

The Ten Manners

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In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful¹

Know – may Allah guide me and you to the best of manners – that from the most important etiquettes are ten:²

The first: When you meet a Muslim, then greet him, [السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ] (Assalaamu `alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakaatuhu) May Allah's peace, mercy and blessings be upon you]. And if he greets you, then reply: [وَعَلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامُ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ] (Wa `alaykum assalaam wa rahmatullahi wabarakaatuhu) May Allah's peace, mercy and blessings be upon you too].³

¹ The author sufficed with Basmalah in the beginning, as it is proven from the Sunnah of the prophet ﷺ in sending letters to the kings. Basmalah in the beginning of any work is the source of blessings and success.

² The author immediately began with the command: "Know". Using a commanding word in the beginning of the speech is to emphasise on the significance of what is about to be spoken. For indeed, command is the most effective form of speech to be heard and accepted.

And because beginning with a command becomes heavy on people generally, the author followed it with making Dua for the one being commanded. So, he said: "May Allah guide me and you to the best of manners." Because the souls accept what is being told even if it is commanded, if Dua is made for them. **Because Dua is of a form of favor to the creation, and favors melt the heart and cool the mind.** And he chose to pray for guidance specially for manners due to its high position, and great benefits in the world and the Hereafter. And he prayed for himself before others as it is Sunnah (although the contrary is as well permissible). It is in Saheeh that when the prophet would make Dua, he would begin with himself.

The author has not mentioned all etiquettes, but he chose ten major of them. These are the ten major because of two reasons, the first being that the Sharee`ah has given it much emphasis and secondly that these ten are required regularly or even daily. And **Adaab (etiquettes)** is whatever is praised in the Sharee`ah or in the custom, as mentioned by Abul Fadl Ibn Hajar and others. Etiquette is a major chapter of this religion, and the recompense of being ignorant of it is evil, and isolating oneself from Adaab makes the slave appear retarded. Indeed, the perfection of human lies in and magnifies with high etiquettes. Therefore, the Sharee`ah gave it much attention, upto an extent that Abu Hurairah (radiyallahu anh) narrated that the prophet ﷺ said: "**Indeed, I have been sent to perfect good characters.**" (Musnad Ahmad) And he was a role model in this, and he was best of people in character. So, it is of clear ignorance to not be aware of Islamic etiquettes established on the Qur`an, Sunnah and acts of the righteous predecessors. But worse than this are those who turn to western and eastern etiquettes and look up to it, because the first ones only leave it while thinking good about it but these showed their back to the Sharee`ah thinking what is in other than the Sharee`ah is better and more beneficial to improve behavior.

³ `Abdullah ibn `Umar narrated that a man asked the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ: "What is the best thing in Islam?" He said, "Feeding others and giving the greeting of salaam to those whom you know and those whom you do not know." (Agreed upon) Ibn Hajar said: "i.e., do not single out anybody out of arrogance or to impress them, but do it to honour the symbols of Islam and to foster Islamic brotherhood." (al-Fath al-Bari)

There are three levels of greeting with salam:

1. Assalaamu `alaykum
2. Assalaamu `alaykum wa rahmatullah
3. Assalaamu `alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakaatuhu

The last one is the best and most rewarded, with thirty hasanaat. Beginning the greeting is a Sunnah, and replying to the greeter is an obligation. And one must reply with a better form. There is consensus on this as mentioned by Abu `Umar Ibn Abdul Barr Al Maliki and others.

The second: If you want to enter upon someone then take permission, standing at either the right or left side of the door. If you are given permission, then you may enter. And if you were told: “Go back”, then go back.¹

The third: Name Allah when you begin to eat and drink, saying [بِسْمِ اللَّهِ] – (Bismillah) In the name of Allah] and eat with your right hand, and what is near to you. And when you are done, lick your fingers, and say [اَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ] – (Alhamdulillah) All praise be to Allah].²

¹ This ruling is not specific to houses only, but extends to offices and other private places where others are not expected to enter without permission. And one should stand either on the right or the left side of the door, as proved in the authentic Hadith. So, it is not appropriate to stand in front of the door as the objective of the Sharee`ah to stand on either side is that those inside do not get exposed.

Enter only when you are given permission and return if you are asked to go back, as Allah said: “And if it is said to you, “Go back,” then go back.” (An-Nur 24:28) So, if the one who is being taken permission from says: “Please come later”, or “I am busy” or other such phrases of the meaning, it becomes obligatory to return. And one must not see that he is being rejected, but remember that one has the right to reject. When you seek permission, he has the right to accept or reject. The souls which do not accept this should remember that this right has been given from the Sharee`ah.

² ‘Umar ibn Abi Salamah (radiyallahu anh) said: I was a young boy in the care of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and my hand used to wander all over the platter (of food). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to me, “O young boy, name Allah, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is in front of you.” (Agreed upon) And another narration reported by At-Tabarani specifies what is meant by naming Allah. It says: “O young boy, say: Bismillah...” (Mu`jam Al-Kabeer)

No addition to “Bismillah” before eating is proven. The scholars differed on this issue, and Abu Zakariyyah An-Nawawi and Ibn Taymiyyah chose that adding to Bismillah other names of Allah like Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, Ar-Razzaq, etc., is better. But Abul Fadl Ibn Hajar refuted them in Fath Al-Bari by saying that there is no proof that adding is better. And the opinion of Ibn Hajar is stronger, and limiting to the Sunnah is better by saying “Bismillah”.

If one forgets to say in the beginning, he must say what the prophet taught. ‘Aa’ishah (radiyallahu anha) narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “When one of you eats, let him mention the name of Allah. If he forgets to mention the name of Allah at the beginning, let him say: In the name of Allah at the beginning and at the end (Bismillahi awwalahu wa aakhirahu).”

What is meant by “**eat from what is in front of you**” is to eat from what is close. This is the ruling when the food is one. For example, if rice and meat is served for everyone, then one must eat from what is in front him. But if the table has multiple dishes, it is permissible for him to take from what is not closely in-front. For example, if the table has rice and meat close to him but the soup and curry is away, it is permissible to take the soup or ask others to pass it onto him.

Then, **lick your fingers**. Ibn Abbas (radiyallahu anh) narrated that the Messenger of Allah said ﷺ: “When one of you eats, he must not wipe his hand till he licks it, or gives it to someone else to lick.” (Agreed upon) **Lick** is defined here as to pass the tongue over the fingers. And giving someone else to lick means a husband licking the fingers of the wife, or the grandparent licking the finger of the baby. So, it does not mean that a thirty-year-old should begin to ask others to lick his fingers in the name of “Sunnah”. And the etiquette in it is to lick quietly not noisily, because that is from the actions of the depicable ones. The Sharee`ah has come with limits not based on desires, but on knowledge. The same goes for kissing the black stone, it should be a gentle one because it is kiss in its honor, and a kiss of honor must be such. And from this category is kissing the father and mother, it must as well be with gentleness and without any voice.

And end eating with “Alhamdulillah”. The Prophet ﷺ used to say:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَثِيرًا طَيْبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ، غَيْرَ مَكْفُورٍ وَلَا مَوْدِعٍ وَلَا مُسْتَغْنَى عَنْهُ رَبُّنَا

“Al-hamdu lillaahi hamdan katheeran tayyiban mubaarakan fihi ghayra makfiyyin wa laa muwadda’in wa laa mustaghnaan ‘anhu rabbana”. (Praise be to Allaah, much good and blessed praise. O our Lord, You are not in need of anyone, and we cannot do without Your favour nor dispense with it.)” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

The fourth: Speak well in a pleasant way, and lower your voice and communicate gently. Listen to the one speaking to you, and turn towards him. And do not interrupt him, and do not proceed in speech those who are senior to you.¹

The fifth: When you intend to go to your bed, perform ablution (Wudhu), and sleep on your right side. And recite Ayat-ul Kursi once, and then cup your hands and recite Surat-ul Ikhlas and Al-Mu'awwidhatayn (Surat-ul Falaq and Surat-un Naas) and blow into them. Then wipe as much of your body as you can with your hands; do that three times.²

¹ **Speak well in a pleasant way:** Abu Hurairah (radiyallahu anh) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "He who believes in Allah and the Last Day must either speak good or remain silent." (Muslim)

And lower your voice, so that others like you and your speech, because people turn away from those who raise their voices even if they be on the truth. **And communicate gently,** by speaking less and only when required. And 'Aishah (radiyallahu anha) said: "When the prophet of the Allah ﷺ gave a talk, a man could count his words if he wished to count." (Sunan Abu Dawood)

Listen to the one speaking to you, and turn towards him, as it is his right. It is the etiquette of communication to accept the speech of each other pleasantly. In it is included the etiquette of Khutbah of Jum`ah to listen to the Khateeb and turn towards him and the same is followed in lessons of teachers, just like how the teacher turns towards each of the students.

And do not interrupt him, and do not proceed in speech those who are senior to you. Abdullah Ibn Mubarak was once asked about an issue in the presence of Sufyan Ibn 'Uyaynah (rahimahullah), so he said: "We have been prohibited from speaking in the presence of our seniors." Interrupting the scholars has become common today, and this is what has declined the honor for these scholars in the sight of people. Just like the senior governors and officers are respected, the senior scholars are to be respected as well.

² It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: "The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ put me in charge of guarding the zakaah of Ramadaan. Someone came to me and started grabbing handfuls of the food. I took hold of him and said, 'I will take you to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.' He said, 'I will teach you some words by means of which Allaah will benefit you.' I said, 'What are they?' He said, 'When you go to your bed, recite this aayah: "Allah! Laa ilaaha illa Huwa, Al-Hayyul-Qayyoom ..." (al-Baqarah 2:255) – until he completed the aayah. Then Allah will appoint a guard for you who will stay with you and no shaytaan (devil) will come near you until morning.' The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked me, 'What did your prisoner do last night?' I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, he taught me something, and claimed that Allaah would benefit me by it.' He said, 'What was it?' I said, 'He taught me to recite Aayat al-Kursi when I go to bed, and said that no shaytaan would come near me until morning, and that Allaah would appoint a guard for me who would stay with me.' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'He told you the truth, although he is an inveterate liar. That was the Shaytaan.'" (Agreed upon)

And when the messenger ﷺ would go to his bed, he would cup his hands together, blow into and recite into them Surat-ul Ikhlas and the Mu'awwidhatan (Surat-ul Falaq and an-Naas). Then he would wipe as much of his body as he could with his hands, starting with his head and face, and the front of his body. He would do this three times. (Narrated by al-Bukhari) It is necessary that the blow be from the mouth with little spit, because the objective is the blessing of the saliva on which the ayaat was recited.

The sixth: If you sneeze, then cover your face with your hand or your clothing, and praise Allah [by saying: الحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ (Alhamdulillah) All praise be to Allah]. If someone addresses you and says: [يَرْحَمُكَ اللَّهُ - (Yarh-amukallah) May Allah have mercy on you], then reply: [يَهْدِيْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيُصْلِّيْ بِالْكُمْ (Yahdeekumullahu wa yuslih baalakum) - May Allah guide you and rectify your condition].¹

The seventh: Suppress yawning as much as you can, and cover your mouth with your hand and do not make sounds like: 'Aah, aah'.²

The eighth: When you arrive at a gathering, greet them and sit where the people are gathered. Do not sit partially in the Sun and partially in the shade. And neither sit between two people except with their permission, nor make anyone to get- up from his seating. And make space for those who come. Remember Allah therein, and its minimum is its expiation: سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَحْمَدُكَ، أَشْهُدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوْبُ إِلَيْكَ (Subahaanka Allahumma wa bihamdika, Ash-hadu allaa ilaaha illaa anta, Astaghfiruka wa atoobu ilayk) How perfect You are O Allah, and I praise You. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except You. I seek Your forgiveness and turn to You in repentance.]³

¹ Abu Hurairah (radiyallahu anh) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "When one of you sneezes, let him say, 'Al-hamdu-Lillaah (Praise be to Allaah),' and let his brother or companion say to him. 'Yarhamuk Allaah (May Allaah have mercy on you).' If he says, 'Yarhamuk-Allaah,' then let (the sneezer) say, 'Yahdeekum Allaah wa yuslihu baalakum (May Allaah guide you and rectify your condition).'" (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)
Should one cover the mouth with his right hand or his left hand?

The answer is that **one should wipe it with his left hand**, because in Islam the right hand is only for things that are regarded as honourable, and the left hand is for things that are regarded as unclean. 'Aa'ishah narrated: "The right hand of the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ was for his purification and food, and his left hand was for cleaning himself after using the toilet and for everything that was unclean." (Sunan Abu Dawood)

² Abu Hurairah (radiyallahu anh) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Yawning is from the Shaytaan. If any of you feels the urge to yawn, let him resist it as much as possible, for if any of you says 'Ha' (makes a noise when yawning), the Shaytaan laughs." (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

³ Abu Hurairah (radiyallahu anh) narrated: Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "A rider should greet a pedestrian (the one walking); a pedestrian should greet one who is sitting; and a small group should greet a large group (of people)." (Agreed upon) The narration in Al-Bukhari adds: Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The young should greet the elderly."

And **it is not appropriate to sit between two people without their permission** except if it is an open place like a university hall with an empty seat between two people not talking to each other, or a bus stop, etc.

And **ending the gathering with Kaffarat-ul Majlis (expiation of assembly) is recommended**. Abu Hurairah (radiyallahu anh) narrated: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Whoever sits in a gathering and indulges in idle talk but before getting up he supplicates: Subhaanak Allahumma...; then Allah will forgive him for whatever happened in the assembly." (Jami` At-Tirmidhi)

The ninth: Give the road its due rights by lowering the gaze, and by abstaining from harming, and replying to the greetings, and enjoining good and forbidding the evil.¹

The tenth: Dress fine garments, and the best of them being white. And do not let it pass your ankles (for males). Begin with right side while dressing, and with the left side while undressing.²

¹ The author mentioned five rights of the (people on the) road mentioned in the narration of Abu Sa`eed Al-Khudri (radiyallahu anh): The Prophet ﷺ said, "Beware! Avoid sitting on the roads (ways)." The people said, "There is no way out of it as these are our sitting places where we have talks." The Prophet ﷺ said, "If you must sit there, then observe the rights of the way." They asked, "What are the rights of the way?" He said, "They are the lowering of your gazes (on seeing what is illegal to look at), refraining from harming people, returning greetings, enjoining good and forbidding evil." (Agreed upon)

1. **Lowering the gaze** and not staring at women, juveniles, etc.
2. **Abstaining from harming** the people by not throwing the waste on the road, or by any other way.
3. **Returning the greetings** of those passing by.
4. **Enjoining good** by encouraging people wasting the time to recite Qur'an or listen to a good lecture, etc.
5. **Forbidding evil** by educating the people around to leave for Salah when the Adhan is called, etc.

² **Fine garments** are those which are considered good and honored in the custom of the people. This is the view of Ash-Shatibi and others. And **the best color is white** because of the narration by Ibn `Abbaas (radiyallahu anh), who said: "The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said: 'Wear your white clothes, for they are the best of your clothes, and shroud your dead in them.'" (Abu Dawood and At-Tirmidhi)

The dress should not pass the ankles because of the narration that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Whatever of the izaar (lower garment) is below the ankles is in the Fire." (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

Begin with right side while dressing: Abu Hurayrah (radiyallahu anh) narrated: The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said: "When you get dressed and when you do wudoo', start on the right." (Abu Dawood)