

MADRASAH
URWAH
BIN AZ ZUBAYR

CULTIVATING ADAB, THE NEED OF THE HOUR



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بسم الله والحمد لله، والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله، وبعد:

Aḥādīth on Adab

عَلَّمَنِي رَبِّي فَأَحْسَنَ تَعْلِيمِي، وَأَدَّبَنِي رَبِّي فَأَحْسَنَ تَأْدِيبِي

“My Rabb has taught me ‘ilm, and He granted me the Best of ‘ilm. My Rabb has taught me adab, and He granted me the best of adab.”

This is a ḥadīth of Rasūl Allāh ﷺ. Despite its isnād being weak, its meaning is sound, and we can derive important lessons from it. (Al-Maqāṣid Al-Ḥasanah)

Its meaning is strengthened by a ḥadīth reported in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī narrated by Sayyidunā Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه، wherein Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

إنما أنا قاسم والله يعطي

I am only a distributor; the Giver is Allāh ﷻ. (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī)

The connection between the two elements mentioned in this narration is profound. It teaches us that without ādāb, one cannot attain the true ‘ilm of Nubuwwah.

عن شداد بن أوس عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: «إن الله كتب الإحسان على كل شيء فإذا قتلتم فأحسنوا القتلة وإذا ذبحتم فأحسنوا الذبح وليحد أحدكم شفرته فليرح ذبيحته».

Sayyidunā Shaddād ibn Aws رضي الله عنه reported: Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Verily, Allāh has prescribed excellence in everything. If you must kill, kill in the best manner. If you must slaughter, slaughter in the best manner. Let one of you sharpen his knife, so his animal is spared of suffering.” (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim)

The word *iḥsān* in the above narration carries the implication of goodness, kindness, adab and respect. This adab is necessary in all aspects of our lives.

‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ and the Khawārij

Concerning iḥsān towards animals, it is narrated that the leader of the Khawārij sect once sent a series of questions to Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ with the intent of causing fitnah. One of these questions was regarding the treatment of a prisoner of war: "What are the teachings of Rasūlullāh ﷺ concerning a captive? Will it be permissible to shoot or stab a captive?"

Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ addressed all their questions to prevent further fitnah and provided authoritative responses. He responded, "Is your question about a human being or a chicken? Rasūlullāh ﷺ prohibited us from shooting a captured animal. How much more serious would it be to harm a captured human being?"

Adab is the Foundation of Islamic Etiquette

A fundamental yet often overlooked aspect of our Dīn is adab. While Muslims focus on fulfilling obligations like Ṣalāh and Zakāh upon reaching maturity, our Asātidhah emphasized the importance of adab even before this stage. Without early cultivation, acquiring adab later in life becomes extremely challenging. Therefore, its nurturing should begin at home, even before formal ta‘līm. Historical accounts reveal that Imām Aḥmad Raḥimahullāh’s gatherings attracted over five thousand attendees, yet only 500 sought academic knowledge, while the remaining 4500 attended solely to observe and learn adab, highlighting its immense significance in the scholarly tradition.

The senior Ṣaḥābah respected Rasūlullāh ﷺ so much that they refrained from directly asking him questions and waited for Bedouins to inquire on their behalf. Some questions remained unasked for up to a year due to their deep sense of adab. While both ‘ilm and adab are essential, adab holds greater importance, as knowledge without it is meaningless. True understanding is reflected not just in intellect, but in humility, respect, and refined character.

Definitions of Adab

(Most of these definitions are derived from the works of the great Muḥaddith of Shām, Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah حفظه الله)

1. That talent and skill that preserves, protects and safeguards from taint, tarnish, stigma and all blemishes.

2. The word adab is said to be derived from مَدَبَة. (A ma’dubah is a walimah, a banquet, a big feast.)

It is explained that just as one is inclined towards, and appreciates, partaking in a feast, people and society gravitate toward and appreciate a person who has adab. This is evidently the case with Rasūlullāh ﷺ. As the possessor of the best adab, Allāh ﷻ endeared the hearts of all towards him.

Allāh ﷻ says:

﴿فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ﴾

It is through mercy from Allāh that you are gentle to them. Had you been rough and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you.

(Qur’an 3:159)

3. Another definition of adab is:

استعمال ما يحمد قولاً وفعلًا

To utilise anything that is praiseworthy, be it statements or actions

Our present-day attitude of: ‘I’ll say it the way it is! I’ll call a spade a spade’ runs contrary to the spirit of adab outlined here. A Muslim does not just say whatever he wants to in a crude manner. A Muslim is obliged to speak in the best of ways. This is the way of Rasūlullāh ﷺ who always addressed issues, or even, if need be, reprimanded, *in the best of ways*.

If a person with knowledge errs, we should consider an approach of remaining silent, not because of the personality, but out of respect for knowledge. We do not have to simply say everything that comes to mind, even if a grievance is justified. And if the basis of our grievances is not justified, then our impetuous speaking out becomes a more serious matter.

4. Adab is also described as:

الأخذ بمكارم الأخلاق

Adopting the highest form of character

Adab entails not being content with the minimum level of perceived goodness one possesses. Instead, one should always be aspiring for what is higher. Take, for example, a teacher saying, 'I never shout at my students. I have a lot of adab.' With the approach to adab encompassed by this definition, the teacher will consider this good quality as insufficient and would aspire towards higher levels of excellence of character. The highest pedestal and benchmark are the akhlāq of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: «إنما بعثت لأتمم مكارم الأخلاق».
Sayyidunā Abū Hurairah ؓ reported: Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "Verily, I have only been sent to perfect righteous character." (Sunan Al-Bayhaqī)

In this quest for excellence of character, a person should constantly introspect: *Did I say it correctly? Did I do it correctly? Did I interact in the most correct way?*

5. Another beautiful perspective on adab is found in the definition:

الوقوف مع المستحسنات والإعراض عن المسيئات

Exhibiting a keenness for all that is good and turning away from that which is offensive

At present, we face significant shortcomings in this regard. Many are engrossed in gossip and scandal, even within Islamic circles, when we should be disavowing such talk entirely.

At Mufti Ebrahim Desai Raḥimahullāh's last Iftā graduation our Ustādh, Hazrat Mawlānā Sulaimān Choksi حفظه الله, cited the example of how the pious predecessors, the Tābi'ūn and Tābi' al-Tābi'īn, resolutely avoided involvement in fitan. Their aversion to controversy was so profound that when the head of Sayyidunā Ḥusayn ؓ was brought before them after his tragic execution, they controlled their tongues and refrained from speaking. This exemplifies the extent of their commitment to disavowing controversy and upholding adab.

It is crucial to understand that silence regarding a matter does not necessarily indicate approval. Ignoring certain fitan can sometimes be more effective in their eradication and contribute to a healthier society.

6. We can also look at adab as:

تعظيم مَنْ هو فوقك، والرفق بِمَنْ هو دونك

Honouring those who are higher than you and showing kindness to those below you

Those deserving of honor include our teachers, Shuyūkh, and individuals serving the Dīn through Da‘wah and khanqahs. Similarly, kindness should be extended to everyone, including the general people.

In teaching Sayyidunā Mūsā عليه السلام how to address the tyrant, Fir‘awn, Allāh ﷻ says:

﴿قُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى﴾

So, speak to him in soft words. It may be, he accepts the advice or fears (Allāh). (Qur’an 20:44)

We must understand that our status is not superior to that of Sayyidunā Mūsā, nor are those we address worse than Fir‘awn. Our audience may have more of the good qualities they are being exhorted to than we possess ourselves. The only distinction is that as ‘Ulama, we would be speaking on these matters from a position of knowledge with kindness.

7. One of the literal meanings of the word **adab (أدب)** is **‘to gather.’** ‘Ulamā’ have written that adab is a quality that cannot be limited to one aspect of life, excluding others. Adab should be ‘gathered’ comprehensively and must be reflected in spiritual, personal, marital, social, academic, and financial matters.

We observe that even acts of worship in Islam are characterized by a profound sense of adab. In the case of Ṣalāh, the prerequisites of ṭahārah and wuḍū’ stem from adab, as does the necessity of covering the ‘awrah.

The opening āyāt of Sūrah al-Muddaththir, among the earliest revelations to Rasūlullāh ﷺ, establish adab as fundamental to ‘ibādah and necessary for the correct practice of Dīn.

Adab begins from a young age

Allāh Ta‘ālā says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٦﴾

O you who believe, save yourselves and your families from a fire, the fuel of which is human beings and stones, appointed on which are angels, stern and severe, who do not disobey Allāh in what He orders them, and do whatever they are ordered to do. (Qur'an 66:6)

In the tafsīr of this āyah, Sayyidunā ‘Alī عليه السلام, Mujāhid Raḥimahullāh, and many other Mufasssirūn emphasize that teaching adab is the key to safeguarding our families from the Fire of Hell. Since eradicating deeply ingrained bad habits later in life is challenging, instilling adab and praiseworthy traits in childhood is essential for the spiritual success of future generations.

Mawlānā Shabbir Saloojee حفظه الله would often recall the words of Mawlānā Muḥammad Yaḥyā Raḥimahullāh, the father of Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā Raḥimahullāh, as he advised his son upon reaching maturity: “You can now proceed. If you make the right choices, then my efforts were successful. If you make the wrong choices, then my efforts were in vain. At this point, it is beyond my power to intervene.” His achievements are a testament to the success of his parents.

I would like to underscore that when it comes to adab, the contention that children “are still young” should not be allowed to feature.

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال: أخذ الحسن بن علي رضي الله عنهما ثمرة من تمر الصدقة فجعلها في الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: «كُحْ كُحْ اِزْمِ بها، أما علمت أننا لا نأكل الصدقة؟!». وفي فيه، فقال رسول رواية: «أنا لا نأكل لنا الصدقة؟!».

Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه reported: Al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī (when he was a child) took one of the dates of charity and put it in his mouth, whereupon the Messenger of ﷺ said: "Kikh, kikh! Throw it! Don't you know that we do not eat from charity?!" In another narration: "Don't you know that charity is not permissible for us?!" (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim)

My Ustādh, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Sulaimān Choksi حفظه الله, explained that despite Sayyidunā Ḥasan’s عليه السلام tender age, Rasūlullāh ﷺ did not overlook his mistake. He did not excuse it due to his hunger but instead physically removed the date from his mouth to instil adab and highlight the prohibition of the Ahl al-Bayt consuming charity.

In another Ḥadīth, Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

“Hang your whip where the members of the household can see it, for it will be a means of adab for them.” (al-Ṭabarānī)

Today, our primary focus for our children is on ta‘līm (education), often at the expense of adab. They are warned of punishment for poor academic performance in school or maktab, with success measured by their educational achievements. However, we see here that discipline was traditionally emphasized foremost to instill adab.

We learn in another Ḥadīth of the great reward promised for instilling adab:

عن أبي موسى الأشعري رضي الله عنه مرفوعاً: «ثلاثة لهم أجران: رجلٌ من أهل الكتاب آمنَ بِنبيِّه، وآمنَ بمحمد، والعبدُ المملوك إذا أدَّى حقَّ الله، وحقَّ مَوالِيه، ورجل كانت له أمة فأدَّبها فأحسن تَأديبها، وَعَلَّمَهَا فأحسن تَعْلِيمَهَا، ثم أَعْتَقَهَا فتزوجها؛ فله أجران».

Sayyidunā Abu Mūsā al-Ash‘ari reported that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "Three types of people will receive a double reward: a man from the People of the Book who believed in his Prophet and then believed in Muhammad ﷺ, a slave who fulfilled his duties towards Allāh and towards his masters, and a man who had a female slave and he taught her good adab, educated her well, then freed her and married her; he will receive a double reward." (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī)

Adab is emphasized in Islam not only for fellow human beings, but it is also valued when it comes to animals.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ had said:

“Any action which is void of the remembrance of Allāh is futile, except for four actions: Walking from target to target, i.e. during archery practice; training (instilling adab) in a horse; playing with one’s family; and learning to swim.”

(Sunan an-Nasa’ī and al-Ṭabarānī)

The purpose of the adab mentioned here also relates to jihad. The horse should be trained to do the right thing, and to conduct itself appropriately. Whatever we do, it should be done with respect.

Hazrat Mawlānā Maseehullah Khan Raḥimahullāh would mention that adab is necessary even when entering a car. The car should be mounted with the right foot first. Likewise, when washing our hands generally, the right hand should be washed first as is done in wudhu.

The Ambiyā' and Adab

Several ayāt of the Qur'ān illustrate the exemplary adab of the Ambiyā' when conversing with Allāh ﷻ.

Sayyidunā 'Īsā عليه السلام

On the Day of Qiyāmah, Allāh ﷻ will ask Sayyidunā 'Īsā عليه السلام:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ أَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّي آلِهَتَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ﴾

"O 'Īsā, Son of Maryam, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as deities besides Allāh?'" (Qur'ān 5:116)

Despite the gravity of this question, Sayyidunā 'Īsā عليه السلام will not immediately deny any wrongdoing. Instead, he will first glorify Allāh ﷻ, demonstrating profound adab:

﴿قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقِّ إِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ﴾

"He will say, 'Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen.'" (Qur'ān 5:116)

The 'Ulamā' highlight that this response is filled with adab, as Sayyidunā 'Īsā عليه السلام first exalts Allāh ﷻ before addressing the question.

Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام

Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, when proclaiming the greatness of Allāh ﷻ before King Nimrūd, stated:

﴿الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ﴾

"He is the One Who created me, and He alone guides me. He is the One Who provides me with food and drink." (Qur'ān 26:78-79)

Here, Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, attributes his creation, guidance, and sustenance entirely to Allāh ﷻ. However, when referring to sickness, he employs a different expression:

﴿وَإِذَا مَرَضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ﴾

"And when I become sick, He heals me." (Qur'ān 26:80)

Even though Allāh ﷻ controls all matters, Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, out of adab, ascribes sickness to himself rather than to Allāh ﷻ. This linguistic nuance reflects reverence and is deeply rooted in Islamic 'Aqīdah. Scholars emphasize that inappropriate attributions to Allāh ﷻ must be avoided and deliberately violating this principle could endanger a person's Īmān.

Imām Mālik Raḥimahullāh highlights the importance of adab, asserting that one deprived of adab is ultimately deprived of his Dīn and that negligence of adab leads to the abandonment of Mustahabbāt, Nawāfil, Sunan, Wājibāt, and eventually Farā'id. A deterioration in 'Aqā'id follows, culminating in the loss of one's entire faith. The preservation of adab, therefore, is fundamental to safeguarding one's Dīn.

Sayyidunā Khiḍr عليه السلام

Sayyidunā Khiḍr عليه السلام imparts profound lessons to Sayyidunā Mūsā عليه السلام in Sūrah al-Kahf, demonstrating refined adab by not attributing his actions directly to Waḥī. Instead, he states:

﴿وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي﴾

“And I never did it of my own accord.” (Qur’ān 18:82)

When Sayyidunā Khiḍr عليه السلام damaged a ship, he ascribed the act to himself:

﴿فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا﴾

“So, I intended to damage it.” (Qur’ān 18:79)

However, when raising the wall to secure the wealth of orphans, he attributed the action to Allāh جل جلاله:

﴿فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا﴾

“So, your Lord willed that they should reach maturity and extract their treasure, as a mercy from your Lord.” (Qur’ān 18:82)

Sayyidunā Ayūb عليه السلام

Sayyidunā Ayūb عليه السلام, after enduring immense trials - including the loss of wealth, health, and social rejection - called upon Allāh جل جلاله with profound adab:

﴿وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ﴾

“And remember when Ayūb cried out to his Lord, 'I have been touched with adversity, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful.'” (Qur’ān 21:83)

Despite his suffering, Sayyidunā Ayūb عليه السلام does not explicitly request relief but instead expresses his hardship with humility and submission. Mufasssirrūn emphasize this as the adab of a Nabī, ensuring his supplication reflects trust in Allāh's wisdom without implying discontent with His decree.

A Great Virtue of Adab

عن عبد الله بن عباس أن نبي الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: «إن الهدى الصالح والسمت الصالح والاقتصاد جزء من خمسة وعشرين جزءًا من النبوة

Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ reported: Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “A correct way that you lead your life, a beautiful appearance [through adab], and moderation are among the twenty-five parts of nubuwwah.” (Sunan Abī Dāwūd)

This Ḥadīth highlights the profound significance of adab. The ‘Ulamā’ state that possessing good adab elevates a person among his people, just as the Ambiyā’ were honoured among theirs.

Moderation, as emphasized in this Ḥadīth, reflects adab. In Sunan al-Nasā’ī, it is narrated that Sayyidunā ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir ؓ once led a brief Ṣalāh. When questioned, he clarified that he had performed all Rukū’ and Sujūd properly and recalled a du‘ā’ taught to him by Rasūlullāh ﷺ during that very Ṣalāh.

اللَّهُمَّ بِعِلْمِكَ الْغَيْبِ وَقُدْرَتِكَ عَلَى الْخَلْقِ أَحْيِيْنِي مَا عَلِمْتَ الْحَيَاةَ خَيْرًا لِي وَتَوَفَّنِي إِذَا عَلِمْتَ الْوَفَاةَ خَيْرًا لِي وَأَسْأَلُكَ خَشْيَتَكَ فِي الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ وَكَلِمَةَ الْإِخْلَاصِ فِي الرِّضَا وَالْغَضَبِ وَأَسْأَلُكَ نَعِيمًا لَا يَنْفَدُ وَقُرَّةَ عَيْنٍ لَا تَنْقُطُ وَأَسْأَلُكَ الرِّضَاءَ بِالْقَضَاءِ وَبَرْدَ الْعَيْشِ بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ وَلَذَّةَ النَّظَرِ إِلَى وَجْهِكَ وَالشَّوْقَ إِلَى لِقَائِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ ضَرَاءٍ مُضِرٍّ وَفِتْنَةٍ مُضِلَّةٍ اللَّهُمَّ زَيِّنَا بِزِينَةِ الْإِيمَانِ وَاجْعَلْنَا هِدَاةً مُهْتَدِينَ

O Allāh, by Your knowledge of the unseen and Your power over creation, keep me alive so long as You know that living is good for me and cause me to die when You know that death is better for me. O Allāh, cause me to fear You in secret and in public. I ask You to make me true in speech in times of pleasure and of anger. I ask You to make me moderate in times of wealth and poverty. And I ask You for everlasting delight and joy that will never cease. I ask You to make me pleased with that which You have decreed and for an easy life after death. I ask You for the sweetness of looking upon Your face and a longing to meet You in a manner that does not entail a calamity that will bring about harm or a trial that will cause deviation. O Allāh, beautify us with the adornment of faith and make us among those who guide and are rightly guided.

In this dua, which we should all learn, Rasūlullāh ﷺ teaches us to beseech Allāh ﷻ for the quality of moderation. Whether a person is rich or poor, there should be moderation in expenditure. This is a part of intelligence as well.

The Adab of the Ṣaḥābah

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢﴾

O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak loudly to him as you speak loudly to one another, lest your deeds be nullified while you are unaware. (Qur'an 49:2)

It is narrated regarding the context of the revelation of this āyah of Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt that the Ṣaḥābī, Sayyidunā Thābit ibn Qays ؓ feared becoming the subject of the Divine censure mentioned in this verse due to his naturally occurring loud voice, that he immediately kept a distance, or stayed away altogether from the gatherings of Rasūlullāh ؐ.

Imām al-Bukhārī recorded that Sayyidunā Anas bin Mālīk ؓ said, “Rasūlullāh ؐ missed Thābit ibn Qays ؓ and a man said, ‘O Allāh’s Messenger! I will find out about his news.’ That man went to Thābit and found him sitting at home with his head lowered and asked him, ‘What is the matter?’ Thabit said, ‘An evil matter!’ And he said that he used to raise his voice above the voice of Rasūlullāh ؐ. He feared that his virtuous deeds would be useless, and he would be among the people of the Fire. The man went back to the Rasūlullāh ؐ and conveyed Thabit’s statement and returned to Thabit with a wonderfully good news. The Rasūl of Allāh ؐ said:

“Go back to him and tell him this news; you are not among the people of the Fire. Rather, you are among the dwellers of Paradise.”

Due to his deep sensitivity toward the commands of Allāh ؐ and profound respect for Rasūlullāh ؐ, Sayyidunā Thābit ibn Qays ؓ was honoured with the glad tidings of Jannah, conveyed directly from the blessed tongue of Rasūlullāh ؐ.

During the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah, ‘Urwa ibn Mas‘ūd served as the Quraysh’s envoy to Rasūlullāh ؐ, though he had not yet embraced Islām. Upon his return, he conveyed a remarkable account of the adab he witnessed among the Ṣaḥābah. Their deep reverence and unwavering devotion to Rasūlullāh ؐ left a lasting impression:

أَيُّ قَوْمٍ، وَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ وَفَدْتُ عَلَى الْمُلُوكِ، وَوَفَدْتُ عَلَى قَيْصَرَ وَكَسْرَى وَالنَّجَاشِيِّ وَاللَّهِ إِنْ رَأَيْتُ مَلِكًا قَطُّ، يُعَظَّمُهُ أَصْحَابُهُ مَا يُعَظَّمُ أَصْحَابُ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مُحَمَّدًا، وَاللَّهِ إِنْ تَنَحَّمْ نُحَامَةً إِلَّا وَقَعَتْ فِي كَفِّ رَجُلٍ مِنْهُمْ، فَذَلِكَ بِهَا وَجْهَهُ وَجِلْدُهُ، وَإِذَا أَمَرَهُمْ ابْتَدَرُوا أَمْرَهُ وَإِذَا تَوَضَّأَ كَادُوا يَقْتَتِلُونَ عَلَى وَضُوئِهِ، وَإِذَا تَكَلَّمْ خَفَضُوا أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَهُ، وَمَا يَحْدُونُ إِلَيْهِ النَّظَرُ تَعْظِيمًا لَهُ.

"O people! By Allāh, I have been to the kings and to Caesar, Khosrau and An-Najashi, yet I have never seen any of them respected by his courtiers as much as the Companions of Muḥammad respect him. By Allāh, if he spat, the spittle would fall in the hand of one of them (i.e. the Prophet's companions) who would rub it on his face and skin; if he ordered them, they would carry out his order immediately; if he performed ablution, they would struggle to take the remaining water; and when they spoke, they would lower their voices and would not look at his face constantly out of respect." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī)

A narration in *Musnad Aḥmad* recounts an incident involving Sayyidunā ‘Abbās ؓ, the uncle of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and Sayyidunā ‘Umar ؓ. Sayyidunā ‘Abbās ؓ had a gutter extending over a pathway frequently used by Sayyidunā ‘Umar ؓ on his way to Masjid Nabawī.

One Friday, after Sayyidunā ‘Abbās ؓ slaughtered two chicks, their blood flowed through the gutter and splashed onto Sayyidunā ‘Umar ؓ as he passed by in his Jumu‘ah attire. Upset, he ordered the gutter’s removal, returned home to change, and then proceeded to lead the Jumu‘ah prayer.

Later, Sayyidunā ‘Abbās ؓ approached Sayyidunā ‘Umar ؓ and reminded him that Rasūlullāh ﷺ had personally placed the gutter in its position. Realizing his error, Sayyidunā ‘Umar ؓ immediately insisted that Sayyidunā ‘Abbās ؓ stand on his back to reinstall the gutter. He then lifted him onto his shoulders, ensuring it was restored to its original place, thus honouring the decision of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

In another narration relating to the adab of the Ṣaḥābah, we find a questioner asking Sayyidunā Salmān ؓ deridingly about the etiquettes of using the toilet which Rasūlullāh ﷺ had taught this Ummah:

عن عبد الرحمن بن يزيد قال: قيل لسلمان: قد علمكم نبيكم صلى الله عليه وسلم كل شيء حتى الخراءة! فقال سلمان: أجل نهانا أن نستقبل القبلة بغائط أو بول وأن نستنجى باليمين أو أن يستنجى أحدنا بأقل من ثلاثة أحجار أو أن نستنجى برجيع أو بعظم.

‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin Yazīd said: "It was said to Sayyidunā Salmān ؓ, 'Your Prophet ﷺ taught you about everything, even defecating?' So, Salmān ؓ said, 'Yes. He prohibited us from facing the Qiblah when defecating and urinating, performing istinjā' with the right hand, using less than three stones for istinjā', and using dung or bones for istinjā'" (Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī)

Rather than being apologetic, Sayyidunā Salmān ؓ proudly expounded on these ādāb, expressing honour in adhering to a disciplined way of life. These glimpses into the adab of the Ṣaḥābah stand in stark contrast to today's culture, where the erosion of adab is widespread. Parents openly instil attitudes of retaliation, teaching their children, *"If someone strikes you once, strike them twice!"*—a mindset entirely opposed to the essence of adab.

Instead, parents must nurture their children with the akhlāq of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, teaching them patience and forbearance. If someone swears at them, they should respond with a smile; if someone harms them, they should embody ṣabr. Strength is not merely about dominance—it is also about restraint, dignity, and the ability to endure with grace.

We learn in a Ḥadīth:

عن أبي هريرة أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: «ليس الشديد بالصرعة إنما الشديد الذي يملك نفسه عند الغضب».

"The strong man is not the good wrestler; but the strong man is he who controls himself when he is angry." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim)

We must instil in our children the true essence of strength – one that fortifies them in Dīn while also fostering physical resilience. However, strength should not be mistaken for suspicion and hostility. Too often, we wrongfully caution our children with statements like, *"Don't be too innocent,"* or *"Avoid eating there; people are jealous of you."* Such sentiments, if consistently fed to young minds, cultivate a culture of fitnah and discord as they grow.

Instead, we must prioritize teaching our children the correct akhlāq, nurturing kindness, patience, and upright character. If every parent instils these values, society will develop an environment of harmony, and many conflicts and misunderstandings will naturally be avoided.

The Adab of Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ

‘Abdullāh al-Ḥawzānī narrates that he met Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ in the Syrian town of Ḥalab and inquired about how Rasūlullāh ﷺ sustained himself. Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ replied:

"From the day I attached myself to him, he entrusted me with all his personal affairs. Whenever a needy person came seeking help, he would direct me to assist him. I would borrow money to provide food and clothing."

One day, a mushrik offered Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ financial support, allowing him to borrow money as needed. However, when Bilāl accrued a significant debt, the creditor confronted him aggressively in public, calling him derogatory names and threatening to enslave him if he failed to repay the loan within four days.

Distressed, Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ performed Wuḍū’ and called out the Adhān. Later that night, after ‘Ishā’, he sought permission to meet Rasūlullāh ﷺ and shared his predicament. Rasūlullāh ﷺ remained silent, awaiting divine guidance, leaving Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ without an immediate resolution. Overcome with anxiety, Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ considered fleeing Madīnah Munawwarah to escape his fate.

Just as he was about to leave, he heard someone calling his name. It was a messenger from Rasūlullāh ﷺ, summoning him. Upon arrival, Rasūlullāh ﷺ informed him that a large gift had been received overnight, which would be used to settle his debt.

This incident exemplifies the deep adab of Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ. When receiving the good news, instead of focusing on his own relief, his first words were: *"All praise to Allāh ﷻ who took care of the situation of His Rasūl"*.

Even when initially presenting his dilemma, Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ demonstrated immense adab. Despite incurring the debt in his capacity as the treasurer of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, he did not attribute the burden to him. Instead, he humbly stated, *"I find myself in a situation,"* seeking Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ counsel rather than shifting responsibility.

Furthermore, even when no immediate solution was provided, Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ remained patient, never expressing frustration or resentment. He bore the difficulty with dignity and unwavering respect for Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

This incident serves as a profound lesson in adab, illustrating the reverence, patience, and humility that we should all aspire to emulate.

The Adab of the Muḥaddithīn

Imām Abū Dāwūd Raḥimahullāh, in his compilation of Aḥādīth, would sometimes omit certain words from a narration purely out of adab and ḥayā. While the same narration may appear in other Ḥadīth collections in its complete form, he would refrain from mentioning specific words directly, instead alluding to them out of reverence.

One such example is a narration concerning Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا. It is known that women should not visit cemeteries unnecessarily, and there are related rulings on this matter. Imām Abū Dāwūd Raḥimahullāh records in his *Sunan* that Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا was returning from a funeral. At that time, the prohibition on visiting graves had not yet been lifted. Rasūlullāh ﷺ informed her that if she had indeed come from the cemetery, she would not have smelt the fragrance of Jannah **until...**

Here, instead of quoting the exact words of warning, Imām Abū Dāwūd Raḥimahullāh respectfully states: "ثم ذكر وعيدًا" ("Then, he mentioned a stern warning"). The complete wording of the narration is available in other Ḥadīth collections, yet he chose not to reproduce it verbatim out of adab for Sayyidah Fāṭimah.

This approach raises an important scholarly discussion - how could a Muḥaddith omit words from a Ḥadīth? However, as the 'Ulamā' explain, Imām Abū Dāwūd Raḥimahullāh was not *concealing* these words, as they remain documented in other authoritative works. Rather, he personally refrained from including them in his own collection out of immense reverence. His decision reflects the deep adab that the Muḥaddithūn exercised when narrating the words of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and speaking about the noble household.

The Adab of the Pious

My Ustādh, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā ‘Ala’uddīn Raḥimahullāh, narrated the following incident:

A devoted student was always eager to serve his Ustādh and ensured warm water was prepared for him each night. One evening, when the usual means for heating water was unavailable, he went searching and noticed a fire in the distance—traditionally lit by prostitutes to signal their presence.

Unaware of its implications, his sole focus remained on obtaining warm water for his teacher.

Approaching the fire, he requested hot water from a woman. Misinterpreting his request in its metaphorical Arabic sense, she assumed he sought illicit relations and replied, “*You need the eye,*” implying that approval was required. Taking her words literally and believing that his physical eye was the price for water, the student began gouging it out.

Shocked by his sincerity, the woman realized his genuine intention, stopped him, and provided the water while tending to his injury. This encounter became a means of her repentance.

Upon returning, his Ustādh noticed the bandage and inquired about it. The student responded, “*The eye has come,*” an expression indicating injury. The Ustādh replied, “*If the eye has come, it has come.*” By the will of Allāh ﷻ, the student’s eye was miraculously healed.

I have deliberately narrated this last—after examples from the Qur’ān, Aḥādīth, and the lives of the Ambiyā and Ṣaḥābah—because today, out of a lack of adab, we hastily dismiss or object to the accounts of the pious.

Without adab, there is no barakah in ‘ilm. While knowledge is abundant, the essence of adab is often missing. With adab comes humility, the wisdom to remain silent when necessary, and the ability to embody true scholarship.

As ‘Ulamā’, we must consciously study and implement adab in our lives.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us the tawfīq to cultivate good akhlāq and ādāb, and protect us from all fitan, both apparent and concealed. *Āmīn.*

وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى أَشْرَفِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ
وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ



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