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Islamic Etiquette and Manners

All praise is due to Allah, whose knowledge encompasses all things, who has perfected the creation of all things, and who has taught His servants the finest manners. He has made this religion a complete way of life, leaving no aspect of human life without guidance, and no character trait or natural disposition without refinement. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, sent to perfect noble character and teach the finest points of etiquette. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, his family, and his Companions.

To proceed,

Fear Allah, O servants of Allah, and know that nations are not defined by the abundance of their wealth or the height of their buildings; rather, they are known by their character and manners.

Nations endure only as long as their morals endure.

If their morals are gone, they too will vanish.

A person's conduct is a mirror of his heart, and good manners reveal what lies within. Allah, Most High, says:

"And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be treated unjustly." (Al-Baqarah 2:281)

O Muslims!

One of the most remarkable features of Islam is that it did not concern itself only with the great matters of life. Rather, it reached into the smallest details of our daily habits and conduct, refining them and giving them the finest form. As a result, every aspect of a Muslim's life is shaped by good manners: in worship, in dealings with others, in speech, in eating, in sleeping, and even in **the etiquette of relieving oneself**.

Salman (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: The idolaters said, "Indeed, your companion teaches you everything, even he teaches you how to defecate!" Salman said, "It is so. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) prohibited us from removing excrement using the right hand, or while facing the direction of prayer. The Prophet prohibited us from using dung or bones to do so, and he said not to use less than three stones." (Muslim and Ahmad)

This is a religion that teaches you how to sit and how to speak. It even teaches you how to sneeze, how to yawn, and how to refrain from causing harm to others in the simplest situations. What greater comprehensiveness could there be? What finer form of moral training could there be?

Servants of Allah!

Good manners in Islam are not a superficial display or a passing formality. Rather, they are a quiet act of worship by which people's character is weighed, and their true nature is revealed.

Whoever pays attention to these finer points demonstrates a living heart, a refined soul, and a graceful disposition. But whoever treats them lightly reveals an inner heedlessness and a coarseness of character.

This is why Islamic law came to refine our daily habits and improve our conduct. Among these manners is **the etiquette of sneezing**.

Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Allah loves sneezing and dislikes yawning. When one of you sneezes and praises Allah, it is a duty upon every Muslim who hears him to respond to him.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Consider how Islam turns even a sneeze into an act of remembrance and a means of connection and mercy between people. The one who sneezes says, “Praise be to Allah,” and his brother responds, “May Allah have mercy on you.” He then replies, “May Allah guide you and set your affairs right.”

These are simple words, yet they build affection and nurture bonds of harmony.

Another aspect of good manners is that a person should avoid causing inconvenience or harm to others. Thus, he should lower his voice and cover his mouth when he sneezes.

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: "Whenever the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) sneezed, he would cover his mouth with his hand or a piece of cloth - thereby suppressing the sound." (Reported by At-Tirmidhi, who graded it authentic)

O Believers!

Among these manners is **the etiquette of yawning**.

Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: “The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Yawning is from Satan and if anyone of you yawns, he should check his yawning as much as possible, for if anyone of you (during the act of yawning) should say: 'Ha', Satan will laugh at him.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Yawning is attributed to Satan because it is associated with sluggishness, heaviness, and lethargy, in contrast to sneezing, which Allah loves and which generally indicates lightness, energy, and vitality.

Therefore, a Muslim is encouraged to avoid the causes of yawning and, when it occurs, to deal with it in a manner that preserves his dignity and does not detract from his appearance or conduct.

Another subtle aspect of good manners is **the etiquette of belching**—the sound of air escaping from the stomach through the mouth, which commonly occurs when the stomach is full.

There is something offensive about it when a person deliberately produces such an unpleasant sound without regard for those sitting around him.

Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated that a man belched in the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him) so he said: “Restrain your belching from us.” (At-Tirmidhi, Al-Albani graded it authentic)

Thus, the Prophet ﷺ combined the refinement of conduct with the correction of a habit. The prohibition of belching points to the underlying cause—overeating.

Miqdam ibn Ma`dikarib (May Allah be pleased with him) reported:

I heard Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say: “No man fills a container worse than his stomach. A few morsels that keep his back upright are sufficient for him. If he has to, then he should keep one-third for food, one-third for drink and one-third for his breathing.” (At-Tirmidhi, who classified it as Hadith Hasan)

The Arabs used to say: “When the stomach is full, the mind grows dull.”

I say these words of mine, and I seek Allah’s forgiveness for me and for you from every sin. So, seek His forgiveness and turn to Him in repentance. Indeed, He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

The Second Khutbah

All praise is due to Allah, praise which is abundant, pure, and full of blessings. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.

To proceed,

Fear Allah, servants of Allah, as He deserves to be feared. Be mindful of Him in private and in secret and know that you will all be gathered before Him.

O Blessed Believers!

If Islam has refined these everyday behaviors in all circumstances, then observing them in the Houses of Allah is even more important and deserving of care. Mosques have a sanctity of their own, and they are entitled to our reverence and respect. Allah, Exalted is He, says:

“In houses which Allah has permitted to be raised, and where His Name is mentioned, He is glorified therein morning and evening—by men whom neither commerce nor trade distracts from the remembrance of Allah, the establishment of prayer, and the giving of zakat. They fear a Day when hearts and eyes will tremble.” (An-Nur 24:36–37)

Yet how much disturbance do we see in our mosques that goes unnoticed—sneezing, yawning, and belching without covering the mouth or lowering the voice? The mosque is a place where our limbs should be still, and our hearts should humble themselves before Allah. How can one be mindful of proper etiquette in gatherings with people, yet neglect it in the House of the Lord of all people?

O Believers!

Honoring the mosque means protecting it from anything that may disturb or repel others and preserving it from anything that may disrupt the tranquility of worship. If Islamic law has even prohibited raising one’s voice while reciting the Qur’an in the mosque, then what should we say about raising one’s voice with such distracting and offensive sounds?

Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “Lo! every one of you is calling his Lord quietly. One should not trouble the other and one should not raise the voice in recitation or in prayer over the voice of the other.” (Related by Abu Dawud and Al-Albani graded it as Sahih)

Al-Sa’ib ibn Yazid (may Allah be pleased with him) said that when he was sleeping in the mosque a man threw a pebble at him, and when he looked, he saw that it was ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab, who said, “Go and bring me these two men.” He brought them and ‘Umar asked them what tribe they belonged to, or what place they came from. On their replying that they belonged to At-Ta’if, he said, “If you had belonged to Medina, I would have given you a beating for raising your voices in the mosque of God’s Messenger. (Al-Bukhari)



Servants of Allah!

Proper etiquette in such matters is a sign of refinement and an indication of a living conscience. A believer does not live only for himself. Rather, he is mindful of those around him and avoids causing them any harm, even when that harm may seem insignificant.

`Abdullah ibn `Amr (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue or his hands. And a Muhajir (an emigrant) is the one who gives up (abandons) all what Allah has forbidden." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Just as Islam forbids harming others with the tongue or the hand, it likewise forbids every form of conduct that may offend, disturb, or cause them harm.

It is therefore incumbent upon every Muslim to discipline himself, to encourage others toward these refined manners, and to hold himself firmly to such standards of etiquette.

O Allah, honor Islam and the Muslims, and humble disbelief and the disbelievers. O Allah, forgive the Muslim men and women, and the believing men and women, the living among them and the dead. O Allah, guide our Amir and his Crown Prince to that which pleases You, and enable them to act in obedience to You and in pursuit of Your pleasure. Make this country safe and secure, prosperous and flourishing, a land of safety and faith, and grant the same to all Muslim lands.

(Committee for preparing the model sermon for Friday Prayer.)