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ETIQUETTE OF GREETINGS IN ISLAM



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Written By

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PREFACE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

We have discussed the issue of etiquette of greetings in Islam in the light of Quran and Ahadith in this book. It is an interesting read for all those who want to know facts in this regard.

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GREETING IN ISLAM

The following Ahadith are related to various aspects of greetings in Islam.

(1) It is in Hadith - Narrated Abu Huraira (رضي الله تعالى عنه): The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, 'Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) created Adam (عليه السلام), making him 60 cubits tall. When He created him, He said to him, 'Go and greet that group of angels, and listen to their reply, for it will be your greeting (Salutation) and the greeting of your offspring.' So, Adam (عليه السلام) said (to the angels), As-Salamu Alaikum (Peace be upon you). The angels said, 'As-salamu Alaika wa Rahmatullahi' (Peace and Allah's عَزَّ وَجَلَّ - Mercy be upon you). Thus the angels added to Adam's (عليه السلام) Salutation the expression, 'Wa Rahmatullahi,' Any person who will enter Paradise will resemble Adam (عليه السلام) (being his offspring). People have been decreasing in stature since Adam's (عليه السلام) creation. **(Bukhari - Book #55, Hadith #543).**

(2) It is in Hadith - Narrated Ummul Momineen Aisha (رضي الله تعالى عنها): 'I have not seen any person who resembled the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) more in his speech than Fatimah (رضي الله تعالى عنها). Whenever she would come in the presence of Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) he would stand up, welcome her, kiss her hands and seat her in the same place where he was sitting. And when Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) would go to her, she would also stand up and kiss his hand.'" **(Sunan Abi Dawood, Tirmidhi, Nasai and Mustadrak Hakim).**

(3) It is in Hadith - It was narrated that Usamah Ibn Shareek (رضي الله تعالى عنه) said: We stood up for the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) and kissed his hand. **(Abu Bakr ibn al-Muqqari in Juz Taqbeel al-Yad page-58. Al-Haafiz ibn Hajar said its isnaad are good).**

(4) It is in Hadith - Imam Hakim and Imam Tabrani narrated that when Jafar bin Abi Talib returned from Abyssinia, Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) kissed him between his eyes and said, "I don't know if I am more happy with the return of Jafar (رضي الله تعالى عنه) or with the conquest of Khaybar." **(Hakim and Tabarani).**

(5) It is in Hadith - It was narrated from 'Awn ibn Abi Juhayfah that his father said : When Ja'far came after he had migrated to Abyssinia, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) embraced him and kissed him between the eyes. (Abu Dawud in Sunan, Ibn Abi Shaybah in Musannaf and Tabarani in al-Kabeer 2/108).

(6) It is in Hadith - It was narrated that Anas (رضى الله تعالى عنه) said: When the companions of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) met they would shake hands with one another, and if they had come from a journey they would embrace one another. (Tabarani in al-Awsat 1/37).

(7) It is in Hadith - Narrated Abu Huraira (رضى الله تعالى عنه) : Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) kissed Al-Hasan bin Ali (رضى الله تعالى عنه) while Al-Aqra' bin Habis At-Tamim (رضى الله تعالى عنه) was sitting beside him. Al-Aqra (رضى الله تعالى عنه) said, "I have ten children and I have never kissed anyone of them," Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) cast a look at him and said, 'Whoever is not merciful to others will not be treated mercifully.' (Bukhari Book #73, Hadith #26 and Muslim).

(8) It is in Hadith - It is narrated by Abdullah bin al-Harith (رضى الله تعالى عنه) that he said, Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) described Abdullah bin Abbas (رضى الله تعالى عنه) and his two brothers, Ubaidullah and Katheer (رضى الله تعالى عنهم) and he said, 'Whoever races to me, he'll get such a prize.' They all raced to him and jumped on his back and chest. He hugged them and kissed them. (Ahmad).

(9) It is in Hadith - Narrated Ummul Momineen Aisha (رضى الله تعالى عنها) that she said, 'I saw Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) kiss Uthmaan bin Madhoon (رضى الله تعالى عنه) while tears were rolling down his cheeks.' (Ahmad, Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Ibn al-Arabi).

(10) It is in Hadith - Narrated Ibn 'Abbas (رضى الله تعالى عنه) : Once the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) embraced me and said, "O'Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) Bestow on him the knowledge of the Book (Qur'an)." (Bukhari Book #3, Hadith #75).

(11) It is in Hadith - Narrated Ummul Momineen Aisha (رضى الله تعالى عنها) : Zayd ibn Harithah (رضى الله تعالى عنه) came to Madina and the Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) was in my house. He came to him and knocked at the door and the Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) stood up and embraced him and kissed him. (Tirmidhi # 2732).

(12) It is in Hadith - Qadi Abu Ya'la narrates that Ummul Momineen Aisha (رضي الله تعالى عنها) said, 'I saw Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) hugging Ali (رضي الله تعالى عنه) and kissing him.'

(13) It is in Hadith - It is narrated that once Zaid bin Thabit (رضي الله تعالى عنه) was riding his horse. As an act of honor Ibn Abbas (رضي الله تعالى عنه) came in front and took the reins of the horse. Zaid (رضي الله تعالى عنه) stopped him from doing so, saying that you are the cousin of Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم), how can I let you do such an act. However, Ibn Abbas (رضي الله تعالى عنه) replied, 'This is how we have been commanded to revere and honor our scholars.' Zaid bin Thabit (رضي الله تعالى عنه) kissed the hands of Ibn Abbas (رضي الله تعالى عنه) and said, 'This is how we have been commanded to respect the noble household of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم).'

Above Hadith is reported by **Hakim** in his Mustadrak who has authenticated this narration by saying that it fulfills the conditions of **Imam Muslim. Ad-Dhahabi** did not object to this verdict of Imam Hakim). **Ibn Hajar Asqalani** also reported this Hadith under section 'biography of Abdullah bin Abbas (رضي الله تعالى عنه)' on the authority of Sha'bi (رضي الله تعالى عنه).

(14) It is in Hadith - Narrated from Dhiraar bin Umar (رضي الله تعالى عنه) who narrates from Abu Rafi (رضي الله تعالى عنه) that Umar (رضي الله تعالى عنه) dispatched an army to Rome in which Abdullah bin Hudhafa (رضي الله تعالى عنه) was also sent. The Roman army enjoyed great strength and power. They imprisoned the Muslims. The king of Rome told Abdullah bin Hudhafa (رضي الله تعالى عنه) that if he converts to Christianity, the king will make him a partner of his kingdom. Abdullah bin Hudhafa (رضي الله تعالى عنه) blatantly refused. On this the king ordered that Abdullah bin Hudhafa (رضي الله تعالى عنه) be hung on a cross and shot with arrows from every side. This order was executed; however, even on the cross, Hadhrat Abdullah (رضي الله تعالى عنه) appeared to be totally content without any sign of fear. Seeing this, the king ordered that he be taken off the cross and ordered that water be heated in a cauldron. Thereafter, he commanded that one prisoner should be burnt. The flesh of the prisoner began to melt away from his body and his bones became visible. After showing Hadhrat Abdullah (رضي الله تعالى عنه) this scene, the king ordered that he be thrown into this boiling water. When Hadhrat Abdullah (رضي الله تعالى عنه) was brought to the cauldron, he began to sob bitterly. The king ordered that he be brought back and asked him the reason for crying. He replied, "I am sad and I regret that I only have one life. When I am thrown in this water, my life will be over. If only I had a hundred lives and I could use every

life to burn in this boiling water.' The king was awestruck and taken aback by Hadhrat Abdullah's (رضي الله تعالى عنه) steadfastness. The king said, 'If you do one thing, I will free you; just kiss my head.' Hadhrat Abdulah (رضي الله تعالى عنه) replied, 'I will do so only if you free all the Muslim prisoners.' The king accepted this and Hadhrat Abdullah (رضي الله تعالى عنه) kissed his head. On this the king ordered that he and all the Muslim prisoners be freed. When all these Muslims returned to Umar (رضي الله تعالى عنه), he stood up and kissed them on their foreheads. **(Baihaqi)**

(15) It is in Hadith - Imam al-Ghazzali (رضي الله تعالى عنه) states that Haddrat Abu Ubaida bin Jarrah (رضي الله تعالى عنه) kissed the hand of Haddrat Umar Farouk (رضي الله تعالى عنه). **(Keemya-e-Sa'adat and Awaariful Mu'aarif).**

(16) It is in Hadith - It is narrated that Tamim bin Salamah said : 'When Umar (رضي الله تعالى عنه) came to Syria, Abu Ubaidah bin al-Jarrah (رضي الله تعالى عنه) came to welcome him. He shook and kissed the hands of Umar (رضي الله تعالى عنه).' **(Sufyaan's Jami).**

(17) It is in Hadith - Narrated Ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله تعالى عنه) : 'The Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) taught me the 'Tashahhud,' holding my hand between both of his.' **(Bukhari # 6265 and Muslim # 402).**

(18) It is in Hadith - Umaymah (رضي الله تعالى عنها) the daughter of Raqeeqah (رضي الله تعالى عنها) said: The Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said: 'I do not shake hands with women.' **(Nasai # 4181; Ibn Maajah # 2874).**

(19) It is in Hadith - Imam Ahmad and Imam Bukhari reported that Thabit (رضي الله تعالى عنه) said to Anas (رضي الله تعالى عنه), 'Have you touched Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) with your hands.' Anas (رضي الله تعالى عنه) replied in the affirmative. On this, Thabit (رضي الله تعالى عنه) kissed his hands. **(Bukhari, Ahmad).**

(20) It is in Hadith - Narrated from Yahya bin Harith Adh Dhimari (رضي الله تعالى عنه) that he said, 'I met Wathilah bin Asqa (رضي الله تعالى عنه) and asked, 'You pledge allegiance on the hands of Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) with this hand?' He replied in the affirmative. I submitted, 'Please stretch out your hand so that I can kiss it.' He fulfilled my request and I kissed his hand.' **(Tabarani. Haythami** also narrated this Hadith and said that the chain of narrators of this Hadith is strong).

(21) It is in Hadith - Ayaas bin Dughful (رضي الله تعالى عنه) narrated that he saw Abu Nadhirah (رضي الله تعالى عنه) kiss the cheeks of Hasan bin Ali (رضي الله تعالى عنه). (Abu Dawood).

(22) It is in Hadith - Tirmidhi, Nasai and Ibn Majah narrated from Safwan (رضي الله تعالى عنه) that a group of Jews kissed both the blessed hands and feet of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم). Imam Tirmidhi said this Hadith is Hasan.

(23) It is in Hadith - Bukhari narrated in Al-Adab al-Mufrad that Suhaib (رضي الله تعالى عنه) said, I saw Ali (رضي الله تعالى عنه) kiss the hands and feet of Abbas (رضي الله تعالى عنه).

(24) It is in Hadith - Al-Wazi Ibn Zari Umm Aban, daughter of al-Wazi' ibn Zari' (رضي الله تعالى عنه), quoting her grandfather, who was a member of the deputation of Abdul Qays, said : 'When we came to Madina, we raced to be first to dismount and kiss the hand and feet of the Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم). But al-Mundhir al-Ashajj waited until he came to the bundle of his clothes. He put on his two garments and then he went to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم). (Abu Dawood).

(25) It is in Hadith - Buraida (رضي الله تعالى عنه) narrated that when we were with Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) on an expedition, a Bedouin came and asked for a miracle. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) pointed at a tree and said to the Bedouin : "Tell that tree : Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) summons you. "The Bedouin did, whereupon the tree swayed and brought itself out, and came to the presence of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) saying : "Peace be upon you, O Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم)! "The Bedouin said : "Now let it return to its place! "When Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) ordered it, the tree went back. The Bedouin said : "let me prostrate to you! "The Apostle (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) answered : "If I commanded anyone to do that, I would command the wife to prostrate to her husband. "The Bedouin said : "Then give me permission to kiss your hands and feet. "The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) gave him permission.

Qadi Iyad narrated the in al-Shifa' (1:299) and al-Bazzar in his Musnad (3:49). Qadi Iyad said the Hadith of the tree's uprooting and coming to the Prophet () is also narrated by Jabir, Ibn Mas'ud, Ya'la ibn Murra, Usama ibn Zayd, Anas ibn Malik, `Ali ibn Abi Talib, Ibn `Abbas, and others () who all agreed on the same account and so did the Tabi`in who related it. Ibn Hajar included this Hadith among Ibn al-Muqri's good narrations on the subject of kissing the hand.

The above Ahadith signify the following points.

(1) When two Muslims meet they should greet each other by saying 'Assalamu Alaikum' which should be replied by 'Wa alaikum Assalaam wa rahamtullahi wa barakatuhu'.

(2) If the circumstances and the requirement of the meeting demand, they can shake hands as well.

(3) If the occasion demands, they can hug each other to show extreme happiness of their meeting. There is no need to hug (embrace) each other in every day meetings in offices, schools, mosques, etc.

(4) Hugging (Mu'aniqa) at the time of Eid, festivals, etc., are desirable. Embracing on special occasions, like someone has qualified in a big exam or got a very good job and his parents or relatives hugging him out of happiness or hugging a person when he came back after a long time, etc., are also allowed.

(5) Kissing of children on their cheeks is allowed. Parents can kiss their children on cheeks, foreheads and can hug their children on special occasions to show extreme happiness. Mothers can kiss their infant babies on lips as well. Similarly, children can kiss their parents on their foreheads, hands, knees and feet, etc.

(6) When we meet our elders, parents and religious scholars, we can kiss their hands as a show of love and respect. There are many authentic Ahadith in this context.

(7) When we meet with our Shaikh-e-Tareeqat, or well known Shaikh of our time, we can kiss his feet.

(8) On Eid and other special occasions, we can kiss the feet of our parents, scholars and religious teachers as well.

(9) When elders visit our homes, it is important that we stand to greet them and let them sit at a prominent place.

(10) Some Shuyookh and Scholars do not like people touch their feet and kiss them. We should not insist to kiss or touch their feet against their wish. In such a case we can kiss their hands. If they do not allow even

kissing of their hands, it is better to stand for them and say Assalamu Alaikum. Our stature in standing in front of them should show our humility. We should not stand in front of them in a lax way or stand-with-pride as we do with our friends and youngsters. Our body language should indicate our respect and love for them.

(11) Some Shuyookh allow their Murideen to kiss their feet. This is done as part of training of Murideen so that they develop extreme humility in their character. Thus, kissing of feet of Shuyooks is part of Tazkia of Murideen.

(12) Some people say that there are so called Shuyookh who demand their Murideen to kiss their feet as a mark of superiority and show of pride in public. If we find this kind of characteristics in a person, it is better we avoid his company.

(13) Some people request Shuyookh to stretch their feet so that they can kiss them. In such a case, it is up to the Shaikh to accept their request or politely stretch their hand for kiss.

(14) It is written in **Fataawa Hindiya (Alamgiri)** that 'If a person requests a scholar (عالم) or an ascetic person (زاهد) to spread out his leg to kiss, it will not be permissible for him to stretch it out and therefore he should not respond according to some scholars. Some scholars however say that he should respond to this request. The same is the case if he requests to kiss the scholar's or ascetic person's head and hands.'

CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF SOME RELATED AHADITH

(1) It is in **Hadith** - Narrated Anas bin Malik (رضي الله تعالى عنه) that a person asked, "O' Prophet of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), when any of us meets his brother or friend, should he bow (inhinaa) to him?" Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) replied, "No!" (Tirmidhi reported this Hadith as Hasan).

(2) It is in **Hadith** - Narrated Qatadah (رضي الله تعالى عنه) I said to Anas (رضي الله تعالى عنه) : Did the companions of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) shake hands with one another? He said : Yes. (Bukhari # 5908).

(3) **It is in Hadith** - "Tirmidhi narrates from Anas bin Malik (رضي الله تعالى عنه) that a person inquired from Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) "If anyone of us meets a brother or friend, should he bow before him?" Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) replied in the negative. He further asked, "Should he embrace him and kiss him?" Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) replied in the negative. The person then asked, "Should he shake his hands?" Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) replied in the affirmative."

(Tirmidhi). Bayhaqi and Imam Ahmad considered the above Hadith as weak. Wahhabi scholar Al-Bani considered this Hadith as Hasan.

The above Ahadith establish following points:

(i) When brothers (cousins) and friends meet with each other as a routine, it is sufficient to say Assalamu Alaikum and and shake hands (if required).

(ii) **On special occasions**, kissing of hands, forehead or hugging (embracing) is proved from Ahadith (**Refer Ahadith at Nos. 3, 4, 8, 9 in the beginning of the book**).

(iii) Kissing of each others cheek as a routine greeting is **Haraam in Islam** as it has been specifically forbidden by Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) in Hadith # 3 above.

Salafis' practice of kissing each others' cheek, as per the above Hadith, is Haraam because Salafis have made it a routine and compulsory social tradition and custom which was forbidden by Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم).

Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Muhammad are of the opinion that it is makrooh (nearest to Haraam) if a male kisses another male on cheek (even occasionally).

Indiscriminate Salafi Cheek Kissing between men, or between women, or cross cheek kissing between men and women, as a compulsory social tradition, is indeed deplorable by all Islamic standards.

KISSING OF THUMBS DURING ADHAN

The following Hadith and statements of scholars confirm the fact that 'Kissing of thumbs and index fingers and placing them over the eyes during Azan is Mustahib.

It is in Hadith - It is narrated that whenever he (Abu Bakr Siddique - رضى الله تعالى عنه) heard the Mu'addhin say: "I bear witness that Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) is the Apostle of Allah", he would repeat this (phrase) and would kiss the tip of the index fingers (or thumbs) and wipe his eyes. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said: whosoever does what my friend (Abu Bakr Siddique - رضى الله تعالى عنه) did, my intercession will come down upon him. (**Ad-Daylamee** in Musnadul Firdaws by way of Tadhkiratul-Mawdoo'at - page 36) and al-Mawdoo'at al-Kabeer - page-75).

Mulla Ali al-Qari said, 'If this Hadith is Sahih up to Abu Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه) then it is enough to act upon it.

It is in Hadith - Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, 'My Sunnah and the Sunnah of my rightly guided Caliphs is obligatory upon you.' (**Abu Dawud # 4607 and Tirmidhi # 2676**).

Imam Shamsuddin Sakhawi has quoted in his book 'al-Maqaasid al-Hasanah' that **Imam Hassan** (رضى الله تعالى عنه) said that whoever kisses his thumbs and index fingers and rubs them over his eyes during Adhan, will never become blind and will never suffer from eye diseases.

Syed Mohammad Amin Shami in his Raddul Mukhtar (the book of fiqh) has written that kissing of thumbs and rubbing them over the eyes during Adhan is Mustahib.

Shaikh Jamal bin Abdullah Makki, Mufti of Makka Al-Mukarrama said that kissing of thumbs and index fingers and placing them over the eyes is Mustahib. Barelwi Grand shaikh Ahmad Radha Khan reported this in his book Munir-ul-Ayn)

Many Muhadditheen say that the act of kissing of thumbs and index fingers and placing them over the eyes is Mustahib.