

LETTER EIGHTEEN
CONCERNING TEN SIGNS OF GOOD ETIQUETTE

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear honorable and respected Mahmūd Ghaznavī:

Assalāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

This *faqīr* is well and wishes the same for you. Abdul Karīm of Samarqand has brought all of us to see Bukhārā. Both of you have met before in Karachi, and he speaks of you fondly.

Good etiquette is the way to attain honor in this life and happiness in the next. It is related from our beloved Prophet ﷺ that the believer with the best character and etiquette is one with the most perfect faith. Remember that good etiquette is the best blessing after having accepted Islam. The elders [*mashā'ikh*] have mentioned ten signs of good etiquette:

- (1) Meeting people with a cheerful attitude
- (2) Empathizing with others
- (3) Helping those in dire need
- (4) Not obstructing people's good actions and intentions
- (5) Not speaking ill of people nor picking out and spreading faults of people
- (6) Noting one's own faults and others' good characteristics
- (7) Treating kindly those who wrong you

- (8) Accepting the apology of someone who has wronged you
- (9) Choosing moderation in everything
- (10) Staying away from worthless pursuits

The gist of the above is to neither cause harm to others nor to cause them pain. Remember that there is no return once milk has spoiled, nor can a jewel be put back together once broken.

Hadrat Junayd al-Baghdādī ؒ used to say that he preferred the company of a wrongdoer who had good etiquette over a scholar [*ʿalim*] who had bad etiquette. This is why I say that neither the Creator nor His creation is pleased with someone who has bad etiquette. The seeker [*sālik*] who considers spiritual training [*tasawwuf*] to be complete simply with the completion of his litany is ignorant; both the remembrance [*dhikr*] of his heart and the *dhikr* of his tongue are faulty. His outward appearance may coincide with the testimony of faith, but internally he has nothing but darkness. One with a bad attitude and bad manners will never attain anything even if he joins himself with the most able spiritual guide [*shaykh*]. He has lost everything because of his habits. Character should be moderate, but not vile. Such a sufi will never be accepted. Considering all this, thinking about the blessings of Paradise seems like a distant matter.

Was-salām maʿal-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandī *Mujaddidī*