



# **The Art of Social Relations**

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## Introduction

If we want to put a big signboard at the beginning of this topic, shall we find a better or more suggestion than the following: “Oh my son! Consider yourself a scale between yourself and others; love for your brother what you love for yourself, and hate for your brother what you hate for yourself.

Do not oppress as you don't want to be oppressed; do good to others as you want for yourself, dislike for others what you dislike for yourself. Accept people as they also accept you; do not say what you do not know, even if your knowledge is little, and do not say (to others) what you hate to be said to yourself.”

In short, this “signboard” wants to tell us: Make yourself a balance between you and other people; a positive thing in relation to you is positive to others, and likewise, anything negative to you is also negative to others. Indeed, if we take this golden advice, what can we get from it?

1- Practicing this theory will make us just, and justice is the main aim of the whole humanity. There is nothing more superior and more important as justice among people. With this theory, you cannot wait for justice to reach you from others; rather you go for it so as to be the first person to practice it. Naturally, good attracts good, and justice calls toward justice.

2- Practicing this precious theory will change life from a place of massacres and bomb blasts to a place of beauty and growth. In other words, it will be changed into a small paradise.

When someone, brothers, friends or any other human being, becomes related to me. I remember him in my happiness and unhappiness. I understand what makes him sad by what makes me sad. And, likewise, when I know what he likes by what I like and I do it for him, I will be among those who turn the dryness of life into paradise and happiness.

In addition, this theory is not Islamic alone, rather it, also, relates to the sense of humanity. Thus, Islam - as it is clear - is human in nature in all its teachings. And not only Islam, but, all the Divine religions believe and follow such moral and social principles. Even some psychologists and sociologists call toward it in the process of social rehabilitation and human relations.

James Bander, the head of the Civil Institute for Human Relations in New York, said: “The first theory described by the philosophers is the view represented in the eternal saying: 'Love for your brother what you love for yourself'“. It is derived from the theory that helps in attracting people, and regards it as the first and most important step in reaching “an attractive personality.”

The author of the book, “How to Attract Friends”, Dayel Carnigy has said: “Show your concern toward others to the best of your ability, because it is your wealth which will increase in growth whenever you spend it.” The question here is this: Is the path of attaining an Islamic and social personality - the one which makes you love and be loved - you like it and other people like it - practicable?

(With all simplicity, we can say: Yes...but!)

The word 'but', in most instances, changes things upside down, but here it is just a reminder, reminding us that the 'yes' requires a particular and

special effort in order to make it good and perfect. Because the art of social relations is like any other art, we cannot obtain it just like that, rather it is an art, which requires action and endeavor.

It is possible, in the initial stage, that we will find it difficult, but with time it will become enjoyable; a social and spiritual enjoyment. One day you will find yourself opening hearts to those close to you saying: "I am ready to let you into my heart... I am ready to do it!"

By this, you will see that the closed hearts of others toward you will be opened to you once they see and feel the sincerity of your love and respect towards them, because there is nothing more attractive to love than love, to the heart more than the heart, to kindness more than kindness, to good relations than good relations. An experienced philosopher said: "The possessors of intellects have many enviers, but those who possess hearts, their friends are many."

It is, unanimously, accepted by people that man is a social being that attracts and is attracted, to the extent that if he lives alone for a period of time he will become wild. In both cases - happiness and misery - he needs someone who will accompany him, who will share his happiness at the time of happiness, and likewise, his sorrow at the time of sorrow.

From here, we understand that the saying "others are evil" propagated by Western artists, is originated from the values that lack the warmth of social relations and from the feeling caused by the non-Islamic society, as well as, from the competitive environment which many a time encourages toward harming others.

Indeed, a true believer living in a safe society can never accept and live under this black and harmful theory. It is possible that our friends might cause some problems for us, but we can, through wisdom, patience and caution, find a way to attract them toward us and, thereafter, we know how to make them our friends.

It is reported from the former United States president Abraham Lincoln that a woman heard him praising his enemies. She asked him in a surprising tone: "You are praising those enemies who are working for your destruction?" He said: "Am I not destroying them when I make them my friends?!"

Before him (Lincoln), the Prophets (peace be upon them) and their leader the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) had followed this way of breaking the enmity of their foes and making them their friends. And, likewise, this way was followed by the Holy Imams (Ahlul-Bait) (a.s.) and other saints. They made their enemies their friends and followers.

Indeed, it is a great human theory for the one who faces evil with good. He will strike down evil and make it shake like a slaughtered animal until it breathes its last breath. It makes the value of a kind person rise to the state of the Kind and the Forgiver. Indeed it is one of Allah's traits, which becomes compulsory for us, as Muslims, to practice.

A Prophetic narration, in this regard, says: "Do good to the possessor of good as well as to those who lack it, because even if they are not from those who do good, you have become one of the doers of good." Thus, this moral way will take us from the state "envy and evil" to the state of those who

practice love and goodness to others. The first state is a state of destruction while the second one is a state of life and growth.

In view of this, if we want to attest to the development and growth of a particular society, we should look into its social relations. If the principles of ethics and its manners govern the relations among its people, we will evaluate that the society is moving toward development and growth. And, likewise, its people, who respect the laws and theories of social development the way a driver respects the laws and regulations of driving, are on the verge of development and civilization.

It is a mistake to think those moral laws and regulations limit man and his activities in the community, or it is in contrast with the meaning of freedom. Indeed, road signs are meant for protecting lives, to reduce the occurrence of painful happenings, as well as, preserving the general security, not for paralyzing people's movement. Thus, moral laws are also meant for protecting the society, as well as, its development.

Thus, naturally we are social beings, and this is what was outlined in many prophetic narrations, like: "Whoever mixes with people and endures their troubles is better than the one who neither mixes with people nor endures their troubles." And in another hadith: "Mix with people so as to complete your religion", and "Staying away from people is a step toward enmity."

In many places, Islam calls us as Muslims to make a sincere and powerful relationship with Islamic societies, as well as, with other people from different religions and schools of thought provided that we should safeguard the teachings, morals and principles of our religion 'Islam' and its legislative laws.

Indeed, the one who runs away from people, lives in isolation, casts his problems upon others, and considers them (his problems) hell, and suffers from their behavior, such man never wants to live in reality, nor lightens even one candle or two instead of remaining in darkness and insulting others.

Prophet Moses (a.s.), while talking to his Lord, said: "Oh Lord! Protect me from people's tongues. He said: Oh Moses! You are asking something that I didn't make it for Myself." Indeed, there is a lesson in the famous story that talks about a father and his child and their donkey for those who want to consider.

One thing that will make people accept you and be friendly with you and, your being friendly with them, is their justice and good morals toward you and vice versa. One day a Bedouin, from Bani-Tamim tribe, came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), and said: "Advise me". Among the Prophet's advice to him was this: "Love people so that they will love you." And the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "Do not pursued people with your wealth, pursued them with your good habits."

Therefore, Islam suggests that we call people without using our tongues. Piety is propagation (calling people to Islam), good relationship is propagation, honesty, sincerity, and justice are all propagation which have a wonderful effect that words can never achieve.

It is narrated that a Jew accepted Islam as a result of being affected by the good morals of Imam Ali bin Abi-Talib (a.s.) who learned from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.). In this regard, a proverb says: "Actions speak louder than words."

Unfortunately, some of our youth, sometimes, regard and take certain bad examples and proverbs as their models and pacesetters, as a result, they lose their social respect and consideration among people and are pleased for themselves by such bad, negative and dispraised dependence. Among them are: "Behaving like others is a feast" is the saying of a yes-man who always says: "I am from the people and I am one of them." The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) prohibited Muslims from being yes-men, who do not know the succor of good from the succor of evil.

Among the bases of this art (the art of social relation) is to be a pacesetter of others in doing good. If you want to take some people as friends take those who were guided by Allah: those who have good morals.

***"These are they whom Allah has guided, therefore, follow their guidance;..." Holy Qur'an (6: 90)***

Mu'awiyah bin Wahab is reported to have said: I asked Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.): "How can we deal with our people and those people who are not on our way?" He said: "Look at your Imams whom you followed, and do as they do, by Allah! They visit their sick ones, and participate in their funeral processions, they become their witness for and against them and give them their trust." From all these introductions, we will try to answer the following four questions:

1- Regarding an attractive Islamic personality, how can one be effective in the society?

2- Base on the basis of the theory of morals...how can we proceed socially?

3- On the basis of the negative part of relations...what are the factors that destroy relations and harm them?

4- And on the basis of good pacesetters.... What are the practical factors of a pioneer, sound, and righteous personality, which improve good relations with others?

1

First- How Can One be Effective Among People? First- How Can One be Effective Among People?

Good morals and sound relations can be a common and general language of the world, but one can rarely find a society that hates truth and justice or likes theft, injustice and aggression. Even if you find a society like this, it would be a backward and primitive society that lives outside the realm of humanity and civilization; an abnormal society, which can never be taken into consideration.

Thus, all sermons, regulations, recom-mendations, and advises in different religions are one or are close to each other, this is because man is one even though individual approaches differ. And the source of all messages is one, even though its teachings differ - and its aim and objectives are one, bringing good morals into the life of people.



Therefore, it is not surprising to see the aim of the Last Divine Message being what was reported from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) that: “I was sent to complete good morals.” Thus, we must try our best to practice these laws of morals in all our undertakings. The following are ways of deriving social respect and consideration:

1- Smiling: It is a magic key with which we open people's heart. This shining and attractive act, which moistens the lips and lightens our face, speaks the sound word saying to others: I love you, I want you to be my friend, I want to have a good relationship of love and affection with you.

It is charming because the other fellow - whether he likes it or not - will answer it in kind like or even better. It is reported in a prophetic narration that: “Smiling at the face of your friend (brother) is an alms.”

The general moral law states: “Smile and the world will smile with you. When you smile you are using thirteen parts of your face, whereas you are using 74 parts when you frown!!” Thus, why do you suffer your body in something which has no benefit, or in something whose result will be harmful?!”

It is also stated in this law that: “ The parts of the face are the best indicators of the feelings of its possessor.” The smiling face is the best source of attracting friendship and relations with others. It is better than a gift presented by someone. Then, what is the need for stinginess?

Smile for all, be they young and old. In this way, you will surely motivate others for smiling and spread a warm and friendly atmosphere among them. In this respect, a well-known Chinese proverb says: “The one who does not know smiling well, should not open a shop.” because smiling is a successful seller.

2- Handshaking: It is a great hearty expression of love of the hand giver to the hand receiver; indeed, it is a general language of love and kindness that doesn't need a translator. Whenever you put your hand into the hand of your friend, both of you will feel the sense of love and affection for each other.

It was reported in a narration encouraging handshaking to the extent that whenever two people shake hands their sins will fall away the way the dried leaves of a tree fall. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) said: “When two people meet and shake hands, Allah will turn to them, and their sins will fall as the leaves of the tree fall.”

3- Greetings: Greetings between people is an expression of love and affection. But, the Islamic greeting “Assalamu Alaikum” (i.e. peace be upon you) is full of greater expression than the one mentioned above. It is an expression of peace, which the whole world is looking for.

From this, we can understand what was reported in a narration. “The Almighty Allah likes he who starts greeting.” Whenever you extend your greetings to whomever you meet, whether you know him or not, you are extending flowers of love and peace on people's way, as well as, putting peace and tranquility into their hearts.

The great achievement, for a person, is when others feel secure and have peace of mind whenever they meet him. And what a good behavior, when

peace is exchanged with peace, while answering greetings in kind with what is better than that.

Based on general moral laws, a poet has said:

“In every hour of the day

You can give something as a gift.

It might be smiling,

And it might be extending hands in hand shaking.

And it might be a word;

Through which you strengthen others' determinations.”

4- Embracing: If smiling is a key to a bright meeting and greetings are a source of tranquility and handshaking is a greeting from a heart to another heart, then embracing is a source of expressing what smiling, greetings and hand shaking were unable to express.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) is reported to have embraced Ja'far al-Tayyar and kissed his face. And, likewise, his grandson Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) was reported to have said: “The best and most complete greeting of he who is at home is handshaking, and the best and complete greeting for a traveler is an embrace.” There is no difference whether he is going or coming back from the journey.

5- In our daily life, a name has a great role to play more the story of naming someone on the day of his birth...it is our companion who may leave his effect on us positively or negatively. It is in view of this that Islam enjoins on us to call people by their best name. If he wants us to call him with his real name we must call him by it, and if he wants us to use his surname we must call him by it. It is good even to add more phrases in the names to show our respect for him.

It is said in the moral laws that: “If you want people to love you, call them by their names because the name of a person is the most loveable thing to him. When you address a person and call him by his name, you are giving him respect, which he will thank you for in return. But, when you forget his name, he will regard it as disrespect to him.”

6- Paying attention to what others are saying is a good habit, which expresses love and respect to the speaker so as to make him feel at ease in saying all that is on his mind without interruption. A prophetic narration has enjoined us not to cut a speaker off while speaking, because it is a form of disrespect.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: “Whoever cuts his own Muslim brother off while he is speaking - it is as if he scratched his face.” This is because what a speaker requires is that all ears should be turned to what he is saying. But if he has finished his speech, you have the right to ask, shed more light on or repute his sayings.

Apart from the fact that disrupting a speaker doesn't give one a chance to hear what is in the heart of the speaker, it also hurts his feelings to the extent that he may misunderstand. Most speakers respect those who listen to them even if their speech is of not much importance. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: “In the past, I had a brother- in- faith, ...he was more eager for keeping quiet than speaking...”

It is said in the general moral law that: “The best of speakers is he who listens attentively to others. He who talks about his own personality, and doesn't think except about his own self is egoistic. A person with such a habit is an ignorant fellow who drags himself to pity. If you want to earn an efficiency in talking, and people to love you, you must be a good listener and encourage the other side to express him.”

One of the philosophers said: “I have never learned anything while I was talking.”

7- It might be possible that you will not know that I love you unless I tell you, or you might know it in a general form, but you will not know it deeply if I don't tell you, or I express it with good words, feelings, sincerity, or by presenting a valuable gift; etc...

It is one of the Islamic morals that if you love someone you should reveal it to him and not hide it from him so that to make him feel that you love him and do everything to repay the love. Indeed, loving words have achieved desirable results that cannot be expressed.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) was reported to have said: “If you love someone tell him, because that will make your relationship firm.” It is also among moral behavior to: “Make it your habit to narrate to others the sweetness of what you have heard or read. Do not forget your courteous behavior which expresses sincerity,

grant others good and sincere assessment of all the services they have rendered to you, be it material or spiritual, because it is one of the factors that brings confidence and firm love in the heart. The difference between assessment and adulation is that there is sincerity in assessment while adulation is just lies and destruction.”

8- A word of thanks and assessment is a good and beautiful expression of concern and assessing the good habit done to you. It is hoped that it will continue. Thus, it is compulsory to thank the doers of good. It is reported in one narration that: “Whoever doesn't thank his fellow beings doesn't thank the Creator.” The Almighty Allah has combined thanking Him and parents in one verse to show the importance of thanksgiving to the one did good to you, whether He is the Lord, a father or a mother. “Be grateful unto Me and unto your parents” Holy Qur'an (31: 14) It is also narrated in a hadith that: “Thanks giving which exceeds the limit is adulation, while the shortening of thanks from the limit is faltering.”

Among the methods of thanks giving is revealing the special peculiarity of the thing that is worthy of thanks. You should know that an individual giving thanks, that is to every sincere helper, is more beneficial than the general thanks, because everyone will be pleased with, and may turn all the thanks and assessment, to the person concerned. Indeed, all thanks, encouragement, good words that express thanks and assessment and praying for his success and rewards, are all forms of thanksgiving that we ought to abide by, if we want to create good human relations between people.

It is said in general moral laws to: “Spend your day thanking people, in the afternoon thank many people, and before you go home at night, you must thank as many people as you can. Because thanking people is part of

their environment that surrounds them and it shows your concern for them and, likewise, it has its own role in human health.”

9- There is nothing superior in heart and intellect than to find an excuse for a mistake done to me by someone, because by this it lifts the heaviness of the mistake and gives me self-confidence, as well as, educates me on how to deal with others peacefully and, also, seek their apology whenever I make a mistake.

It is reported in one hadith to: “Give your brother seventy possibilities. If you didn't find an excuse for him, seek an excuse for him.” Imam Ali (a.s.) said: “Do not regard the word that comes out of the mouth of someone as evil, while you can find a possibility of good in it.” This shows the importance of building anything on its positive possibility and takes the mind away from any negative interpretation, even if we exhaust all possibilities and there remains only one negative possibility, we should try to find an excuse to clear our brothers from blame.

It is said in the method of morals to: “Try to gain the power of clearing shame and incapability in the mind of your fellow brother...because the words 'you have made a mistake' is the fastest way of attracting enmity.” We have already mentioned ways to draw the attention of the one who made a mistake without hurting his feelings.

10- Indeed, there is a great difference between those who assess others and make them feel that they are important to the society and do not withhold from people the things that are their due, and those who make them their source of laughter and mockery. The first group attracts people while the second one makes people away from them. The Almighty Allah had prohibited this in His saying:

***“Let not a people laugh at (another) people (to scorn) who happily may be better than them; nor let women laugh at other women who happily may be better than these...” Holy Qur'an (49: 11)***

It was narrated in a hadith that: “The Almighty Allah has hidden His most pious servants among His servants.” This narration explains to us that there is a possibility that the man we are mocking might be greater and more superior, in the sight of Allah, than us. Thus, this narration that teaches us how to treat people as great is not only a moral narration, rather it, also, teaches us a lesson; the art of social relations and value.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) said: “If you see someone who is older than you, you should say: He has passed me in greatness. And if you see someone who is your junior, in terms of age, say: I have passed him in sinning, and if you see someone who is your age, then say: I am knowledgeable with myself but I do not know what is in his mind.” In every circumstance, you should give less importance to your self and think good of others. Is there any moral teaching, which encourages its followers to go high, better than the moral teachings of Islam?!

It is said in the moral laws: “Do not mock and laugh at others, rather make them feel that you have concern for them. If you want people to love you, show them concern and assessment that will give them more hope... leave them to feel their importance... find something in them that is good and talk about it;

do not destroy that beautiful condition. Indeed, people differ, but you must find something good in them, if not in their creation, in their spirit. As you are hoping for yourself bliss and respect, make others, who are your brothers in humanity, also feel the same... indeed men - including me, you and the rest - are sentimental first, then later in the second stage become rational.”

11- Have a glance at your surroundings... look at them carefully... you can never find someone who is free from some form of goodness even those whom at first sight you think are lacking in it. If we consider the positive features of others, we can draw them to our side.

It is reported that one day Prophet Jesus (Isa) (a.s.) and one of his followers passed by a dead and rotten dog. The man said: “This dog smells bad.” But, Jesus (a.s.) only looked at the whiteness of its teeth and said: “This dog has white teeth.” He looked at the positive side of the dog even though we see nothing attractive in the dog.

When Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.) wanted to blame Safwan al-Jammal (one of his followers) for renting his camel to Harun Rashid, the Abbasid ruler, he started by approaching him mildly and said: “Oh! Safwan! Everything in you is good except one thing”, it is renting the camel to Harun, but we see how Imam al-Kadhim (a.s.) used a good method of refutation. First, he praised the good qualities of Safwan, so when he made mention of the negative side of him (Safwan), he felt the sense of blame and asked, “What is it, Oh my Lord?” trying to repair it and add it to his good qualities.

A psychologist said: “We should remember that we have common qualities, with our differences, and they are that each and every one of us has good and superior qualities.”

Others have said: “If you want to refute, then consider it with intimacy and felicity.” It is said in a prophetic narration that: “May Allah bless the one who guides me toward my shortcomings.” Guidance can never be achieved except by a good approach.

12- The best person to attract people's love and respect to himself is he who benefits them. It is said in a narration that: “The best of men is he who benefits people.” The more the benefit grows the more the love and respect of people grows.

Abdul-Aziz al-Qaratasi reported from Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) that: “One day Abu Abdullah said: Oh Abdal-Aziz! Belief (iman) is like a ladder that has ten steps, therefore, he who is on the second step should not say to the one on the first that he is nothing until he reaches the tenth. Do not intimidate he who is under you; he who is above you will intimidate you. If you see someone who is under you, try and raise him up mildly. Do not make him do what is above his capability, you will break him, and he who breaks a believer, will take the responsibility.”

It is among the necessities of good companionship to find a good friend who stays with you with all sincerity and is beneficial both spiritually and materially. There is no stinginess and pride; friendship must be only for Allah's sake.

In order to attract your friend towards you, you must try and raise him to your standard, and this is what is said and emphasized by those who have experience in the field of education that: “Do not exceed the limit in praising your values, because it is possible that those who you think are inferior to you, might be superior to you, and what you are proud of may be something useless in the sight of others.”

Therefore, some psychologists have said: “Encouragement makes people successful, and you can make someone like what you want him to do if you work in order to achieve what you want from him.” 13- It is our common nature that we give more care and concern to big issues only. We tend to forget about small issues or we give them less concern.

Regarding the saying of the Almighty Allah; “Verily we see you of the doers of good (to all).” Holy Qur'an (12: 36), Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) is reported to have said: “He used to widen the gathering, lending to the needy and helping the destitute.”

The Imam (a.s.) is, also, reported to have said: “He is not from us who doesn't control himself at the time of sadness, nor makes good his relationship with his companion, who disagrees with he who disagrees with him, nor follows he who follows him, who isn't close to the one who becomes closer to him, and who doesn't eat with the one who eats with him.” All these are considered as ways of making relationships good and making the tree of love grow and benefits from its fruits and flowers.

It is said in the moral laws that: “Do not neglect a little concern, because it has a great issue and benefit.”

Secondly: How Can We Proceed Socially?

After being acquainted with some moral laws through prophetic hadiths and sayings of psychologists, then, we will come to the answer of the second question on how to proceed socially.

Morals play an important role in the art of social relations. It is good, before we go further to state that none of these morals are final and conclusive. Whatever the case may be, if we are talking about art, it is possible that each and every one of us will add something.

## 1- The Manners of Greeting

A- Among the etiquette of greetings is that a rider should greet the one who is on foot, a passer-by should greet the one who is standing, a small group should greet a larger one, little ones should greet the elders, a man should greet a woman, a child should greet his parent, and the one who enters a place should greet those whom he meets inside.

The art of social relations we have learned from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), and his teachings require us to be the first to say the Islamic greeting, that is, “Assalamu Alaikum”, because he used to be the first to say the greeting.

B- We should use the Islamic greeting “Assalamu Alaikum”, so as to show our identity. It is not right for us, as Muslims, to use other people's greetings while we have our own, which is beautiful and perfect.

C- To welcome your friend and visitor with all of your existence, so that he will feel your concern for him. It is not good to shake ones hand while your other hand is in your pocket, or you are resting on your car, a wall or tree. This will reduce your value in the sight of your friend.

D- To reply to the greetings with the best of it, these are the Islamic morals that do not repay good with good only, rather it repays it with what is better than it, “When you are greeted with a greeting, then greet you with a better (than it), or return it.” (Holy Qur'an (4: 86) The best reply for “Assalamu Alaikum” “Peace be upon you” is “Wa alaikum al-Salam wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu” (And peace be with you and the mercy and blessings of Allah be with you.”

E- It is obligatory for Muslims to greet women with Islamic greetings and show for them our concern, but it is not permissible to shake their hands; because Islam considers such action as part of an Islamic chastity and security.

## **2- The Manners of Phoning:**

It is true that you can not see your friend while phoning him, nor he sees you, but this doesn't mean that you should indulge with manners of phoning. Among them are:

A- First, you should greet your friend and show him your concern and love as if you are talking to him face to face.

B- You should introduce yourself when you phone your friend, because some voices may be similar and in order not to put your friend in a dilemma, you should introduce yourself, first, by telling him your name directly after greeting.

C- You should be sure that the number you are dialing is correct and that the time you are phoning is the right time. You should hastily redial the number of your friend if it cuts off while you are talking, to avoid any misunderstandings.

D- Try to summarize your talking to the required standard. And if you recorded a message on your telephone telling your friend that you will call him back, while you are away, you must call, because it is the habit of a believer that he fulfills his promise.

E- You should, at least, telephone at the time of ceremonies and occasions, to say your greetings and good lucks to your friends and relatives; as many as you can, even though to visit them in person is better, but telephoning them, as correspondence, is half of direct meeting.

F- If your friend or neighbor wants to use your telephone, leave the place for him until he finishes, because he might have some secrets he does not want others to be acquainted with them.

G- Do not reply to those that disturb you with harsh words. Use mild words that will make them feel shy and have a guilty conscience. This way will keep them away from doing it again.



### **3- The Manners of Thanks Giving:**

We have mentioned before that the reward of good is good and that the repaying of beauty is beauty or what is better than that, therefore, it is not good for me to repay good with showing no concern or even evil. Thus, thanksgiving has its own manners, among them are:

A- Do not be slow in thanking those who did good to you.

B- While thanking the one who did good to you, you should hope to repay the service(s) rendered to you in the future. This is a practical thanks giving which deepens friendly relations and encourages towards doing more good.

C- Thanks giving is not only meant for a particular group of people, rather it is meant for every doer of good, no matter what the rate of good he did. As it is meant for father, mother, brother, sister, friend, teacher and director, it is also meant for postmaster, metropolitan worker, waiter, door keeper, shoe shiner and others.

#### **4- The Manners of Friendship and Companion-ship:**

A prophetic hadith calls us to live with our friends and relatives with goodness and to prefer them on our own selves; we should not let them see any corruption or cheating on our part. We should be kind with them or we should not show them any sign of stinginess. We should keep their secrets in their presence and absence; we should not allow anybody to cheat them. We should give them advice and encourage them to obey to Allah; and we should help them in overcoming their wrongdoing and sins.

All these are summarized in the saying: “Be a source of mercy to them, not a source of punishment.” However, companionship has some manners that must be respected, among them are:

A- We must not deceive our friends in any affairs; rather we should be frank with them in any matter. We should not cheat them; rather we should be sincere with them.

B- We must not lie to them; rather we should be truthful and sincere. There is nothing better than finding a friend who is truthful and sincere in all fields of our companionship.

C- We should not do anything to degrade them whatever the case may be; degrading a brother or a friend is degrading ones self, because the position of a friend or a brother is our own position. Instead of degrading them you should work for the purpose of completing their personality, this is the best for friendship and the most loveable in the sight of Allah and His Messenger (s.a.w.).

D- If you stay with your friend, be soft to him in choosing appropriate words and feelings that show love and affection. It is said, “Softness reduces loneliness.” How beautifully the Holy Qur'an explains this: “and lower your wing (be gentle) unto the believers.” Holy Qur'an (15:88) You should make yourself inferior in your relation with your brother, but it must be inferiority of love, not disgrace.

Among the desirable things are: Coping with things that are not prohibited; and you should not force your opinion on your friend that has different opinion as yourself. You should not stand up from where you are sitting unless with his permission; and you should not let him hear anything except good, because “there is evil in bad words and good is a suppression of evil”; and you should thank him for his good.

E- The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: “Companionship must be with faithfulness,” i.e., we should not disclose the secrets of our friends unless with his permission.

F- If any friendly meeting contains more than two and are sitting in one place, it is not suitable for me to whisper to one of them something that I don't want others to hear, because such action will surely make him (them) unhappy, even whisper doesn't concern him. But, if I do so, he will surely feel that I did not regard him sincerely and honestly.

## 5- The Manners of Giving a Gift:

A gift has a great effect on the heart of he whom the gift is given to, because when you give me a gift - with its real meaning not its material value- you are sending me a message of your love and affection. Thus, it is upon me to be happy and put it in mind that it is also your right upon me to repay that gift (not necessarily with a material gift but with thanks and, etc).

However, being the fact that a gift is an expression of a feeling that can never be expressed in words, therefore, it has its own manners:

A- We must be careful in choosing it, because the choice of a man - as it is said- is part of his intellect. The gift might be small in its quantity but great in its value. The books liked by your friend might be the best gift to him than anything else.

B- As some are saying that a gift must be presented on a certain occasion, but there is a possibility that a gift should be given without any occasion, because your zeal for the growth of your friendship with your friend, itself, is an occasion. Nevertheless, choosing a particular occasion for presenting a gift, like the success on anything, marriage, buying a house or returning from a journey, has a great effect on people's relationships. It was reported in a hadith to: "Present gifts, you will be loved."

C- Covering a gift with a nice and attractive cover is an expression of felicity and good wishes that will make the gift talk more than the tongue.

D- He who presents the gift must look into the practical effects of the gift before giving it. This is because some gifts have a small life span, while others have a long life span, or some have a limited effect, while others have unlimited effects.

E- It is not good to refuse a gift or to degrade it. Even if it is of little value, we must thank those who present them to us and accept them with respect. It is narrated that one day a student presented cucumbers as a gift to his teacher. The teacher ate one and found it bitter.

He took the second one and found it the same, nevertheless he ate it all without inviting the other students to join him in eating. The students were surprised with their teacher's deed. The student who presented the gift went out happy because of the gift he presented to his teacher. After he went out, the teacher turned to the rest of the students and said:

"Maybe you were surprised at what I did, but the cucumbers were bitter. If I presented them to you, you would not eat them and the presenter of the gift would not be happy. That is why I kept quiet without inviting you."

F- It is not good to give someone a gift given to you as a gift by someone else, because it is said that a gift cannot be given twice. The presenter of the gift wanted it to be your personal belonging. What can you tell him when he see it (the same gift) in the hand of another fellow? It might hurt him.

## **6- The Manners of Visiting:**

One thing that has a great effect on strengthening social relationships is the exchange of visits, which is encouraged in many narrations to the extent that it is stated that whoever visits his brother, it is as if he visited Allah and His Messenger. Among the manners of visits are the following:

A- Making arrangements and stating a particular time before a visit. It is not good to break the arrangement made or to arrive late, except if something that is above someone's control happens. In such a case, you must extend your apology to whom you want to visit, so that he may not be waiting for you.

B- If you visit a friend or a brother in religion without prior arrangement and he apologizes for not been able to attend to you due to some problems best known to him, as “The owner of the house knows better what is going on in it”, do not become angry and do not feel offended, rather, it is his right that must be respected.

C- It is good to arrange for the time the visit will take, because it might be that your host may have another arrangement with someone or something else to do. Thus, if you leave the end of the visit without any limit, it might be a burden or can hurt your host.

D- If you enter the house of your friend, do not be curious and inquisitive in the affairs of the house or the family or anything that doesn't concern you. It might be that your host doesn't want you to know everything that's going on in his house. This means that you should also protect your eyes and tongue.

E- It is good to underline the aim of the visit and discuss it immediately when you arrive. Do not make your visit a chance of too much talking and spending unnecessary time.

Nevertheless, being the fact that there are different kinds of visits, therefore, each and every one of them has their own manners and morals. In addition to the visit of friends, there is also the visiting of the sick, or of a neighbor. Below is the manner of each and every one of these:

## Visiting of the Sick

One of the things that helps in the quick recovery of a sick person or at least reduces his pain is a visit. It is in view of this that Islam encourages this kind of visit and legislated some etiquette for it:

A- Limiting the time of the visit. Prolonging the time may be painful to the sick who needs much time for resting, except if he is the one who requests it.

B- Limit your visit by hearing from the sick one or asking those close to him about his condition and the prescription of the doctors. Do not talk about yourself. Talking and asking about the condition of the sick will serve as a relief to him. C- While visiting the sick, you should try and take something to him as a gift; it might be flowers or something that may be attractive to him and help him through his stay in the hospital.

One day Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) met some of his companions on the way; he asked them: "Where are you going?" They said: "We are going to visit a sick fellow." He asked them: "Does anyone of you hold an apple, quince, citron or perfume for the sick?" They answered: "None of us carry such things." Then he said: "Did you not know that the sick person feels at ease when something is brought to him." We ought to know that all the mentioned items in the narration are just an example, but we can take anything we feel is of great importance to the sick as a gift.

D- We should pray for the quick recovery and reward for the sick at the time of the visit. We should try and raise his spiritual being, reduce his pain and hope for him protection against anything that may disturb his health again. And, likewise, we should try and strengthen his patience by reciting some verses of the Holy Qur'an, and prophetic narrations and wise sayings.

E- To touch the forehead of the sick person that is suffering from a headache and fever, and put your hand in his hand will make him feel your concern and love. Because this shows that you are concerned with his health. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "Among the perfections of the visit to a sick person is putting one's hand in the hand of the sick or on his forehead."

F- We must abide by the laws and regulations of the hospital which were enacted for the good of the sick persons. If we meet him sleeping we should not wake him up; we should just leave a message to those close to him hoping for his quick recovery. We can ask if there is any service needed so as to try our best to help.

## Visiting Neighbors

Concerning neighbors, the Almighty Allah said: "...and neighbour close to you and neighbour who is a stranger..." Holy Qur'an (4: 36) And, likewise, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "The Arch Angel Gabriel (Jibra'el) continues to talk to me concerning neighbors to the extent that he will inherit from his neighbor." Your neighbor is not just the one whose house is closer to yours; rather your neighbors are the people of your area, or your town or your community. The manners of relating with a neighbor are as follows:

A- Knowing him: It is not virtue to live with a neighbor, whether he is a Muslim or not, without knowing him, greeting and visiting him.

B- Favouring him: The neighbour must preserve the security of his neighbour; he must not hurt him or any of his family members. If any good thing happens to them, he should congratulate them and, likewise, if anything bad happens to them he should console them. He should not raise his voice or the sound of a radio or television so as to disturb his neighbour. If he needs your help, help him, and try and protect his security in his absence.

C- Mutual Assistance: A neighbour should try and help his neighbour in anything possible that needs help.

D- Make him feel loved: Try to show your concern for your neighbour and that you love him by welcoming him, visiting and presenting gifts to him. And if he is sick visit him.

## 7- The Manners of Saying Farewell and Welcoming a Traveler

Among the advices of Prophet Luqman (peace be upon him) to his child is: “While traveling with people consult them on your issues; do not hang your head. Smile at them; share your properties with them; answer their call if they call you; if they need your help, help them; do not talk much, always pray; be generous with what you have of animals or water or anything else; if they make you a witness of right, be their witness; and give them your opinion if they seek your advice.”

Mufadhhal bin Umar said: “I went to Abu Abdullah, and he said to me: 'Who is with you?', I said: 'It is one of my brothers'. He said: 'What did he do', I said: 'Since I entered I don't know where he is', then he said: 'Did you not know that whoever is with a believer forty steps, Allah will ask him about him on the day of judgement?’“

Among the manners of farewell are:

A- To pass the Holy Qur'an over the head of the traveler.

B- To embrace him and read on his right shoulder:

(ان الذي فرض عليك القرآن لرادك الى معاد)

“*Verily He Who has ordained the Qur'an unto you certainly brings you back (to your) home;...*” *Holy Qur'an: (28: 85)*

And on his left shoulder:

(فالله خير حافظا وهو ارحم الراحمين)

“But Allah is the Best Guard, and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful ones.” (Holy Qur'an (12: 64) C. To hope for his safety while travelling and on his way back.

D- If it is possible you should escort him to where he will start the journey, be it a motor station, railway station or airport; this will make him happy.

E- Do not face him with your needs or what you want him to buy for you unless he asks you to do so.

F- Try to ask about his condition from his relatives or to phone him, if it is possible, and also reply to his letters if he sends any to you.

And when he comes back:

A- Welcome him in the station, if it is possible.

B- Embrace him warmly and thank Allah for his safe return. Show your happiness for his return. It is narrated in a hadith that:

“The best and complete greetings of he who is at home is hand shaking, and the best and complete greetings for a traveler is embracement.”

C- Visit him in his house and go with a gift to show your happiness for his return.

## 8- The Manners of Condolence:

The art of social relations doesn't mean that we should only be with people at the time of happiness; rather it requires us to be with them at the time of tragedy also. Maybe the need for comfort and a comforter, for an angry man, is much greater than a happy man.

Among the manners of condolence are:

A. Taking part in the burial activities of the deceased, to walk in a sad mood as if the deceased is ours; and we should continue to recite the words of believing in the will of Allah, like:

(لا اله الا الله)

'La'ilaha Illallah'  
(There is no god, but Allah),

و(لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله)

'La hawla wa la quwata illa billah'  
(There is nor power but with Allah)

(انا لله وانا اليه راجعون)

'Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi Raji'un';  
(We are from Allah, and to Him we return)

We should also hold a part of the coffin and continue seeking Allah's forgiveness for the deceased.

B- We should take part in the prayer for the deceased and read chapter 'Fatihah' (the opening chapter in the Qur'an) for him. C- We should escort the deceased to his final resting-place; and, also, comfort his/her family and relatives with the words of sympathy and ask them to be patient with what has happened to them.

D- We should take part in the ceremonies of reading 'fatihah' and du'a (supplications) for the deceased.

E- We should help the family of the deceased with what we can afford, so as to comfort them for the loss.

F- If we are far from the place where our friend or one of his relatives died, we can extend our condolences to his family by telephone, letter, telex, fax, and internet. There are certain common and well-known terms and expressions for extending condolences, which depend on the culture and custom of the people. Among them are

عظم الله اجوركم

“May Allah glorify your rewards.”

انا لله وانا اليه راجعون

“(We are from Allah, and to Him we return) “



## **9- The Manners of Congratulations:**

Among the rights of our friend on us is to congratulate him on any success and favour he achieved in life, and, likewise, it is our right upon him to have him do the same thing for us. Indeed, congratulating each other is among the factors of strengthening a friendship between friends. Among the manners of congratulation for success is hoping additional success for the one who is favored with success; and presenting gifts to him to show our happiness and concern for his success.

Among the manners of congratulating the one who is blessed with a newborn child is to give thanks for Allah for the safety of the child and his mother; to pray to Allah to make the child to be brought up under their (parents) care and, also, to make him (the child) among the true believers; and we should follow it with gifts.

Also, among the manners of congratulation for marriage is to hope for the couple's safety, understanding of each other and having children; and likewise, presenting suitable gifts to the couple.

## **10. The Manner of Entertaining Guests:**

Entertaining a guest is something known and good in Islam, which regards entertaining guests as one of the good habits. It is reported in a hadith that: “Whoever believes in Allah and the Day of Judgement should entertain his guests.”

Thus, the manners of entertaining a guest at a feast, or on the occasion of marriage, buying a house or breaking the fast in the month of Ramadhan are:

A- Show a warm welcome to the guest and let him sit down in a suitable place, or leave the choice up to him.

B- Give the guest the freedom of choosing what to say while in his company.

C- While waiting for the meal of the occasion, let him choose what is suitable for himself, from books, newspapers or watching television or talking to other people, lest he feels loneliness.

D- Do not be slow in bringing the food, and if it is possible you should choose a nice food for the guest, one that will be the best and most complete entertainment for the guest.

E- If your guest decides to sleep in your house, you should prepare a nice place for him to sleep; show him the Qibla (the prayer-direction) and where the toilet is; prepare a nice handkerchief for him, and seek his permission whenever you want to enter the room in the morning. In short, try to show your guest that he is the owner of the house, as one poet says:

“Oh! My guest, if you visit us you will find that We are guests and you are the owner of the house.”

## **11- Manners on the Street:**

Being the fact that we do not know most of the people on the street, this doesn't mean we should forget about our morals of relationship with our companions on the street. Good morals are for those we know and for those that we don't know; for those whom we know, in order to strengthen our relationship with them and for those we don't know, in order to show a humanitarian face. Islam has enacted some etiquette while on the street; here are some:

A- Lower your eyes while walking on the street; face the direction you are going and do not turn away much.

B- It may happen that something disturbs your temper on the way; remember that as you are in your house, you are also on the street, thus, your obligation is your obligation, your manner is your manner, protect yourself respect and personality wherever you are.

C- Remove any harmful thing on the street, because those people who are moving on the street are your brothers either in religion or in humanity. It is reported in a prophetic hadith that: "Do not hesitate from doing anything good even if it is moving away any harmful thing on the way".

D- Spread peace by greeting all people - those you know and those you don't - in order to spread safety and tranquility on the street.

E- Do not block the way with anything, because the street is for everybody, not for you alone.

F- Being the fact that the street is the right for all, therefore, it is not good to spit on it nor throw waste and garbage on the street, because dirtying the street is harming the general health; your health included. Put your waste and refuses in special places meant for them.

G- Help those who need your help by picking up what falls down of their properties, or help those who may have problems in their means of transportation. Give your help to those who need it especially those in dire need of it, because it is possible that one day, you may need others' help; even if you don't at least you have done a good work.

H- If you park your car in a special place, do not cause a rise in its sound. Do not start it carelessly for the purpose of protecting your health and the health of others.

## **12. The Manners of Relations With Elders:**

Relations with elders - whether they are our parents or teachers and scholars - have their own special manner. Islam enjoins Muslim youth to respect them. It is reported in a hadith that: "Among the respect of the Almighty Allah is respecting elders" If an elder is from the people of merit (respected family), he has two kinds of respect; respect for his age and respect for his merit.

As relations with children requires mercy, educating them, forgiveness and patience, likewise, relations with elders has its own basis:

A- Do not argue with them, nor repay their wrong doing with wrong doing. Direct his attention to his mistakes in a better way as Imam Hasan and Husain did, when they drew the attention (when they were children) to an old man who didn't know how to perform ablution. When they requested him to judge among them as to who knows how to perform ablution correctly, the old man realized that they were right and that it was he who was not performing ablution correctly.

B- Do not proceed an elder while moving, and do not sit down before he sits. You should give him a place in a meeting; and you must respect him wherever he may be.

C- Redeem him by assessing his favour to you and the greatness of his good to you which requires sacrifice and respect. We should protect them, especially parents "And We have enjoined on man goodness unto his parents." Holy Qur'an (29: 8) and likewise, our teacher being our second father or mother. Indeed, our teachers deserve respect both orally and practically.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "Sitting down with learned religious men is an honor both in this world and in the hereafter." Prophet Luqman (a.s.) told his son: "Oh my son! Sit down with scholars, disturb them with your knee, because the Almighty Allah revives hearts with the light of wisdom, as He revives the earth with the heavy rain of the sky". It is also good to assess their services, as well as, follow their advice and protect them.

## Other Manners

The list of social manners, which comprises the 'Art of Social Relations' is a long list we cannot bring up here, but we will make mention some of its components:

A- When you borrow a book, do not write anything in it; protect it against loss or damage; return it to its owner with respect and thanks; if anything bad happens to it, pay for it.

B- Try to abide by the laws and guidance fixed inside motorcars, rooms, centers, libraries and market and business centers. C- Ask permission before using anything that does not belong to you.

D- Do not delay in replying to letters sent to you, because letters are like greetings. They need a reply, even if you only tell your friend that you have received his letter.

E- Avoid smoking in an indoor place, because hurting others is not good; most especially that inhaling the smoke of a cigarette harms more than the smoker himself - a confirmed medically proven fact.

F- It is good to apologize quickly after committing a mistake, no matter how small it is like coming late for an appointment by giving reasonable excuses for it.

G- Admonition is the soap of the hearts. Admonish your brother, but not about everything. Imam Ali al-Hadi (a.s.) wrote a letter to some of his followers saying: "Admonish so-and-so, tell him if Allah means good for someone He admonished him first." Isn't admonition better than backbiting a thousand times?

Thirdly: What are the Factors that Destroy Relations?

No doubt the art of social relations requires the understanding of two things together: knowing the factors that strengthen the relationship and knowing the factors that destroy and harm it. This is because knowing the second will help us avoid those things that spoil social relations as it will help us also correct the displeasure of others who don't pay attention to good morals, so as to refrain from anything harmful. In short, each and every one of us will become a mirror for his fellow friend; they are seeing our positive and negative side and we are, also, seeing their positive and negative side.

For the purpose of seeing the real picture, we will present a number of repulsing behavior with the hope that we may preserve our selves against them.

## 1- The Holy Qur'an makes mention of these in many places and in many terms:

A- Mockery: Is ridiculing others thinking that we are better than they, forgetting that it is possible that they are above us in many things. And there is the possibility that the man we are ridiculing doesn't have a hand in his condition; it is just a divine examination like being a cripple, semi-blind, deaf and dumb. The Almighty Allah says: ***“Let not a people laugh at (another) people (to scorn) who happily may be better than they nor let women laugh at other women who happily may be better than these.”*** Holy Qur'an (49: 11)

B- Defamation: This is degrading someone with disorder, it is among the most active repellants. It is to see any disability in your brother and hurt him with it or ridicule him in front of others, which may hurt his feelings, whereas, Islam calls toward covering others disability. The Almighty Allah says: ***“and find not fault with each other.”*** Holy Qur'an (49: 11)

C- Giving Offensive Names: Is calling our brothers with names that hurt their feelings. Calling them with such names, means degrading their personality, whereas, Islam enjoins us to call our brothers with the most loveable names. The Almighty Allah says: ***“nor call one another by nick names.”*** Holy Qur'an (49: 11)

D- Suspicion: Is defining any movement of your brother with bad and suspicious definitions, which is the opposite of what prophetic narrations enjoin us to do. Do not look at the action of others but with good. The Almighty Allah says: ***“O you who believe! Avoid such suspicion, for verily suspicions (in) some (cases) is a sin.”*** Holy Qur'an (49: 12) The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) also says: “I warned you against suspicion, because suspicion is the most untruthful narration.”

E- Spying: As distrust directs you to suspicion, which is an internal action, likewise, it directs you to a physical action which is spying and looking for mistakes. Thus, spying is following the secret of a fellow believer. The Almighty Allah says: ***“And spy not.”*** Holy Qur'an (49:12)

F- Backbiting: Is talking behind your brother's back in order to discredit him or disagree his personality. If he is what you are saying it is backbiting, and if he isn't, it is fabrication. Backbiting is the act of a coward who cannot face people openly.

It is broader than the act of those who want to find others' disabilities, which is a source of degrading the personality of a believer. The Almighty Allah says: ***“And let not some of you backbite the others; What! Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?”*** Holy Qur'an (49: 12)

G- Calumny: Is transferring what we hear from one person to another in order to spoil their relationship; it is a bad habit.

Instead of doing something to strengthen the relationship between people, the person with this type of habit tries to create misunderstanding between them. Thus, the Almighty Allah says: ***“And yield you not unto any despicable swearer, defamer, going about with slander.”*** Holy Qur'an (68: 10-11) And it is also reported in a hadith that: “Whoever bring someone's sayings to you will take yours to others.

“ And the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: “Would that I tell you about the most evil person among you?’ They said: ‘O yes, O Messenger of Allah’, Then he said: ‘They are those who are calumnious, spoilers of relations between people.’”

H- Violating Sanctity: All the above mentioned repellants serve as a way of violating the sanctity of a believer, which was described - by prophetic narration - as superior than the sanctity of Ka'ba. With all these, some people are doing their best to destroy the dignity of a believer in order to downgrade his social position.

The Almighty Allah says: “*Verily those who love to spread scandal about those who believe, they shall have a grievous chastisement in this world and the hereafter.*” *Holy Qur'an (24: 19)* It is narrated that: “Do not move without modesty between you and your brother....preserve it, because not having it like doing away with shyness.

“ It is not virtue to hurt, disgrace, degrade and hurt a believer. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: “Whoever hurts a believer hurts me, and whoever hurts me hurts Allah.”

I- Among the factors that destroy brotherhood and friendship is: 'enmity', and 'hostility', 'abuse', which is more controversial than the others, to the extent that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: “Whoever abuses a man, his personality falls and his dignity is gone.” And 'malice', arguing', 'hearsay', which is among calumny, backbiting and degrading, 'mutual hatred', which breaks the bridge of relationship, are reported in a hadith that: “In mutual hatred, there is a shaver - not a shaver of hair - but the shaver of religion,” and lastly, double-facedness (hypocrisy).

Imam Ali (a.s.) said: “Whoever extends the limits in arguing is an offenders; whoever shortens it is an oppressed. There is no way an argument person can be virtuous.”

J- Counting shortcoming: It is an action of revealing evil and a preparation to topple others. It is closer to the action of intelligence agencies in order to find fault. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) said: “Whoever counts his fellow believer's bad actions in order to downgrade him and spoil his personality will find his abode in hell fire.” Some narrations regard it as betrayal.

K- Breakups: Sometimes a relationship between friends breaks up temporarily; this is a natural when any of us sticks to our own opinion. But, if the relationship reaches such a stage, it is not good to leave it to reach a stage of total or permanent breakup, because it is among the things that does away with the Islam of a Muslim and the belief of a believer.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: “If two Muslims break their relationship and stay for three days without mending their differences, they are out of Islam. There is no guardianship between them, and whoever starts to talk to the other fellow, will be the first to enter paradise on the day of judgement.”

It is mentioned in the law of morals that: “Do not become emotional, do not argue, do not press and do not aggravate your stand... stop an argument in order to refrain from it. The word 'you are not correct' is the shortest way of attracting enmity...accept your mistake when you make it...do not

criticize like the criticism of a desolate one, who breaks hearts and degrades spirits. This is the source of misery.”

Fourthly: What are the Practical Factors of a Sound and Attractive Personality?

The factors that might be mentioned here are many. What we mentioned earlier on the laws and manners of morals is not a mere slogan or advises that are hung from the sky, rather it is long human experience on social relations. Due to time limit, we will put forward some examples with the purpose of reasoning:



## **1- Hold onto your anger as you hold onto the mouth of a filled bottle:**

“Anas said: I was with the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) wearing a gown that had a thick end; the gown attracted a Bedouin, and he said:

'Oh Muhammad! Put something on these two camels from the wealth of Allah at your hand, because you are not conveying to me your wealth or your father's wealth.' The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) kept quite for sometime and then said: 'The wealth is Allah's and I am His servant.' Then, he continued: 'Oh Bedouin! Did your action against me guide you?' He said: 'No.' He said: 'Why?' He said: 'Because you are not repaying evil with evil.' Then, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) laughed, and ordered his companions to put barley on one camel and dates on the other.”

## **2- Receive your brother cordially...you will capture his heart:**

“Imam Hasan Askari (a.s.) said: One day two believers - a father and his son - came to Amirul Muminin (Imam Ali) (a.s.). He stood up and received them cordially, seated them by his side, then he ordered food for them. After they ate, a servant of Amirul- Muminin, called Qanbar, came with a washbowl, a wooden jug and handkerchief so they could wash their hands. Amirul Muminin (a.s.) took the wooden jug and washed the hands of the man, even though he (the man) was refraining, but Amirul Muminin insisted that he would wash his hands.

Then, Muhammad bin Hanafiyyah (Imam Ali's son) took the wooden jug from his hand. He said: Oh my son! If this son came to me alone without his father I would have washed his hands, but the Almighty Allah doesn't want to see a father and his son, in one place, being treated the same. But, since the father had poured water on the hands of a father, then a son should pour water on the hands of a son. Then, Muhammad bin Hanafiyyah poured water on the son's hands.”

### **3- A wise way of criticism opens a sealed secret in order to accept criticism:**

“One day Imams Hasan and Husain (a.s.) came across an old man who didn't know how to perform ablution. They started arguing saying to each other: 'You don't know how to perform ablution.’ Then, they moved closer to the old man and said: “Oh Old man! Be a judge between us, we will perform ablution and you should tell us whose ablution is right. They performed ablution and asked him which one is correct? Both of you are correct, except that this old ignorant man doesn't know how to perform ablution, but now he has learned it.”

#### **4- Felicity in opening an argument is an art that should be done well:**

One day a talk went on between Imam Hussein (a.s.) and his brother, Muhammad bin Hanafiyyah. Hanafiyyah wrote a letter to Imam Hussein (a.s.) in which he told: “O! My brother, indeed, my father and your father, Ali, did not prefer you to me nor preferred me to you, and regarding your mother, Fatimah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, if the earth full of gold was a property of my mother, it never met your mother's right, and if you read my letter, come on to me until you make me pleased; surely, you have more right in preference than me, and peace be upon you and Allah's Mercy and His Blessings.” Then, Imam Hussein (a.s.) did that and after that time, nothing happened between them.

## **5- The best method in the art of relations is the repayment of evil with good:**

“A man stopped Imam Ali bin Husain (a.s.) and abused him but, Imam Ali didn't say anything to him. After he left, the Imam said to his companions: 'Did you hear what that man said? I want you to follow me and witness my reply to him.' They agreed, then, he took his shoes and proceeded, saying: “And he who restrains (their) anger, and forgives (the faults of) men; for Allah loves those who do good (to others).” Holy Qur'an (3: 133) When they heard him saying so, they said: 'He will not say anything to him.

' They proceeded until they reached the house of the man. The Imam told them: 'Tell him it is Ali bin Husain.' The man came out in the mood of fighting thinking that the Imam came to repay what he did to him. The Imam said to him: 'Oh my brother! You stopped me and said such things to me. If I possessed what you said, I seek Allah's forgiveness for it, and if what you said does not pertain to me, then may Allah forgive you.' Hearing this, the man started kissing the face of the Imam and said: 'Rather I said things pertain to myself if not.’”

## **6- Do not differentiate yourself from others...be like one of them, it will attract love to you:**

“One day the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) was on a journey. He ordered that a sheep be slaughtered, then one man said: 'Oh Messenger of Allah! I will be in charge of slaughtering it', another one said: 'I will skin it,' and another said: 'I will cook it.' Then, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: 'I will bring wood for cooking it', they said: 'Oh Messenger of Allah! We are enough to do all these, (no need to suffer yourself).' He (s.a.w.) said: 'I know you will do it, but I hate to be different from you, because the Almighty Allah hates to see His servant differentiating himself from his companions. He stood up and brought the wood.’”

## **7- Be just to people give rights to the possessor of the right...raise people and be raised:**

“Sawadah bin Qais said to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) at the time of his sickness that: 'O! Messenger of Allah! When you come back from Ta'if, I welcomed you. While you were on your camel with a stick in your hand, and you wanted to bit your camel, it hit my stomach'. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) asked him to come forward and take revenge of the hit. He asked the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) to open his clothing at his stomach; he did so. Seeing this, Sawadah asked him, 'Do you permit me to kiss your stomach?

' The Prophet (s.a.w.) permitted him to do so, then, he (Sawadah) said: 'May Allah protect me from the fire of Hell,' by taking revenge on the Messenger of Allah: Then, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: 'O! Sawadah bin Qais! Will you forgive me or do you take revenge?' He said: 'No, I will forgive, O! Messenger of Allah', then, The Prophet said: 'O! My Lord! Forgive Sawadah bin Qais as he forgave Your Messenger, Muhammad!’”

### **8- I learned from life that abuse rotates its self:**

“The Leader of the Believers, Imam Ali (a.s.), heard a man abusing Qambar (his servant) and Qambar wanted to reply to him. Amirul- Muminin (a.s.) called him: 'Be patient, Oh, Qambar! Leave him who abused you, so as to please Allah and displease the devil and punish your enemy. I swear with He Who creates grains and the breeze, there is nothing from a believer that pleases the Lord like patience, and displeases the Devil like keeping quite and punishing a stupid person, like silence.”



## **9- The best trial, in the sight of Allah, is fulfilling the need of a believer:**

“One day a man came to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) and complained about his inability to pay his rent. Imam (a.s.) called Safwan al-Jammal (one of his companions) and said: 'Help your brother in fulfilling his needs. He stood, and went with the man to fulfill his need, then, Safwan came back to Imam Sadiq (a.s.). The Imam asked him what had he done with the need of the man, he said:

'Allah has fulfilled his need.' The Imam (a.s.) said: 'Fulfilling your brother's need is more sweeter to me than the circumambulation (tawaf) of Ka'aba for seven days.'“

*Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds*

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