

The Manners Commendable for the Mystic Traveller on the Path of the Sufis

Al-Adaab Al-Mardiya Li Salik Tariq Sufiyyah

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(The following are summarised notes from a class taught by Sayyid Shaykh Muhammad Al Yaqoubi in South Africa, April 2007)

Imam Buzidi (r) was a murid of the great Shadhili Master Mulay Al-Arabi Ad-Darqawi (r), and died before his Shaykh in 1229 A.H.

The Shadhili Way is about studying sufi texts and spending time on awrad.

Golden Rule: If you want to know how much you observe the sanctuary ('hurma') with Allah Most High and the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, then observe your level of adab with your Shaykh.

There are 65 adaab listed (commendable manners), all of which are derived from the Quran and Sunnah.

Shaykh Muhammad prefers to arrange the points in a different order to what has been written, as some are more pertinent for advanced students rather than for beginners etc. This will be taught at a later date inshAllah.

It is amongst the adaab of the murid:

1. To bring a gift when visiting the Shaykh, even as little as a piece of wood if the murid is poor.
2. Not to sit privately with the Shaykh for prolonged periods of time outside classes and dhikr lessons, as this may lead to disrespect. Hence only those should serve the Shaykh who are firm on the path.
3. Not to laugh in front of the Shaykh. Your laughter should always be less than the Shaykh's- it may be a test to see how you behave.
4. Not to speak a lot in front of the Shaykh. If you do have to speak, ensure that it is not done loudly.
5. To sit in front of the Shaykh rather than to his left or right side i.e. not to be honoured but rather to sit as a humble servant.
6. Not to look directly at the Shaykh when he is sitting in front of you, except when he is speaking or unless you are overwhelmed by yearning and longing for him.

7. Not to rush in speaking, confirming or denying what the Shaykh is teaching. Rather put your knowledge behind you and claim nothing in order to learn from him.
8. To sit with the Shaykh as a slave would sit with his master, and not as lay people sit with each other. He is like a qibla for the murid, so you should not turn your attention away from him. Rather, have total concentration upon him.
9. Not to walk alongside him. The murid should be either behind him or a little in front of him if he is clearing the way. The Shaykh is the Imam, and the murid a follower.
10. Not to lead the prayer whilst in the presence of the Shaykh, unless commanded to do so.
11. Not to sit where the Shaykh usually sits even if commanded, as adab is above obedience.
12. Not to eat with the Shaykh, even if he insists (unless he makes an oath), as this may lead to informality and casualness.
13. Not to sleep in the same room as the Shaykh, but outside like a servant; even if it is hot, cold or risky. This is to avoid disturbing him.

When adab is present tariq is present. Adab is a lifeboat and if you are on board you will survive even with ignorance.

14. Not to call upon the Shaykh when he enters his home, rather wait until he exits his home. S. Ibn Abbas (r) would wait outside in the scorching sun for his teacher, S. Zaid ibn Thabit (r), in order not to disturb his sleep.
15. Not to sit at the door of the Shaykh. If you are commanded to do so, then stand with your back to the door.
16. Not to enter the house of the Shaykh without his presence and permission. Entering ordinary people's homes requires high taqwa, let alone that of the Shaykh.
17. Not to take from the Shaykh anything of the dunya, small or large, even if the Shaykh insists (unless you have no food for example). If he insists, you apologise and refuse. Do you look to gifts, or to Allah Most High?
18. Not to bring your family to visit the Shaykh's family except with the intention of ziyara and baraka. Keep the visit short, for the family has the same rights as the Shaykh. Visitors should help out, and not laugh and be informal. You mustn't take children that can't behave well. It would be better for you to do read Fatiha for your Shaykh in your own home rather than commit bad adab in his.
19. Not to wear the Shaykh's clothes even if he gives them to you. Honour them, put them on your head then wrap and preserve them, as they have come from a body close to Allah Most High. If you can't take the amanah, leave it.
20. Not to wear new clothes without the Shaykh's permission. This is haram for the murid in tajrid i.e. those who have left the dunya and live in the zawiya. These murids don't take anything of the dunya except from the Shaykh.

21. Not to complain to the Shaykh about any of your worldly affairs, as the dunya is not your aim- people who do this seldom achieve success. Rather, if you experience difficulties make intercession (tawassul) by your Shaykh, without informing him. Your suluk is for the sake of Allah Most High. When a murid complains he loses in the sight of the Shaykh.
22. Not to rush in answering the Shaykh when consulted but rather reflect on the meaning and purpose of his question. If you fully understand, then answer. If not reply, "You know better Sayyidi".
23. He should hide his human needs from the Shaykh e.g. if you need to go to the bathroom. One of the fruits of sitting with the awliya is that it increases your level of shyness.
24. To follow the Shaykh in his likes and dislikes. Love what he loves and whom he loves. Observe and follow in what causes him happiness and away from what causes him grief.
25. Not to show your knowledge in front of the Shaykh, nor any high spiritual states or insights, even if Divine gifts are pouring on you like clouds.
26. Not to turn to any Shaykh other than your own.
27. Not to request miracles from your Shaykh, rather ask him to remind you of Allah Most High and decrease your attachment to the dunya etc.
28. Not to start a new state without the permission of the Shaykh e.g. reading a new wurd/ getting rid of all wealth. The secret is hidden in the permission and not in the work itself.
29. Not to suspect that the Shaykh dislikes you, humiliates you or gives precedence to others above you.
30. Not to hide your love for Allah Most High, the Prophet (s), the Shaykh and your brothers. The benefit of doing this is that if your love is low, talking about it will lead to increase. People in the tariqa are of three types: those with pious intention (niya) and sincere truthfulness (sidq), those with niya but no sidq, and those with neither. The first get the opening (futuh) when they arrive to the Shaykh. The second get it after they arrive. And the third must struggle a lot. A murid could stay with the Shaykh for 30 years and not get any sidq. In fact if a person enters without niya it is hypocrisy, and it becomes very difficult to teach him.
31. Not to convey contents of private talks in public or discuss public talks in private environments, i.e. some sufi instructions are for specific people (khawaas) only and not for the public (awaam). Eg why steal the secrets of al-hadra and divulge their words to unworthy people? Also, some public talks have connotations of dunya, which are not for the khawaas.
32. Not to stop disciplining his soul or become lazy. One should not sit with people who are weak in their yaqeen (certainty) as it has a negative effect.
33. Not to sit in a place of darkness or wrongdoing like marketplaces.

34. Not to praise himself no matter what heights he reaches in khidma, sidq and mahabba.
35. (i) Not to start giving out a wurd or guiding people before ijaaza is granted from his Shaykh.
(ii) Not to perceive himself above any muslim let alone his brothers in tariqa. If he did this he would share the maqam of Iblis ("I am better than him").
36. Not to ask to be appointed as a muqaddam. S. Luqman said to his son "Be a tail not a head, as strikes come to the head first and not the tail."
37. Not to change his outward state e.g. in dress code, subha, simple shoes, stick, etc. When people take tariqa they leave luxuries and wear simple things. They should not leave these until they are permitted to do so. These codes are for full time murids (e.g. living in a zawiyya) in a state of tajrid.
38. When the murids sit for their mudhakara they leave a place for their Shaykh empty, so that if he attends, his maddad (assistance) goes through the halaqa. Even if he does not attend you should embrace the adab as though he is present. This elevates the states of mureeds.
39. When the murids gather in the zawiya without the presence of the Shaykh they should prepare his place and act as though he is amongst them.
40. If they are with the Shaykh in some place and the Shaykh leaves, his place should remain empty. The whole universe is like a zawiyya. Your zawiyya is your hadra (presence) with Allah Most High. The khalifah of the Shaykh may sit in the Shaykh's place with the permission of the Shaykh. If it is obligatory to respect the place where the Shaykh sits what about the rights of the body of the Shaykh?

Respect stems from mahabba (love) and adab (good manners) is a result of respect.

People who have good adab with the Shaykh will get ikhlas, because the Shaykh receives Divine Transcendences at once, and divides around him. Anyone in company of the Shaykh who still has darkness, it is because of the love he has for his nafs.

Classification of Murids;-

- (i) Some oppose the Shaykh without haya or shyness.
- (ii) Some leave him and never return.
- (iii) Some don't seek his counsel and if they do they don't act upon it.
- (iv) Some are there to fill their bellies
- (v) Some do dhikr with the Shaykh but not when alone
- (vi) Some follow their nafs and desires and claim the Shaykh told them to do so.
- (vii) Some of these repent and advance. Whereas some don't.

I have seen someone arrogant above his Shaykh and his secret was gone and all that remained was gossip. If you busy yourself with attacking the people of Allah, then there is no success. Respecting all people is key to success. The worst jealousy is amongst sufis because their secrets are the most precious.

Praiseworthy categories;

- (i) Some when the Shaykh is mentioned they mention Allah Most High and His Messenger (peace and blessings upon him). The remembrance of the Shaykh reminds them of Allah Most High.
- (ii) When they see the Shaykh they see Shuhud and annihilate in the Greatness of Allah Exalted and High.
- (iii) Some forget themselves when they see the Shaykh.
- (iv) Some stay in baqa (subsistence), absorbing/receiving from the Shaykh whatever he may pass to them.

41. To take knowledge from the young and old without arrogance.

“Knowledge runs away from arrogant people to people of humility”

42. To stand up in respect for people of Allah Most High. E.g. guests coming to visit the Shaykh. Also give these people priority to sit around the Shaykh and see them off with due courtesy.

43. To do same with people we don't know because we don't know their ranks and also our behaviour may cause them to benefit from our Shaykh.

44. To behave well with extra adab especially in front of newcomers. Newcomers are sometimes affected by behaviour of murids more than they are by the Shaykh. The reality of the disciple is manifested but the haqiqa (reality) of the Shaykh is hidden so the newcomer can only see the disciple.

Someone with much intention and sidq could visit but see the misbehaviour of the murids and is pushed away. However someone with no intention could visit and through the manners of the murids he is attracted to the path.

45. To hide the secrets of the tariqa. If he doesn't, safety will not be his companion.

46. Not to enter to see the Shaykh when he is eating or if he is alone. Rather wait until he calls you or comes out. Don't follow him when he goes to the bathroom.

47. Not to get married before being firm and well established unless he fears fitna /haram. Generally speaking the murid should not try to get all of the permitted lusts and desires and his aspiration should only be to Allah Most High. When he gets rid of his nafs he is able to eat, wear, mount or marry as he wishes.

48. The murid should not have a house, dress, bed, mount etc. better than his Shaykh's. This is because the real murid should behave like a slave to his master.

Do not imitate the Shaykh in his spiritual cases, but rather in his character. E.g. Mula Ad-Daraqawi (r) wore the special clothes of the Ahl ul Bayt. Once a murid wore similar, the Shaykh's heart was restricted, and the murid passed away shortly after. Do not to claim the muqam of the Shaykh. If you have it, hide it.

49. Not to clean your throat in the presence of the Shaykh. If you have a cough sit at the back so that there is no disturbance.
50. Not to have arrogance and not to find it difficult to humiliate yourself to advanced murids and to the people Shaykh loves.

The Shaykh Al Akbar (r) tells us of the Malamatiya (people of blame), a group within the sufis who are masters of the way to Allah Most High. However, they hide themselves so as to appear like ordinary people in terms of prayers, (praying only the five fard), in appearance, having no distinguished states, and walking in market places. The common people don't find them different (no extra fard/sunnahs) whereas they are different in the states of their hearts, firm in their slavehood ('ubudiyya). They stand on every occasion with the appropriate position in front of Allah (swt), witnessing Him when eating, drinking but are veiled from people. Sometimes they even do strange acts in order to push people away.

51. One of the adabs before sitting with his Shaykh is to be in a state of wudu, as sitting with the Shaykh means dhikr of Allah (swt). Thus one should not eat foul/strong smelling things such as garlic etc. because sitting with the Shaykh means sitting with angels who surround the gathering. The key to the grand opening (futuh al akbar) for the author was that he always had good adab with the people of tasawwuf when he was young. Leaving a session of the Shaykh without excuse is bad adab and should only be done if necessary, i.e. for the service of the Shaykh or if parents are calling.

- (a) The murid's actions should be better than his claims and words
- (b) To bear and withstand any harm inflicted by his brother
- (c) Adab of fuqara with each other is Ihsan, doing good, extending favours to them using soft words and friendliness.

52. You should not give an opinion in the presence of the Shaykh even if he consults you. How would a blind person lead someone who sees with both eyes? Because your fatwa is from yourself and his fatwa is from his Lord. If Shaykh does ask you, it may be a test to see if you get out of your will (irada). Some might have the permission to do so but this is only after being totally annihilated.
53. Murid should not give permission to read the awrad or instruct extra ibadah unless it is nasihah for the sake of Allah (swt). In suluk you should not act like a Shaykh.
54. Do not convey any statements against the Shaykh to him. Believe that Allah (swt) would make the Shaykh aware of an issue before you speak. Anyone who sees the faults of the murids and reports them to the Shaykh is blind to his own faults. If he were engaged in dhikr

he wouldn't notice any such faults. Reporting of such issues may be based on false information, which could lead to the Shaykh becoming angry at that murid.

The real sin with sufis is beyond the members of the body and focused on the heart. State of a faqir is of dhikr, fikr and muzakra i.e. remembrance, reflection and deliberation. Hence a faqir should only speak out of necessity.

55. The murid shouldn't ask the Shaykh to move him from one state to another as this decision depends upon the Shaykh, and once he commands him, the murid shouldn't delay fulfilling the instruction. Anyone who desires a state without the permission of the Shaykh will never see anything good. Eg. of states such as these are: tajrid (solitude/devotion), asbab (working etc), recitation, teaching, travelling.

A murid with a Shaykh should be like a dead body with the washer, as this was the state of the Sahaba (RA).

Shaykh Ismail (r) was commanded by his Shaykh to beg in the market (souk) saying "something for the sake of Allah". However his jilbab had no pockets and any money received would simply fall out.

Whenever a murid spends any money on his Shaykh or fellow murids he shouldn't make it known to anyone if possible, as it should be sufficient to him that Allah (swt) knows of his actions.

If a murid gets happy when the Shaykh praises him then he is swaying between blame and praise, whereas if the murid has nothing to give to his Shaykh but his true heart, then this is more sufficient than any money, gifts etc.

56. The murid shouldn't see himself alongside Allah (swt) in any state. He stops only with Allah. Nothing sways him, either darkness or light. His reliance should only be with Allah Most High even if he has received states, knowledge, stations, karamats and secrets.
57. One of the adabs of the disciple is not to accept any money given to him if he already has enough, as this breaks tawwakul. Charity is only given to people in need.

There should be no worrying about rizq or fear of poverty.

Five doors should open for the disciple each day:

- I. Contentment
- II. Reliance on Allah (swt)
- III. Altruism even with little
- IV. Generosity
- V. Not looking at what other people have

58. Need to stick to two doors which lead to Allah (swt); confidence in Allah (swt) and sufficiency with Knowledge of Allah (swt).

59. The disciple during the state of tajrid (isolation) in the early stages is not to seek any profession i.e. not to mix his tajrid with asbab.

Hikam of s.Ibn Attaiyyah (r), "Not to move from one state to another until Allah (swt) moves him".

Rejection of dunya in the heart is an obligation that has to remain with the disciple till the end of his life. As to throwing the dunya out of his hand, this is done entirely under the instruction of the Shaykh, most commonly in the early stages.

60. Disciple should not meet kings, royalties or oppressive and arrogant people. People of arrogance and dunya bring darkness to the heart. This out of fear of the Quranic Verse "Do not incline to the oppressors".

Anyone you see aspiring to politics and power in the early or intermediary stages of suluk, know he is perishing.

61. Adab of murid is not to live adjacent to his Shaykh unless he is doing khidma. Because he may misbehave during the prolonged company. Beginners cannot maintain discipline. Hence this is only appropriate for people of tamkin who embody firmness.

62. Murid should not:

- i. Stop visiting his brother for the sake of Allah (swt).
- ii. Belittle the least amongst them.
- iii. Show-off in front of ignorant brothers, rather he should be with them at their level and show little knowledge before them to avoid upsetting them.

63. Not to buy from his Shaykh or sell to him. Rather, the disciple takes knowledge, adab and marifah. If he sells, he sells his nafs to get rid of it. He should be ashamed of speaking of dunya while his journey is about akhira, the Verse: "Allah has purchased from the believers their souls". The sufi has eliminated his nafs.

If the Shaykh needs something give it to him. But only take from him things for Baraka.

You need to behave like you would in front of your parents.

64. Disciple should not marry or divorce any of the Shaykh's ex-wives. Lest he falls into bad adab. However there is no harm in becoming a son-in-law.

65. Disciple should not think of the obligations of the next time but should only be pre-occupied with the present time.

"The sufi is the son of the moment"

This is the obligation of time.