are"? _____
7. In the play, what reward did the Courteous Sister get?

8. What reward did the Rude Sister get?

9. Why would the children say that a cockroach had fallen out of someone's mouth?

10. Practice saying something nice in a nice way, and then in a rude way. Let's all try very hard to only say nice things, in nice ways!

Maybe you and your friends could put on the play that the 5 little children put on!

How did you do? Did you get them all right? The answers are on the Parents' Page.



Art Page

Materials:

Toilet paper rolls (empty)

Ruler

Pencil

Scissors

Double sided tape

Construction paper

Gems or pearls (plastic)

Glue

Glitter (optional)

2 plates(optional) 1 for glitter, 1 for glue

Method:

Cut toilet paper roll into 1 cm circles.

Figure out what design you want.

The circles can also be folded in half.

Tape or glue together.

Tape or glue onto construction paper.

Glue in gems or pearls.

Or;

Dip star into a plate of glue and then into a plate of glitter.

Hang up star after it dries, or mount on construction paper.

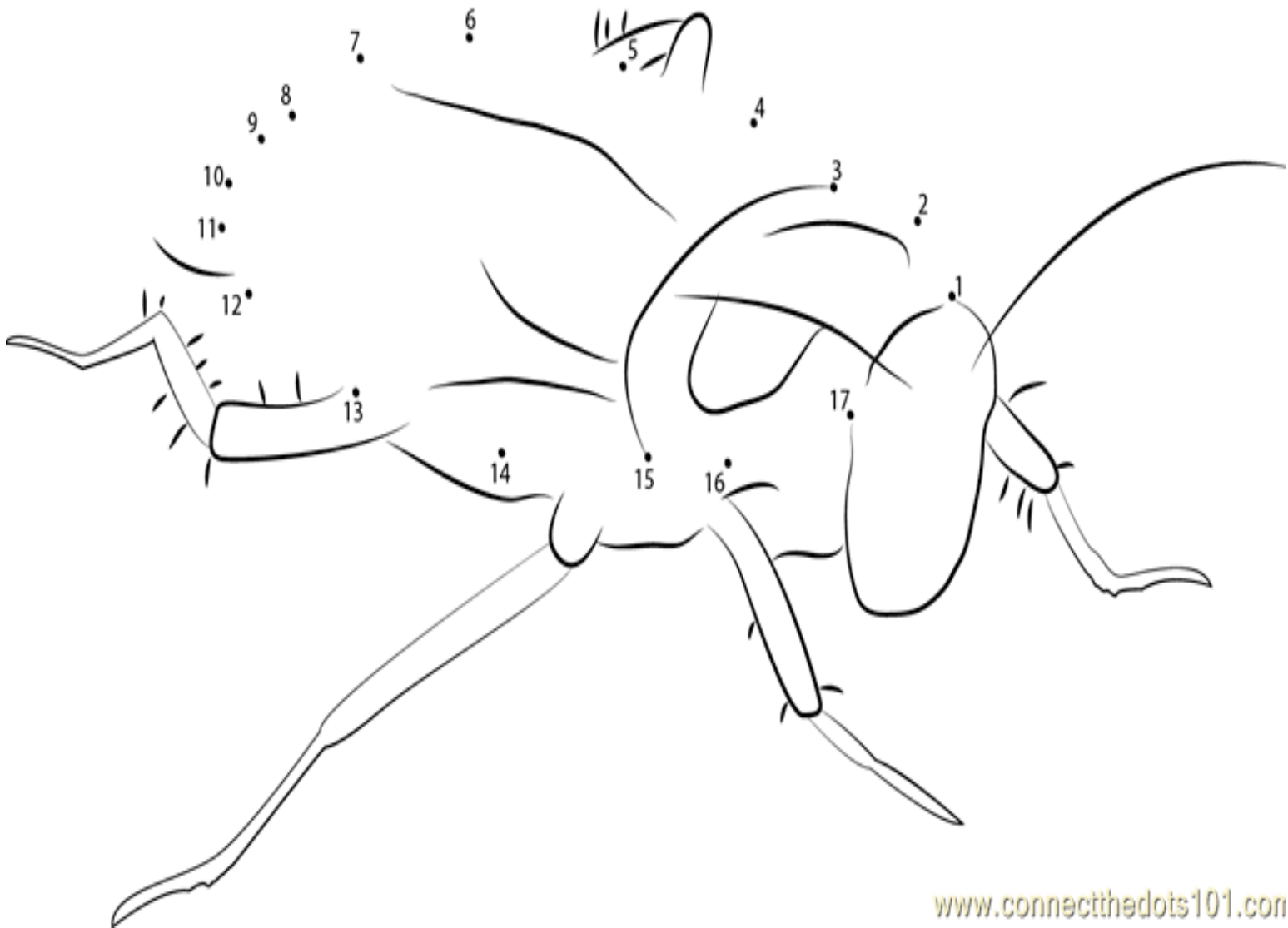


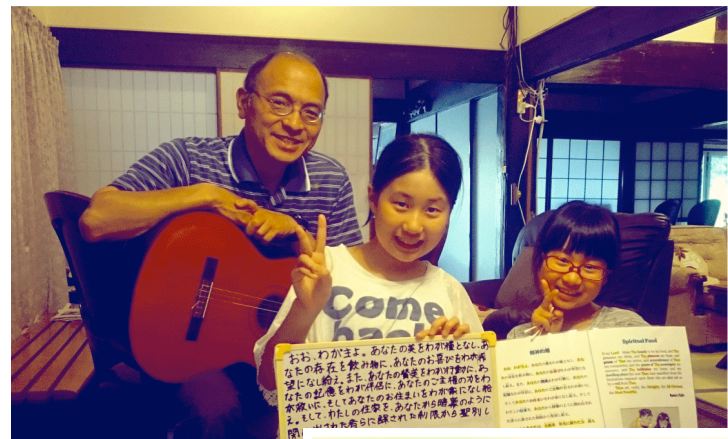
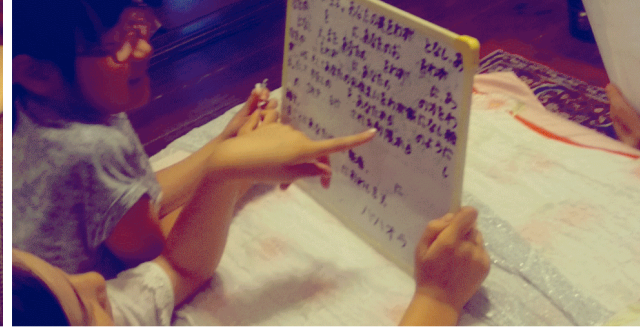
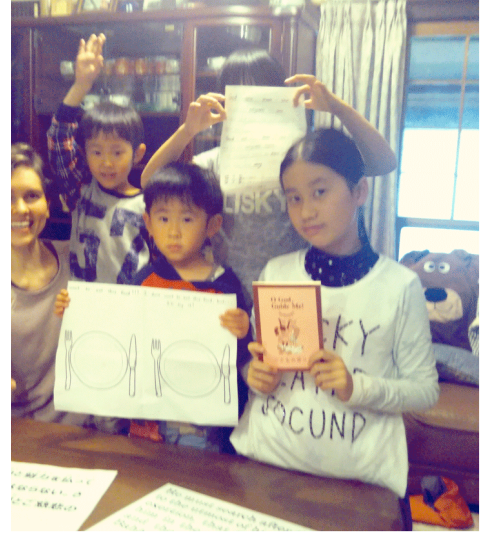
Connect the numbers from 1 to 17.

What do you see?

Is this the cockroach that fell out of your mouth when you said something that was not courteous?

Color him nicely, please.





Parents Page

Here are some quotations from the Baha'i Writings on courtesy for meditation and discussion with our children.

O people of God! I admonish you to observe courtesy, for above all else it is the prince of virtues. Well is it with him who is illumined with the light of courtesy and is attired with the vesture of uprightness. Whoso is endued with courtesy hath indeed attained a sublime station. It is hoped that this Wronged One and everyone else may be enabled to acquire it, hold fast unto it, observe it, and fix our gaze upon it.” Baha'u'llah

“A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men. It is the fountain of the light of wisdom and understanding.” Baha'u'llah

“We, verily, have chosen courtesy, and made it the true mark of such as are nigh unto Him. Courtesy is, in truth, a raiment which fitteth all men, whether young or old.” Baha'u'llah

“Beware lest ye harm any soul, or make any heart to sorrow; lest ye wound any man with your words, be he known to you or a stranger, be he friend or foe.” ‘Abdu'l-Baha

***“Beware! Beware! Lest ye offend any heart!
Beware! Beware! Lest ye hurt any soul!
Beware! Beware! Lest ye deal unkindly toward any person!
Beware! Beware! Lest ye be the cause of hopelessness to any creature!” ‘Abdu'l-Baha***

Quiz Answers: 1) Playing a game. 2) It is rainy. 3) The dice of the game. 4) Courtesy 5) Courtesy 6) Yes
7) Jewels, flowers, butterflies, lots of wonderful things coming out of her mouth. 8) Spiders, cockroaches,
snakes and other creepy things coming out of her mouth. 9) When someone said something not nice.





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13-2-7 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo-to 160-0022

Tel. 03-3209-7521

Fax 03-3204-0773

You can contact the Hiru no Hoshi Committee at luanahirahara@hotmail.com

We appreciate your comments.

Hiru no Hoshi Committee: Glenn Loe; Seishi Hirahara, Luana Hirahara,
Mami Bowden-Kerby

Story: Luana Hirahara,

Translator: Seishi Hirahara,

Dot to Dot: www.connectthedots101.com

Photographs: Luana Hirahara, Glenn Loe, Eva Sonda, Nozomu Sonda,

Art: Barbara Casterline, Steven Paschal, Kaori Hiramoto, Sana Madjzoub,

Glenn Loe, Maki Obakata,

Technical Advisor: Glenn Loe

Japanese Advisor: Nobuko Iwakura

NSA Liaison: Mary Noguchi