



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

GOOD MANNERS IN ISLAM

INTRODUCTION

Imam Malik said:

كانت أمي تغممني وتقول: اذهب إلى ربي يبعة فتعلم من أدبه قبل علمه

“My mother would put my ‘Imamah (turban) on my head and would say to me: “Go to Rabi’ah and learn from his manners before you learn knowledge”.
(Tartib al-Madarik:1/119)

The above statement implies that even before we seek knowledge, we should sharpen our manners, because at the point of seeking knowledge, you must have manners of seeking knowledge itself:

- Punctuality
- How to speak to your teacher
- How to address the teacher
- How and when to ask questions
- How not to interrupt the talks often
- Your mobile phone should be switched off
- Do NOT check WhatsApp/Instagram/Facebook messages during classes
- Must be humble
- Must dress appropriately

The main issues on good manners in 2019: involves use of social media and mobile phones. People are obsessed with these that even on dinner tables, talking to people, etc – they reflect the bad manners of the 21st century!

In court – if anyone were to enter for jury duties – all mobile phones are taken away from juries and locked in a safe place. The court recognises the interruptions made by these gadgets.

Certain common misconception about good manners:

1. I am from a certain culture and we always do this.

Culture must conform to Islam and NOT Islam conforming to culture. Speaking in a loud voice, especially in the mosque, is completely forbidden.

2. Forgive him/her or let him do what he/she likes...he is still young

Good manners MUST BE INCULCATED at a young age. Bad habits will develop and will only get worse they are not corrected. Children must be taught how to say salam to adult, how to address the adult, how to interact, etc.

3. The school is responsible for conducting classes on etiquette and manners

Good manners begin at home. Parents with poor manners/akhlaq will usually produce children who follow the same traits and characters as the parents.

4. The poor has good manners and rich has bad manners, or vice versa

On the contrary, in general, manners do not recognise wealth. I have encountered many children from rich background in the UK with impeccable manners

5. I have important calls to receive - affecting prayers in mosques or even Friday khutbah.

THE ROLE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SALLALLAHU 'ALAYHI WA SALLAM)

From Abu Hurairah (RA), Rasulullah (SAW) said:

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ

Innamaa bu'ithtu li'utammima makaarimal akhlaaq

Indeed, I (Rasulullah [SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam]) have been sent to perfect good character. (Narrated by Hakim)

It is clear from this hadeeth, that Rasulullah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was sent not just remind everyone about our duties in this life which is to worship Allah alone, and to uphold Islam, but he was also sent to bring mankind to higher levels of good character. Rasulullah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) himself displayed good character, and was himself a manifestation of excellent character.

ALLAH REAFFIRMED IN THE QURAN:

Rasulullah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was praised by Allah SWT in the Quran:



And you, surely, possess sublime moral excellences. (Surah Al Qalam 68:4)

EXAMPLES OF RASULULLAH'S (SALLALLAHU 'ALAYHI WA SALLAM) FINE MANNERS

By nature he (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was gentle and kind hearted, always inclined to be gracious and to overlook the faults of others. Politeness and courtesy, compassion and tenderness, simplicity and humility, sympathy and sincerity were some of the keynotes of his character. In the cause of right and justice he could be resolute and severe but more often than not, his severity was tempered with generosity. He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) had charming manners which won him the affection of his followers and secured their devotion.

1. Though virtual king of Arabia and an apostle of Allaah, he never assumed an air of superiority. Not that he (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) had to conceal any such vein by practice and artifice: with fear of Allaah, sincere humility was ingrained in his heart. He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) used to say:
"I am a Prophet of Allaah but I do not know what will be my end." [Al-Bukhaari]
2. In one of his sermons calculated to instil the fear of Allaah and the day of reckoning in the hearts of men, he (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said:

"O people of Quraysh be prepared for the hereafter, I cannot save you from the punishment of Allaah; O Bani Abd Manaaf, I cannot save you from Allaah; O Abbaas, son of Abdul-Mutalib, I cannot protect you either; O Faatimah, daughter of Muhammad, even you I cannot save." [Al-Bukhaari & Muslim]

He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) used to pray:

"O Allaah! I am but a man. If I hurt any one in any manner, then forgive me and do not punish me." [Ahmad]

3. He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) always received people with courtesy and showed respect to older people and stated:

"To honour an old man is to show glorification to Allaah."

4. He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) would not deny courtesy even to wicked persons. It is stated that a person came to his house and asked permission for admission. The prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) remarked that he was not a good person but might be admitted. When he came in and while he remained in the house, he was shown full courtesy. When he left 'Aa'ishah (RA) said: "You did not think well of this man, but you treated him so well."

The prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) replied:

"He is a bad person in the sight of Allaah who does not behave courteously and people shun his company because of his bad manners." [Al-Bukhaari]

5. He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was always the first to greet another and would not withdraw his hand from a handshake till the other man withdrew his. If one wanted to say something in his ears, he (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) would not turn away till one had finished as reported in the books of Abu Daawood and At-Tirmithi (RA). He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) did not like people to get up for him and used to say:

"Let him, who likes people to stand up in his honour, he should seek a place in hell." [Abu Daawood].

He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) would himself, however, stand up when any dignitary came to him. He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) had stood up to receive the wet nurse who had reared him in infancy and had spread his own sheet for her. His foster brother was given similar treatment.

6. He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) avoided sitting at a prominent place in a gathering, so much so that people coming in had difficulty in spotting him and had to ask which one was the Prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam). Quite frequently uncouth bedouins accosted him (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) in their own gruff and impolite manner but he never took offence. [Abu Daawood]
7. He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) used to visit the poorest of ailing persons and exhorted all Muslims to do likewise [Al-Bukhaari]. He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) would sit with the humblest of persons saying that righteousness alone was the criterion of one's superiority over another. He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) invariably invited people be they slaves, servants or the poorest believers, to partake with him of his scanty meals. [At-Tirmithi]
8. Whenever he (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) visited a person he would first greet him and then take his permission to enter the house. He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) advised the people to follow this etiquette and not to get annoyed if anyone declined to give permission, for it was quite likely the person concerned was busy otherwise and did not mean any disrespect.

9. There was no type of household work too low or too undignified for him (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam). 'Aa'ishah (RA) has stated:

"He always joined in household work and would at times mend his clothes, repair his shoes and sweep the floor. He would milk, tether, and feed his animals and do the household shopping." [Al-Bukhaari]

10. He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) would not hesitate to do the menial work of others, particularly of orphans and widows [An-Nasaa'ee, Ad-Daarami]. Once when there was no male member in the house of the companion Khabaab Ibn Al-Arat (RA) who had gone to the battlefield, he used to go to his house daily and milk his cattle for the inhabitants [Ibn Saad].

TEN HADEETHS ABOUT THE EXCELLENCE OF HAVING GOOD MANNERS

- 1) Abu Darda (RA) reported that Rasulullah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, "Nothing is weightier on the Scale of Deeds than one's good manners." (Al-Bukhari)
- 2) Abu Hurairah (RA) said, "I heard Abu al Qasim (Rasulullah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam)), say, 'The best among you in Islam are those with the best manners, so long as they develop a sense of understanding.'" (Al-Bukhari)
- 3) Rasulullah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "The most beloved of Allah's servants to Allah are those with the best manners." (At-Tabarâni and Albani authenticated it in Silsilatul-AHaadeethis-Saheehah)
- 4) Abd Allah ibn 'Amr said, "Rasulullah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was never obscene or coarse. Rather, he used to tell us that the best among us were those with the best manners." (Al-Bukhari)
- 5) Anas (RA) said, "I served Rasulullah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) for ten years. During that time, he never once said to me as much as 'Oof' if I did something wrong. He never asked me, if I had failed to do something, 'Why did you not do it?,' and he never said to me, if I had done something wrong, 'Why did you do it?'" (Al-Bukhari)
- 6) Abu Hurairah (RA) said that Rasulullah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, "If one has good manners, one may attain the same level of merit as those who spend their nights in prayer." (Al-Bukhari)
- 7) Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, "And what is most likely to send people to Paradise? Being conscious of Allah and good manners." (Al-Bukhari)
- 8) Nawas ibn Sam'an reported that Rasulullah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) was asked about doing good and evil. He replied, "Doing good is having good manners. Doing evil is what troubles you inside and what you would not like others to know about." (Al-Bukhari)
- 9) Rasulullah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, "He who does not show mercy to our young or show esteem for our elders is not one of us." (Al-Bukhari)

- 10) Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that Rasulullah (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said:
 "Richness does not lie in the abundance of (worldly) goods, but richness is the richness of the soul (heart, self)." (Muslim)

THE FOUR MAIN HADEETHS ON GOOD CHARACTERS

Imam An-Nawawi mentions that scholars have said all good character and manners can be derived from four prophetic traditions.

An-Nawawi writes:

بِ فِي زَمَانِهِ جَمَاعٌ وَقَدْ قَالَ الْإِمَامُ الْجَلِيلُ أَبُو مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي زَيْدٍ إِمَامُ الْمَالِكِيَّةِ بِالْمَعْرِ
 آدَابِ الْحَيْرِ يَتَفَرَّغُ مِنْ أَرْبَعَةِ أَحَادِيثَ

The Imam Al-Khaleel Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Abu Zaid, the leader of the Maliki scholars in the West in his time, said that all good manners are derived from four traditions.

Source: Sharh Sahih Muslim

These four traditions are the following:

ONE

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ

Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak goodness or remain silent.

Source: Sahih Muslim 47, Grade: Sahih

We have been commanded to speak good words or remain silent. It is not permissible to use the tongue for bad purposes like telling lies, slander, gossip, curses, profanity, or abuse. If we apply this tradition, we will be saved from the sins of the tongue by which many people enter Hellfire.

Ibn Hibban al Basti: "The tongue of an intelligent person is behind his heart so that when he wants to say something he consults his heart. If it is thought that he should speak he does, and if not he remains silent."

TWO

Ali ibn Hussein reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

إِنَّ مِنْ حُسْنِ إِسْلَامِ الْمَرْءِ تَرْكُهُ مَا لَا يَعْنِيهِ

Verily, from the perfection of Islam is that a person leaves what does not concern him.

Source: Sunan At-Tirmidhi 2318, Grade: Sahih

We have been commanded to leave what does not concern us and to mind our own business. It is not permissible to gossip, repeat everything we hear without verification, spy on others, seek out people's faults, or to busy ourselves with matters beyond our concern. If we apply this tradition, we will make the most of our time and avoid violating the privacy and honor of others.

THREE

Abu Huraira reported: A man came to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, and said, "Advise me." The Prophet said:

لَا تَغْضَبْ

Do not get angry.

The man repeated his request twice and the Prophet said:

لَا تَغْضَبْ

Do not get angry.

Source: Sahih Bukhari 5765, Grade: Sahih

We have been commanded to control our anger and to avoid acting impulsively. It is not permissible to allow anger to be the cause of transgression, aggression, oppressing others, harbouring rancour in our hearts, or envying others. If we apply this tradition, we will be saved from the innumerable sins caused by losing control of our anger.

FOUR

Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ

None of you will have faith until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.

Source: Sahih Bukhari 13, Grade: Muttafaqun Alayhi

We have been commanded to love for each other what we love for ourselves and to treat each other the way we would love to be treated. We should have a desire and intention to benefit others and to love good for them. We should not hold any malice towards others or have an intention to harm others. If we apply this tradition, Allah will honour us on the Day of Resurrection in the same way that we treated others well in this life.

From these four prophetic traditions are derived the foundations of all good character and manners in Islam. We should strive to apply these four traditions and thereby achieve a blessed rank among the righteous in the Hereafter.

HOW TO INSTIL GOOD MANNERS

1. Start at home - parents must be best example
2. Start from a young age
3. Engage in lots of communications with your family and share your views politely
4. Address issues that may disturb you immediately and don't wait
5. Avoid being rude by constantly being obsessed by your mobile phones
6. Correct each other nicely - but this enjoining good and forbidding evil must be done.
7. Look at examples from prophet Muhammad Sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam and the companions
8. Visit countries which are renowned for the manners - Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, etc
9. Seek knowledge
10. Be with good companions
11. Recite and understand the Qur'an constantly
12. Seek refuge in Allah from shaytan

13. Leave out cultural habits which may reflect bad manners, for e.g. talking loudly

CONCLUSION

Imam Al-Ghazali in his eminent works of Ihya' Ulumiddin succeeded in explaining in detail the categories of the higher level characters and their explanations, based on the Al-Quran and Sunnah. He divided it into two parts: Manners which will bring misfortune in this world and the next, and manners which will bring triumph in this world and in the hereafter.

Among the destructive characters are jealousy and resentment, the love for this world, the love for power and rank, riyak, ujub and takabbur. And among the characters which will bring us to success are sincerity, the habit of thinking, compassion, tawakkul, patience, and many others.

How wonderful it will be if we can internalise the good characters as taught by Islam. Without good character, a Muslim will not be complete, his faith will not be complete.

An Arabic poet once said:

إِنَّمَا الْأُمَّمُ الْأَخْلَاقُ مَا بَقِيَتْ # فَإِنْ هُمُوهُ ذَهَبَتْ أَخْلَاقُهُمْ ذَهَبُوا

"Indeed the ummah with good character will last,

But when their good character is lost, they will also be lost."

May we be able to improve our characters and be a good example to other communities.

May Allah Guide us with good manners which will shine and set good examples for others to emulate.

May Allah Grant us with the ability to emulate the good manners of prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and the good manners mentioned in the Qur'an.

Ameen.

