

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

THE SUNNAH MANNER OF TALKING

O Allah (The Exalted) bless our master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and the family of our master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) whose Light is from the Light of Lights and who with a ray from his Secrets illuminated all Secrets.

We have to communicate with people on a daily basis by talking. It is harmful to talk when it is not necessary and to observe silence is better than talking when there is no need. If we contemplate on the way we talk with people, we will find that it goes against how the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would talk. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would not shout nor speak so quietly that the person could not hear. Let us learn about the etiquettes of talking so that we may follow the Sunnah and be respected in our communities.

Eye contact

When someone wanted to talk to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) he would turn towards him fully and face him directly.

Speak clearly

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) states that, *"When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) spoke it was very clear and every listening person could understand (what he said)."*ⁱ

Subhanallah! Some people talk in such a manner that it is either too fast or too quiet. Follow the Sunnah and speak so people can understand you.

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) stated that, *"When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would talk, he repeated it (that which he said) three times so that it could be understood."*ⁱⁱ *Subhanallah!*

We find that this is the way of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to face the person whilst talking, to speak clearly and if necessary to repeat it too.

Control the tongue

Uqba bin Aamir (may Allah be pleased with him) states that, I said: *"O Prophet of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) what is salvation? The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, "To save ones tongue from evil talk."*ⁱⁱⁱ

If we want salvation than we should not offend or break anyone's heart by saying things that could or will offend. We should think before we speak and not speak and then think what we have said as it could be too late scaring someone's heart for life.

The parts of the body plead

Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *"When one of you wakes up, the parts of the body plead to the tongue, 'Fear Allah (The Exalted) for our sake! We are attached to you, if you take care we will be saved and if you deviate then we will be punished'."*^{iv}

The body pleads not to say anything wrong otherwise the other parts of the body will be punished and not the tongue.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that, *"The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that 'He who protects his tongue and his genitals from sin, will enter Jannah.'"*^v

This has become a challenge in today's society, many are lost in the love of the world and involved with acts that are worthy of hell fire, may Allah (The Exalted) save us. If we follow this advice we are guaranteed paradise, remember paradise is surrounded with difficulties and hell fire is surrounded by desires.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates from the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) that, *"To speak good is charity (Sadaqah)."*^{vi} This could be performing Dhikr, guiding

someone or talking about the religion etc. how easy has it become to gain the reward of charity. Let us all make the effort to gain as much reward as possible and increase our bank balance for the hereafter.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“The one who listens to people’s talk while he does not like such actions will have molten lead poured into his ears on the day of resurrection.”*^{vii} *Allahu Akbar!*

Do not spy or false talk

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“Beware of suspicion (about others) as suspicion is the most false of talk. And do not spy upon each other and do not listen to the evil talk of the people regarding the affairs of others, and do not have enmity with one another. But be brothers.”*^{viii}

This evil is wide spread in every community today. If a Muslim (Allah forbid) opens a video shop or a pub people will say, ‘O he is trying to earn a living’, however, when someone does the work of deen (religion) many will oppose and start spreading slander. May Allah (The Exalted) guide us all in the straight path and strive to spread the deen for the sake of Allah (The Exalted). Many also say things that are not true to create friction between people. If someone comes to you with this type of talk then you should enquire about it before believing in it. Allah (The Exalted) mentions in the Qur’an:

“O believers! If any disobedient comes to you with any news make a strict enquiry lest you may hurt any people improperly then remain repenting on what you have done.”^{ix}

Another bad habit that is wide spread is to ask to many questions about others and things that do not concern us. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“From the excellence of a person’s Islam, is that he or she leaves what does not concern him (or her).”*¹

Say that which is good or remain silent

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that *“Anybody who believes in Allah (The Exalted) and the last day should not harm his neighbour. And anybody who believes in Allah (The Exalted) and the Last Day should entertain his guest generously and anybody who believes in Allah (The Exalted) and the last day should speak of that which is good or remain silent (i.e. abstain from all kinds of evil talk).”*^x

Malik bin Dinar (may Allah’s Mercy be upon him) states that, *‘When you feel hard hearted, tiredness and no blessing in your wealth then know that you have said something useless which is the reason.’*^{xi} He was a great Sufi and knew secrets from Allah (The Exalted) as was a friend of Allah (The Exalted) and close to Allah (The Exalted).

Useless talk is forbidden

Al Mughira bin Shuba (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“Allah (The Exalted) has forbidden for you, (1) to be undutiful to your mothers; (2) to bury your daughters alive; and (3) to beg. And Allah (The Exalted) hates for you (4) vain and useless talk, or that you talk too much about others, (5) to ask too many questions (in disputed religious matters) and; (6) to waste wealth (by extravagance).”*^{xii}

Allahu Akbar! Only if people took the sayings of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) seriously and we would not be in the state we are in today, but we would be very successful Muslims.

‘Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) would keep a piece of stone in his mouth so he does not get a chance to speak.^{xiii}

This was the state of our pious, they only talked when necessary and when necessary they would use sign language to communicate.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“To keep silent is better than sixty years of worship.”*^{xiv}

Look at this reward, keeping silent is not easy, however, the reward is great.

¹ Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah. It is a good hadith (hasan).

Talking nonsense & raising one's voice

Yahya (may Allah be pleased with him) related from Malik (may Allah's mercy be upon him) that he heard that 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) set aside an area near the mosque called al-Butayha and said, *"Whoever wishes to talk nonsense or recite (useless) poetry or raise his voice should go to that area."*^{xv}

Meaning that these people are not worthy when they do such things.

'Abd-Allah Ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *"A believer does not taunt, curse, abuse or talk indecently."*^{xvi}

Unfortunately we find in our homes, friend circles, and in our communities that people can't say anything without cursing someone, without abusing people, or swearing and talking rude. May Allah (The Exalted) save us from this, Ameen.

Remembering Allah (The Exalted)

Junaid Baghdadi's (may Allah's Mercy be upon him) tongue would stay moist in the remembrance of Allah (The Exalted). Once he went to a barber and the barber asked him to stop the dhikr for a moment so he can trim his moustache and he is not hurt. Junaid Baghdadi (may Allah's Mercy be upon him) replied, 'You do your job, if my lips are cut then they will, but I will not stop the dhikr of Allah (The Exalted).'^{xvii}

They did not leave a moment spare, but remembered Allah (The Exalted) at all times, may Allah (The Exalted) also give us the ability to perform much dhikr, Ameen.

Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) reports that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *"Those of you who will be dearest to me on the day of resurrection are those with the best character, and those of you who will be most hateful are those with character, those who talk much and are loud-mouthed and talkative (unnecessarily)."*^{xviii}

Allahu Akbar! If we fall into this category then change your habits today. Do dhikr, say well or remain silent.

Junaid Baghdadi (may Allah be pleased with him) was once given a bird as a gift; he accepted it and placed it in a cage. He kept it for some time but one day let it free, people asked, 'Why did you let it free?' He replied, 'The bird said to me, 'O Junaid! Shame, you get the satisfaction of visiting your friends but leave me far from mine and keep me locked!' I felt ashamed and let it free. Whilst it flew it said, 'When a bird or an animal is busy in the remembrance of Allah (The Exalted) it is free and if not then it is locked up. O Junaid! It was only one day that I didn't make the remembrance of Allah (The Exalted) and for this reason I was locked up. What will be the situation of those who do not remember Allah (The Exalted) often? O Junaid! I promise that I will never be in a state that I do not remember Allah (The Exalted).' The bird then flew away.'^{xix}

Subhanallah! We should make remembrance of Allah (The Exalted) and the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) often. This can be done by learning the supplications in this book or setting a fixed dhikr such as reciting Salawaat and Salaam 313 times a day. We should make a habit of reading the Qur'an and seeking knowledge and not wasting time standing on the streets, sitting with friends talking about useless things, or talking on the phone etc, etc.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *"No two shall exchange whispers in the presence of a third person."*^{xx}

We learn two things from this, firstly this is so that the third person does not get the feeling that he/she is being talked about. Secondly, whispers are usually secrets, so if a friend entrusted you with a secret, do not betray it. Do not tell it even to your best friend or closest relative.

The Art of listening

If a person starts telling you, whether you are alone or in the company of others, something that you already knew very well, you should pretend as if you do not know it. Do not rush to reveal your knowledge or to interfere with the speech. Instead, show your attention and concentration. The honourable Tabi'i Imam 'Ata ibn Abi Rabah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that, *"A young man would tell me something that I may have heard before he was born. Nevertheless, I listen to him as if I had never heard it before."* *Subhanallah!*

Answering a question

If a colleague was asked about something that you know, do not rush to answer. Instead, you should not say anything until you are asked. This is better manner and a nobler attitude. It generates interest in what you say, while enhancing your respect.

The honourable Tabi'i Mujahid ibn Jabr (may Allah be pleased with him) recalled that Luqman the Wise said to his son, *"If another person was asked a question, never hasten to give the answer, as if you are going to gain booty or win a precious prize. By doing so, you will belittle the questioner, will offend the questioned and will join obnoxious people with your stupidity and ill-manners."*

Talking on the phone

Keep the following basic manners in mind when making phone calls. Identify yourself by saying your full name unless you are calling someone very close to you. Do not engage in conversation or answer questions until you know who is calling. Choose the right time for your call, whether calling relatives, friends, employees or officials. Make your conversation brief and to the point, so it will not interfere with their business, or other calls they themselves have to make or receive.

Respected brother/sister in Islam! Every morning the parts of the body plead to the tongue to control itself. If you control your tongue then you will remain protected but if you do not control it, you will place yourself into difficulty. To say something good is better than to remain silent. To remain silent is better than to talk nonsense.

Manners of talking

1. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would speak slowly and clearly.
2. Do not talk nonsense.
3. Offer thought to what you are about to say prior to speaking.
4. Do not imitate another person the way they talk. ^{xxi} To mock them.
5. Look at the person you are talking to and making constant eye contact. ^{xxii}
6. Do not interrupt when someone is talking. ^{xxiii} This is very disrespectful and neglected too.
7. Do not shout when talking as people do today, it is against the Sunnah. ^{xxiv}
8. Smile facing the person whilst talking. ^{xxv}
9. Do not lie to anyone.
10. Do not swear or use abusive language whilst talking.
11. Do not put your fingers in your ears or nose or spit. ^{xxvi} These are bad habits especially whilst talking to someone.
12. Refrain from the evils of slander and backbiting.
13. It is not good to slap each others hand (giving fives) whilst talking. ^{xxvii} In the time of ignorance the non-believers would circumambulate whilst naked and whistling around the Ka'ba. ^{xxviii}
14. If there are three people then two of them should not talk in secret leaving the third as it may be that the person may think that he/she is being talked about.
15. Imam Shafi'i (may Allah's mercy be upon him) states that to talk less and sit with the pious increases wisdom. ^{xxix}
16. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would not turn his face away from anybody and if somebody wished to whisper something to him then he would take his ear close to the speaker and not remove it until the speaker had completed. ^{xxx}

17. When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) wished to call somebody whose name he did not know he would call out to him with the words: “*Ya Ibn ‘Abd Allah*” (O son of Allah’s (The Exalted) slave). ^{xxxi}
18. Refrain from using words of disrespect whether to youngsters or elders such as i.e. ‘Oy’, ‘Ai’, ‘Huh’, ‘What!’ etc.
19. Try to perform sign language as much as possible to avoid talking when not necessary, or at least use minimum amount of words.

Respected brother/sister in Islam! The mercy unto all the worlds did not leave any aspect of our lives untouched. We must know from interviews that one of the main things is body language and the importance of communication skills. Why should we then go elsewhere and adopt the teachings of others when one can learn everything from the teachings of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and become successful in this world and the hereafter?

O Allah (The Exalted)! Give us all the ability to talk in the Sunnah way and abstain from talking evil and when not necessary, Ameen.

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- ⁱ Abu Dawood
 - ⁱⁱ Bukhari
 - ⁱⁱⁱ Tirmidhi
 - ^{iv} ibid
 - ^v ibid
 - ^{vi} Bukhari & Muslim
 - ^{vii} Bukhari
 - ^{viii} ibid
 - ^{ix} Surah Hujurat, Surah No: 49, Verse: 6
 - ^x ibid
 - ^{xi} Faizane Sunnat
 - ^{xii} Bukhari
 - ^{xiii} Kimiyae Sa’adat
 - ^{xiv} Bayhaqi
 - ^{xv} Al-Muwwata
 - ^{xvi} Tirmidhi
 - ^{xvii} Aneesul Wazieen
 - ^{xviii} Tirmidhi & Abu Dawood
 - ^{xix} Nuzhatul Majalis
 - ^{xx} Abu Dawud in Adab
 - ^{xxi} Faizane Sunnat
 - ^{xxii} ibid p. 680
 - ^{xxiii} ibid
 - ^{xxiv} ibid
 - ^{xxv} ibid
 - ^{xxvi} ibid
 - ^{xxvii} ibid p. 681
 - ^{xxviii} Khazainul Irfan
 - ^{xxix} Ihya by Al-Ghazali
 - ^{xxx} Nisai
 - ^{xxxi} Ibn Sunni