

## Islamic Manners, Part V: Social Manners<sup>1</sup>

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### Importance and Manners of Greeting

It is understood from the verses of the Quran<sup>2</sup> and *hadiths*<sup>3</sup> that *salam* is the slogan and the special greeting of Islam. God has enjoined the noble Prophet (s) to observe this favorable custom:

When those who have faith in Our signs come to you,  
say, "Peace to you!" (Quran 6:54)

Thus, the Prophet (s) spread this favorable and humanly custom. He was always the first in saying "*salam*" to whomever he met, even the children. He used to say, "There are five things I will continue to do until I pass away in order that they become conventions among my *ummah* after me; one of them is greeting children". (Majlisi 1403AH, 73:10)

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<sup>1</sup> This is the translation of the fifth part of the first chapter and the beginning of the second chapter of *Adab-e Islami: Darsnāme-ye Akhlaq Baraye Tullab-e Payeh-e Avval*.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance Quran 15:52; 24:69.

<sup>3</sup> See for instance Majlisi (Bihar al-Anwar 1403AH, 73:12).

Muslims should adhere to this Islamic custom, and when they see their brothers in faith, they should greet one another with *salam*, and thus strengthen their social relations; the Prophet (s) has said, “When you meet each other, say *salam*” (Majlisi 1403AH, 73:4-5).

The Arabic word *tabyyat* (greeting) is derived from *hayat* (life), and it is in fact a kind of prayer for prolongation of the other person’s life. Apparently the convention among Arabs was to say, “*hayyaka Allah*” (May Allah keep you alive) to show respect to and greet one another when they met. The word *tabyyat*, in fact, means saying the sentence *hayyaka Allah*. However, its meaning was extended later to any expression of greeting. It has even been used to refer to any *action* that is done for showing respect in greetings. In Islamic manners and culture, when people meet one another, *tabyyat* mostly refers to saying *salam*.

### **The Importance of SALAM**

Offering *salam* has been counted as a sign of modesty in Islamic culture. The person who offers *salam* sees himself equal with other people. He does not create an untrue self-image in his mind, and does not see himself above others. He can easily relate to people and get close to them. Therefore, he does not become ensnared by vanity and pride. Imam Sadiq (a) says, “Greeting whomever you meet is part of modesty”. (Majlisi 1403AH, 73:3)

Saying *Salam* establishes a spirit of fellowship in the Islamic community. Hence, the biggest reward is for one who says *salam* first. Imam Ali (a) says, “There are seventy rewards for saying *salam*; sixty nine is the share of the one who initiates it, and one belongs to the one who returns it”. (Majlisi 1403AH, 73:11) Therefore, the person who says *salam* first is closer to God’s mercy and receives more attention from Him. The holy Prophet (s) says, “Indeed among the causes of forgiveness are offering *salam* and speaking nicely” (Majlisi 1403AH,

73:11) and “Indeed the closest of people to God and His Prophet is the one who says *salam* first”. (Majlisi 1403AH, 73:12)

Based on Islamic teachings, when Muslims see their brothers in faith, they have to say *salam* to them before saying other things. Accordingly, whoever starts talking before saying *salam*, does not deserve answering. The Prophet (s) says, “If someone starts talking before saying *salam*, do not answer him”. (Majlisi 1403AH, 73:3)

Saying *salam* is the least expression of respect and affection of a Muslim to other people. It is a very simple thing to do. Now, if one is so inconsiderate of his brothers in faith that he does not even say *salam* to them, could his behavior be called anything but stinginess? The Prophet (s) says, “Indeed the stingiest of people is the one who is stingy in [saying] *salam*” (Majlisi 1403AH, 73:4).

### **Manners of Saying SALAM**

Saying *salam*, like any other Islamic custom, has manners that make it more fruitful. Some of these manners are as follows:

#### a) Who should say *salam* first?

The Prophet (s) said, “A younger person should say *salam* to an elder person, an individual should say *salam* when he meets two people, a small group of people should say *salam* to a larger group, a rider should say *salam* to a walking person, a passer-by should say *salam* to a standing person, and a person who is standing should say *salam* to a seated person.”

#### b) Spreading *salam*:

Since *salam* is one of the Islamic customs, and Muslims are known by it, spreading *salam* gains special importance. The Prophet (s) said, “Should I inform you of the best behavior of people of this world and the Hereafter?” The people said, “Yes, O Messenger of God.” Then the

Prophet (s) said, “Spreading *salam* in the world”. (Majlisi 1403AH, 73:12)

c) Proper response

When someone says *salam* to us, we are enjoined to give a deserving response. The holy Quran says,

When you are greeted with a salute, greet with a better one than it, or return it. (Quran 4:86)

d) Equal offering of *salam*

A Muslim should not say *salam* to the rich differently than he says *salam* to the poor. Imam Rida (a) says, “Whoever meets a poor Muslim and says *salam* to him in a different way than he says *salam* to the rich, he will meet Allah on the day of judgment while He is angry with him”. (Majlisi 1403AH, 69:38)

e) Avoiding the extremes

Another point in regard to giving *salam* is moderation. Sometimes a greeting is too much respectful, beyond what the person deserves it such that it sounds more like flattering. On the other extreme, sometimes a person who deserves great respect because of his high spirituality is not greeted in a proper manner. Both of these are improper. Everyone should be greeted according to their spiritual position, and going to extremes in giving *salam* should be avoided. Imam Ali (a) said, “Do not become hypocritical in greeting brothers in faith, and do not deprive them from what they deserve”. (Ibn Abi al-Hadid 1983, 20:315)

f) Forbidden situations for giving *salam*:

In Islamic culture, offering *salam* to some people is *makruh* (discouraged):

1. People who do not deserve the *salam* of their brothers and sisters in faith due to their evil action, such as alcoholics, gamblers, those who take interest (*riba*), and those who commit evil openly. (Majlisi 1403AH, 73:9)
2. Greeting and saying *salam* to these people might be considered as a kind of approval of their evil actions. Hence, every Muslim should avoid giving *salam* to these people and should treat them with a gloomy face and an unkind look in order to obstruct corruption and sin, and this is the least one can do in relation to offenders. The exception is if greeting and offering *salam* to such people is effective in guiding them and one's intention is to bid them to good and forbid them from evil through it.
3. Sometimes, giving *salam* to certain people might cause evil or have unfavorable effects on one's spirituality. Such as greeting the opposite gender, especially for the youth.
4. Giving *salam* when it is difficult for the other person to respond is discouraged. Such as giving *salam* to someone who is performing prayer. This is because returning *salam* is obligatory and this would disturb or distract the person who is performing prayer. This also applies to other situations, like when someone is brushing his teeth, or when he is in the bathroom, or any other situation in which returning *salam* is difficult.

#### g) Returning *Salam*

One of the social etiquettes in Islam is returning *salam*, which, from one aspect, is even more important than *salam* itself. The Holy Quran says,

When you are greeted with a salute, greet with a better one than it, or return it; indeed God takes account of all things. (Quran 4:86)

Thus, offering *salam* is recommended, but returning it is obligatory. Moreover, the returned greeting should be better and more complete. For instance, if someone says, “*salamun alaykum*”, we should say in return, “*salamun alaykum wa rahmatullah*”; if the first person says, “*salamun alaykum wa rahmatullah*,” our reply should be “*salamun alaykum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuh*.”

### **Manners of Social Relations**

In dealing with people, nothing is more beautiful and attractive than politeness. It should be practiced in order that healthy and respectful relations are established between people. Below, we will mention some of the important manners in social relations.

#### a) *Salam* and handshaking

The Prophet (s) said, “When you meet each other, say *salam* and shake hands; when you leave each other, depart with asking [God] for forgiveness”. (Kulayni 1407AH, 2:181)

#### b) Being friendly

Imam Ali (a) said, “When you meet your brothers in faith ... display a friendly mien to them”. (‘Amili 1988, 12:225)

It is mentioned in the biography of the Prophet (s) that he “was always friendly, good tempered, and easy going”. (Majlisi 1403AH, 16:152)

#### c) Speaking kindly

One of the manners of treating people is talking thoughtfully and nicely to them. The holy Quran says,

Speak kindly to people. (Quran 2:83)

#### d) Having a neat appearance

It is necessary that one visits his brothers in faith with suitable clothes, a neat appearance, and a pleasant smell.

- e) Adherence to manners of associating with people
- f) Humbleness and affection
- g) Avoiding inappropriate actions
- h) Paying attention to other people's words

Imam Ali (a) said “[the Prophet (s)] never interrupted anyone's speech unless his words passed the legitimate extent, then he would stop his words either by getting up and leaving the session or prohibiting him [from going on].”

- i) Having tolerance with brothers in faith:

One of the most important manners of dealing with people is being tolerant with them. The Prophet (s) said, “Tolerance with people is half of *iman* (faith)” .(Kulayni 1407AH, 2:117)

### **Manners of Speaking**

A person's character is revealed by his words. Therefore, great people are never willing to taint their mouths with inappropriate words, even in the worst situations.

When speaking, one should try to use polite words and also a polite way of expressing himself. Additionally, gestures, facial expressions, and the tone and quality of voice should accordingly be polite. Some of the manners of speaking are as follows:

- a) Being concise

One's talk should be short, to the point, and free of redundancies, so that it does not cause dislike in the listener. Imam Ali (a) says, “Fortunate is the one who is generous in handing out the extra of his belongings, and is stingy in saying extra words”. (Majlisi 1403AH, 68:283)

## b) Speaking at the right time and the right place

It is said that it takes two years for a child to learn to talk, but that it takes thirty years for him to learn where and when to talk.

## c) Not raising one's voice

Luqman (a) said to his son,

...and lower your voice. Indeed the ungainliest of voices is the donkey's voice. (Quran 31:19)

## d) Speaking kindly

The Quran says:

Speak kindly to people. (Quran 2:83)

And

Tell My servants to speak in a manner which is the best. (Quran 17:53)

Imam Ali (a) has said, "Habituate your tongue to speak softly and to offer *salam*, and thus the number of those who love you will increase and the number of your despisers will decrease." Also, he has said, "Habituate your tongue to speaking pleasantly, and you will stay safe from reproach". (Khansari 1987, 4:329)

Imam Hasan Askari (a) said, "Speak kindly to people, both to believers and to opposers. As for believers, one should treat them with a happy face; as for opposers, one should speak to them with toleration to attract them. If he was disappointed from attracting them, he will at least keep away their evil from him and his believing brothers" . (Majlisi 1403AH, 68:309)

## e) Being mindful of the listener



When one is talking, he should be mindful of the listener, because the listener might not be in the mood for listening to his words.

f) Speaking nicely

When God sent the Prophet Abraham (a) and his brother to the Pharaoh of their time, He said:

Speak to him in a soft manner (Quran 20:44)

g) Observing modesty in conversations with the opposite gender.

h) Being thoughtful in speech.

Imam Ali (a) said, “The tongue of a wise person is behind his mind, and the mind of a fool is behind his tongue” (Nahj al-balagha, Wisdom 40). *A wise person first thinks and then speaks, whereas a fool first speaks and then thinks.*

According to a well-known story, Harun al-Rashid, the fifth Abbasid caliph, dreamt that all of his teeth had fallen out. Someone interpreted his dream to mean that all the relatives of the caliph would die before him. Harun became irritated and ordered his death. He summoned another dream interpreter, who said in his interpretation the life of the Caliph would be longer than all of his relatives. Harun became very happy and gave him a robe.

It is obvious that both interpretations had the same meaning, but Harun became so angry with how the first interpretation was expressed that he ordered the death of the interpreter, and he became so happy with how the second one was put that he rewarded the interpreter. Manfaluti, the famous Egyptian writer, narrates that

Abu ‘Uyaynah became blind. He would regularly call upon the judge Ahmad b. Abi Dawud. This continued for years. He (Abu ‘Uyaynah) said that in all these years, when he wanted to get out of Ahmad’s house, Ahmad told his slave, “O slave, be at the service of Abu

‘Uyaynah and go out with him.’ And in all this time he never, even once, said anything such as “O slave, hold his hand.” Since a sentence like “hold his hand” implied the miserableness of blindness and therefore he refrained from saying it.

i) Speaking usefully

Imam Ali (a) said, “The best talk is what benefits.” (Majlisi 1403AH, 1:219)

j) Omitting one’s redundant phrases through practice

k) Not interrupting other people’s speech

l) In some situations, talking is *makruh* (discouraged): In *tashyi’* (the Islamic burial ritual), before someone who has been struck by misery, in graveyards, before a patient, or in a gathering for knowledge.

### Manners of Listening

Speaking and listening are two fundamental means of communication and among the greatest gifts of God to people. Hence, for having healthy and useful relations, we need to keep in mind the correct way of using both our tongues and ears.

Imam Ali (a) said, “Habituate your ears to listening well” (Khansari 1987, 4:329) and “When you are in the presence of a scholar, be more eager to listen than to talk, and learn to listen well just as you learn to speak well, and do not interrupt anyone's speech”. (Tabarsi 1965, 134)

The way one uses his listening ability to listen well and attentively has great impact on his social relations. Ignoring someone who is speaking is a sign of rudeness. On the contrary, paying attention to and

expressing interest in what the speaker says indicates politeness, social discipline, and mindfulness.

The Prophet (s) used to listen to people, even to those who had sickness in their hearts and had wicked intentions. He would listen so attentively that they said, “He is an ear” to describe him as a credulous, naive, and superficial person. The Quran reports the story:

Among them are those who torment the Prophet, and say, “He is an ear.” Say, “An ear that is good for you. He has faith in Allah and trusts the faithful, and is a mercy for those of you who have faith.” (Quran 9:61)

While the above-mentioned verse of the Quran praises this great manner of the Prophet (s), it indicates that the Prophet (s) trusted only the words of the believers.

High morals require that one show an attentive mood to the speaker. If a person is talking about a subject, or narrating a story or an incident, one should listen enthusiastically; even if he knows about the subject, he should not indicate that he has heard it before. Accordingly, when a teacher is explaining a subject or answering a question, the student should show interest in listening, so that the teacher answers the question whole-heartedly. As the Persian proverb says, “The audience makes the speaker enthusiastic.”

Now, we will mention some of the manners of listening, which have been mentioned in *hadiths* with the title, *husn al-istima'* (listening well).

- a) One should listen to other people’s sayings carefully until they finish speaking. Interrupting others is an unfavorable behavior and an indication of rudeness. It is mentioned in the biography of the Prophet (s) that when someone spoke, the Prophet (s) would listen to him until the person finished speaking (H. a. Tabarsi 1416AH, 45). There is a similar narration about Imam Rida (a) that

Ibrahim b. Abbas said, "I never saw him [i.e. the Imam] interrupting another person's speech; [he would wait] until the other person stopped speaking". (Majlisi 1403AH, 49:90)

- b) The listener should not think himself to be wiser than the speaker. He should not ignore the other person thinking that he knows more and does not need to listen.
- c) Everyone who tries to give advice to another person would like to see him pay attention and listen well. He likes to see the signs of effectiveness of his words and signs of acceptance in the other person. This leads the society towards benefiting from healthy criticism and revives the practice of "enjoining the good and forbidding the evil."
- d) Many people suffer from sadness and depression and are under great mental pressure. They need someone to talk to, so that they become relieved by talking about their problems. Showing compassion and interest in listening to the complaints and griefs of a distressed person is an admirable deed. Imam Ali (a) has said, "Patience in listening to complaints of a distressed person is [a component] of nobility". (Khansari 1987, 6:46) Loving people and having a friendly character makes the life warmer, and relieves the sorrows of distressed people.

To complete this topic, we should note that one of the social etiquettes of listening is "having the permission to listen". If some people are having a private conversation, one should not try to listen and find out what they are saying. Imam Sadiq (a) said, "One who listens to a group of people while they do not like him to do so, hot lead will be poured in his ears". (Majlisi 1403AH, 58:183) Therefore, eavesdropping is an unfavorable behavior has bitter consequences.

### **1) Manners of criticizing**

Prosperity in individual life and in society depends on healthy and constructive criticism. Constructive criticism has the following manners and conditions:

- a) Criticism should be done kindly with the purpose of giving guidance and advice; it should not be done out of envy or ill feelings.
- b) The tone of the critic should be kind.
- c) Criticism should be done in private without embarrassing the person who receives it. Imam Ali (a) said, “Your criticizing [someone] in the presence of other people is humiliating [him]” (Khansari, Sharh Ghurar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalim 1366 Sh, 6:172). Imam Hasan Askari (a) also said, “One who advises his brother in private adorns him, but one who advises him in public disgraces him” (Harrani 1983, 489).
- d) Only wrong action and behavior should be criticized.
- e) Criticism should be done without insulting or hurting the person who receives it.
- f) The critic should give the receiver a chance for compensating his mistake.
- g) The positive behaviors and characteristics of the targeted person should also be mentioned when criticizing him.
- h) The critic should control his feelings when criticizing.
- i) The critic’s approach should be based on protecting people’s reputation as much as possible.

## **2) Manners of Enjoining the Good and Forbidding the Evil**

Among all the Islamic obligations, the only one that is binding based on its probability of being effective, is enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. That is, it will not become obligatory when there is no possibility of it being effective.

All the conditions and manners related to this obligation are to make it more effective. The person who enjoins the good and forbids the evil should know, like a doctor, the problem of the targeted person, and then use the appropriate treatment. He should use manners that bring him closer to success. Some of these manners are the following:

- a) Avoiding investigation in other people's private life.
- b) Politeness in behavior and use of speech which is attractive:

One's behavior and speech should captivate the other person's heart. This is when commanding and prohibiting will have their effects. It is narrated that once the great scholar Ayatollah Shaykh Muhammad Bafqi (d. 1945) was in a public bath when he saw someone shaving his beard. He said to the man, "Why do you shave your beard?" The man, who happened to be a military officer, angrily slapped the Shaykh's face. The Shaykh quickly turned his other cheek to him and said, "Slap me on this cheek too, but do not shave your beard." The officer was surprised by the Shaykh's reaction and asked the *dallak* (the person who helped people in cleaning themselves) about who the Shaykh was. When the *dallak* told him that the Shaykh was Ayatollah Bafqi, the officer became very embarrassed; he apologized to the Shaykh, repented, and became a sincere companion of the Shaykh.

- c) One can never call someone to goodness or stop him from doing evil by insulting or humiliating him. Such behaviors sometimes cause stubbornness and have the opposite effect. One should attract the other person by respecting him. The jurists have said that one is not allowed to insult someone with the purpose of prohibiting him from committing sins.
- d) One should treat the offenders in a manner that they find trust in him. He should be like a mirror which shows their imperfections honestly and without any evil intentions.
- e) In bidding and forbidding, actions must be criticized, not people; so, care must be taken that the dignity and reputation of the targeted people be preserved.

f) In order that the offenders do not become insolent, when we know that they will not listen to our bidding or forbidding, we need to pretend not to know about their wrongdoings, so that the wickedness of wrong actions is not decreased in the minds of people.

Inviting people to good is most effective when done by example. If one does not practice what he says, he cannot influence others. Imam Ali (a) says, “God cursed those who enjoin the good but do not do it and those who forbid the evil but they commit it” (Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 129). In another *hadith*, Imam Ali (a) said, “O people! By God, I do not urge you to any good deed unless I already do it myself, and I do not forbid you from any evil action unless I already forsake it myself” (Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 175).

And Imam Sadiq (a) says, “Invite people [to good] by means other than your tongues” (‘Amili 1988, 15:246).

### 3) Manners of *TABLIGH*

There are many manners with regard to *tabligh*, and a lot of useful books have been published on the subject. Here we just mention a *hadith* from the noble Prophet (s), addressed to Mu‘adh ibn Jabal when he was sent by the Prophet (s) to Yemen for *tabligh*:

O Ma‘adh! Teach them the Quran, and train them to have good manners. Carry out the command of God about them, and do not fear anyone when it comes to God’s commandments and His property, since they are not [related to] your authority or your property. Return to them their deposits, whether significant or insignificant. Be kind and merciful in everything other than what forsakes the truth. Destroy what pertains to the Era of Ignorance, except what is established by Islam.

Let all the teachings of Islam prevail, all minor and major teachings. Strive most for the prayer (salat), for,

after confessing the faith, it is the core of Islam. Remind people of God]and the Day of Judgment, and follow [it by] preaching, for it strengthens them in doing the actions that God likes. Then, send them the teachers. And worship God, to whom you will return, and do not fear the blame of any blamer in His path.

I enjoin on you piety, honesty in speech, fulfilling your promises, delivering back the deposits, forsaking betrayal, speaking kindly, offering salam, respecting your neighbors, being kind to orphans, doing good deeds, swallowing your anger, and being modest. (Harrani 1983, 25-6)

#### 4) Manners of Writing Letters

a) It is recommended that the letter be started in the name of God. Imam Sadiq (a) said, “Do not take away ‘*bi-ism Allah*,’ even if a poem comes after it” (Kulayni 1407AH, 2:672).

b) It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (a) that one should not write the addressee’s name following the name of God, but writing it on the back of the letter (or, on the envelope instead as we do it today) is fine: “Do not write ‘*bi-ism Allah al-rahman al-rahim*, to so-and-so,’ but it is ok to write ‘to so-and-so’ on the back of the letter” (Kulayni 1407AH, 2:672). Following this instruction, our noble scholars, such as Ayatollah Burujirdi, would never write the name of the receiver after “*bi-ism Allah*” but would write it on the back of the envelope.

c) One should write the letter with good handwriting so that the receiver is able to read it correctly.

d) It is necessary that the writer of the letter be careful in his writing and review it at least once after it is finished. Imam Ali (a)



said, “The wisdom of the wise is revealed through their pens” (Khansari, Sharh Ghurar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalim 1366 Sh, 4:365).

e) Imam Sadiq (a) said, “Answering a letter is obligatory like the obligation to return *salam*” (Kulayni 1407AH, 2:670).

f) Murazim ibn Hakim says,

Imam Sadiq (a) ordered me to write a letter for a matter. The letter was written, and it was delivered to the Imam (a) but there was no “*insha’Allah*” in it. The Imam (a) took a look at the letter and said, “How do you hope that this would succeed while there is no *insha’Allah* in it? Look everywhere that there is no *insha’Allah*, and put *insha’Allah* in it” (Kulayni 1407AH, 2:673).

g) The letter should be short, clear, and to the point.

h) The letter should be dated. In a letter sent from the holy city of Najaf to his son, Ayatollah Khomeini writes,

I received your undated writing. I don’t know why you have become an untidy sheikh so soon! From now on, first, put the date on the top of the letter and then start writing it. (Khomeini 1378 Sh, 2:378)

i) The letter should be put in an envelope. In another letter to his son, Ayatollah Khomeini said, “Give the enclosed letter to so-and-so after putting it in an envelope!” (Khomeini 1378 Sh, 2:388).

## 5) Manners of Friendship

Friendship is an answer to a natural need in human beings, saving them from loneliness and helplessness. Therefore, it has a special position in Islam. Below are some of the manners related to friendship:

## a) Purifying one's intention:

One who wants to befriend other people should purify his intention from temporal and worldly motivations. Because if the intention for friendship is vain and limited, after that intention is fulfilled and gone, the incentive for friendship will be gone, too, and that leads to a split. The Prophet (s) has said that “there are seven groups that will be covered under the shadow of Allah on the Day of Judgment ... [Among them are] two people who have made friends with each other for the sake of Allah, lived with that friendship, and died while still friends for the sake of Allah” (Payanda 2003, 521).

## b) Choosing righteous friends:

One should not befriend people other than those who seek the truth and are concerned about the Hereafter, so that they can be his helpers in the path of God and the true benefits of friendship can be achieved.

One should avoid socializing with people who strive only for worldly gains and have turned away from God:

So avoid those who turn away from Our remembrance  
and desire nothing but the life of the world. (Quran  
53:29)

## c) Sincerity in expressing friendliness:

One should be sincere in expressing affection to his friend; his outward friendliness should be rooted in his heart.

d) Avoiding constraint (*takalluf*):

It is mentioned in a *hadith* that the Prophet (s) said, “The pious in my community (*ummah*) and I are free of constraint (*takalluf*)” (Fayd Kashani 1406AH, 4:158). Imam Ali (a) said, “The worst friend is one who makes you tolerate him, and makes you apologize to him, or puts constraint (*takalluf*) on you” (Tamimi Amadi 1366 Sh, 418). Also, Imam Sadiq (a) said, “Among my brothers, the most bothersome to

me is the one who, when accompanying me, puts constraint [on himself] for me and I have to restrain myself for him, and the most congenial to me is the one in whose company I am as I am with myself” (Muhaddith Nuri 1408AH, 9:155).

e) Forgetting friends’ mistakes:

If one’s friend makes a mistake, one should ignore it. One should know that mistakes are a part of human life and cannot be totally avoided.

f) Revealing the good qualities of a friend and covering his imperfections.

g) Having tolerance with friends:

One should tolerate his friend; if the friend does something wrong, one should control himself and try to correct his friend. Imam Ali (a) said, “One who does not tolerate the mistakes of a friend will die alone” (Tamimi Amadi 1366 Sh, 420).

h) Informing friends about their vices:

One of the signs of affection is that we see the vices of our friends as unfavorable as ours and do not ignore them. It goes without saying that informing a friend about his vices should be done in private; otherwise, it would be disgracing him, not guiding him.

i) Listening to the advice of friends:

Refusing to listen to the advice of one’s friend is a sign that one does not have honesty in his friendship.

j) Having *ithar* (altruism) with friends.

k) Having justice with friends.

l) Keeping one’s promises:

It is narrated that the Prophet (s) said, “Do not quarrel with your brother, do not joke with him, and do not promise him then fail him” (Majlisi 1403AH, 74:152).

m) Fulfilling the rights of friends:

One of the subtle points in friendship is that having close relationship with a friend should not lead to neglecting his rights. One must be respectful of his friends, especially in the presence of others and try his best to provide for the needs of his friends. However, sometimes intimacy reaches a level in which one forgets the rights of his friends and respects them even less. One should remember that this negligence will, little by little, weaken the friendship. Imam Ali (a) said, “Do not violate the rights of your brother relying on the relationship between you and him, for indeed the one whose rights you violate is not your brother” (Harrani 1983, 82).

n) Being moderate in speaking with friends:

One should always avoid excess in being humorous or serious. That is, one should not joke so much as to become a target of abuse for unrighteous people, neither should one be so solemn to bore his friends and drive them away from him.

o) Ending the friendship with a person who has gone astray and there is no hope in his return.

p) Remembering a friend who has ended his friendship with us with good memories

q) Maintaining one’s friendship:

The noble Prophet (s) says, “Indeed God likes continuing an old friendship, so continue it” (Payanda 2003, 306). Imam Ali (a) also says, “The most incapable among people is one who is incapable of finding brothers (friends), and even more incapable than him is one who loses those he has found” (‘Amili 1988, 12:18).

r) Helping one’s friends in times of their helplessness:

The Prophet (s) says, “One who is after the need of his brother, God is after his need” (Muhaddith Nuri 1408AH, 12:415). And Imam Sadiq (a) says, “When you realize he [i.e. your friend] has a need, try to solve it, and do not wait for him to ask you for it, but rush to solve it” (Kulayni 1407AH, 2:169).

s) Observing religious rulings in friendship:

It is narrated that Ayatollah Husayn Qummi, in addition to his high level of knowledge and piety, was especially observant of religious rulings when associating with people; He would never neglect religious rulings for the sake of his friends and used to say, “I stand by a friend up to the door of Hell, but I will not enter it for his sake.”

t) Being moderate in affection and trust:

Imam Ali (a) has said, “Offer your friend your all your affection, but do offer him all your trust; share with him what you have, but do not tell him all your secrets. In this way you have observed requirement of wisdom and at the same time you have fulfilled rights of your friend.” (Majlisi 1403AH, 71:165). If a friend wants to end the friendship by inappropriate behaviors, one should try to stop him and save their friendship. Imam Ali (a) said, “Do not let them [i.e. your friends] be stronger in doing evil to you than you are in doing good to them” (Harrani 1983, 82).

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