

آداب الصحبة

In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Compassionate

Adab al Suhba

By Imam Abul-Mawahib 'Abd Wahhab al-Sha'rani

About the author

Imam Abul-Mawahib 'Abd Wahhab ibn Ahmad al-Sha`rani, d. 973 H. in Egypt (may Allah show him mercy), was a Shahili Master, and one of the most distinguished and prolific writers in Egypt during the tenth century. He produced works in a variety of fields including Islamic theology, law and spirituality – each of which is a gem, and unique in its genre. He passed away in Egypt year 973 H. – may Allah illuminate his grave.

About the book

The book “*Adab al-Suhba*” is divided into 3 sections

Section 1 : Being in good company – the benefits of being in good company and the reward prepared for those who love each other for the sake of Allah

Section 2: The Rights of Companions – about the Adab between brother (this is the section presented here).

Section 3: Etiquettes of the People of Tasawwuf

The translation

By the grace of Allah, we here present the English translation of Section 2. It was taught, with detailed commentary, by Shaykh Muhammad al-Yaqoubi in Damacus in 2006, and translated by his undeserving student for the Adab al-Suhba programmes of Sacred Knowledge 2013-2016.

Praise be to Allah, and prayers and salutations on our Master Muhammad ﷺ

Know – may Allah give you success in what He loves – that the rights of companionship are many, however we will mention to you a set of rights that are essential in the path of conviviality and social company. Know also, that the Sheikhs have emphasized the care for the rights of the brothers, saying:

“Anyone who neglects the right of his brothers, Allah the Exalted afflict will him with his rights being neglected, and when Allah afflicts a servant in that way, He abhors him, and when (Allah) abhors a servant He will throw him into the Fire.”

If you are aware of this, then I say – by the tawfiq of Allah:

1. *Minding one’s own faults and ignoring others’ faults*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should turn a blind eye to his defects. The Sheikhs have said: “Anyone who analyses people’s defects gains little but spoils his heart.” And they have said: “If you see a person busying himself with people’s defects, being an expert in that, then know that he has been deluded.” And they have said: “One of the signs that a servant is on a downward path is that he looks at people’s faults while he is blind to his own faults.” And they have said: “I have not seen anything that more efficiently invalidates (good) actions, and corrupts the hearts, or more quickly ruins a servant, or makes him more abhorrent, or more directly leads to love for fame and self-admiration, than a servant knowing little about his own defects and looking into other people’s defects.”

2. *Don’t criticize –interpret your brother’s actions the best way*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should interpret all one sees in him in the most beautiful way possible; and if one is not able to find a (beautiful) interpretation, one must heap blame upon oneself.

My Master Ibrahim al-Dassuqi (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy) admonished: “Do not criticize your brother’s way of life, nor his dress nor his food nor his drink, for criticism brings about alienation and separation from Allah, the Exalted. No one should be criticized unless he commits a crime that entails a major punishment by the Sacred Law. Each individual is special and different from the other, one is a beginner and another has reached the end, one is a follower and another ascertains by establishing proofs. The strong one can not walk at the same pace as the weak one – nor the other way around – but Allah shows mercy to one through the other.”

Quoting from Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy): "There is no honorable and virtuous person who does not also have shortcomings, but if someone has more virtues than shortcomings, his shortcomings are wiped out by his virtues."

3. *Wish forgiveness for him – as you hope for yourself*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should hope for him (to receive) good (treatment), generous forgiveness and accepted *tawba* – just as one wishes for oneself.

4. *Cover his faults and don't bring up sins from the past*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should disregard his previous mistakes and cover his faults if they have been uncovered. (It is stated) in a hadith: « Anyone who sees a naked (fault) and covers it is like one who has brought back to life a girl buried in her grave. »

The Sheikhs have said: "Anyone who does not cover the errors of his brothers, opens the door for his own defects to be exposed as much as he allowed his (brothers') errors to become visible."

And they said: "If you see any of your brothers committing a sin without publicizing it, cover it up. But if he publicizes it, reproach him in private. If he does not retract, reproach him in public (with the intention of) rectifying him – not out of a desire for revenge – hopefully he will then take heed and retract (from his bad action). However, someone who continues to sin, locked up in his home behind closed doors, has not publicized (his sin) – except if there are children (in the home) who tell what they see, for (such children) are like adult (witnesses)."

5. *Don't judge your brother*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should not condemn him for a sin or anything else, because condemnation cuts off love, or stains its purity.

Quoting from al-Hasan al-Basri (may Allah the Exalte show him mercy): "If you hear that someone committed an offence, that he does acknowledge, do not condemn him for it, and consider anyone who divulges such a thing about him to be a liar – in particular if (the accused brother) has given you his proofs; since the default is that a person is innocent until fair proofs have been established in court. Now even after that has been done, be careful not to condemn him, for Allah may have forgiven him, while He is testing you."

(It is stated) in a hadith: « Anyone who condemns a brother for a sin will not die until he has committed that same sin.»

Quoting from my Master ‘Ali Wafa (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy): “Don’t blame your brother for any worldly misfortune. When that happens to him, he is either an oppressed person whom Allah will soon aid, or a sinner who has been punished so Allah has purified him. It is sheer stupidity for someone to pride himself in something he is not immune from, or to condemn someone for a thing that could just as well happen to him – as you know that what can happen to someone else, can also happen to you.”

6. *Don’t look down on anyone*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should not look at him with a scornful eye, since the Sheikhs have said: “Anyone who looks at his brother with a scornful eye will be punished by being humiliated.”

(It is stated) in a hadith: « Anyone who looks at his brother with love, Allah will forgive him.»

7. *Muslims are mirrors to each other. When you see a fault in your brother, it is likely to be a reflection of you your own fault.*

It is a right one owes a brother that, when one discovers a fault in him, one should suspect oneself (to have) that fault, and say to oneself: Rather, this fault is present in me; since Muslims are mirrors to each other, and what a person sees in a mirror is only the mirror image of himself.

A man accompanied Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Adham (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy), and when he wanted to part from him, he said to him: “Alert me about the faults I have!” (Sayyiduna Ibrahim Ibn Adham) then said to him: “O my brother, I see no fault with you, because I looked at you with the eye of love, so I found all I saw of you good; so ask someone else about your faults.”

It is to this effect that the (following verses) were recited:

*The eye of pleasure is blind to all faults,
While the eye of resentment brings out the ugly traits*

8. *See yourself below him, or else you will not benefit from being in his company*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should always, in one's (self)estimation, regard oneself lower than him. (The Sheikhs) have said: "Who does not think himself lower than his brother will not benefit from his company."

Quoting from Sheikh Abul-Mawahib al-Shadhili (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy): "Since the people of Allah, the Exalted, know that no plants can sprout and fruit unless they are put under the ground where (people's) feet (walk) above them, they made themselves a ground for all (people to walk on them)."

And Quoting from my Master 'Ali Wafa (may Allah the Exalted have mercy on him): "The earth was unfolded for you as a carpet only to teach you humility; be humble, then you will unfold!"

9. *Preferring him over yourself*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should prefer him over oneself in every respect. (The Sheikhs) have said: "No one will become a master over his peers unless he prefers them over himself, and bears with their harm, and abstains from (his own) share in anything that his self throws desirous glances upon."

10. *Serve him when he is ill – futuwwa (chivalry) is to serve one's brothers*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should serve him when he is ill, for (the Sheikhs) have mentioned: "*Futuwwa* (chivalry) lies in service to the brothers."

Quoting from al-Ustadh al-Junayd (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy): "It is incumbent upon a person to serve his brothers, and then to apologise for not fulfilling the right he owes him, and accuse himself in front of them for having let them down – even if he knows that he is free of guilt – as long as he does not draw upon himself *hadd* or other severe legal punishment (*ta'ziz*), in which case he would fall into (the category of) those who do injustice to themselves, which is *haram*."

Quoting from Sheikh Abul-Mawahib al-Shadhili (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy): "Whoever excuses himself from serving his brothers, Allah will make humiliation follow him forever without redemption; and whoever serves his brothers will be given a share in their most sincere actions."

11. *Show him respect – especially if he is entitled to it*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should show him respect, especially if he is entitled to it, because he is a scholar, or a memorizer of Quran, or from the offspring of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah send blessings and peace upon him).

Imam al-Nawawi (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy) admonished:

“Do not look down on anyone, for the end is yet to unfold, and a servant does not know with what (final action) his life will be sealed. If you see a sinner, do not take pleasure in (seeing) yourself above him – maybe in the sight of Allah he has a higher rank than you, while you are sinner, and he may be the one who intercedes for you on the Day of Rising! When you see a young person, consider him to be better than you in view of him having a lighter (load of) sins; and when you see someone older than yourself, consider him to be better than you in view of him having moved into Islam before you. And if you see an unbeliever, do not take it for a fact that he will be in the Fire, since it may be assumed that he accepts Islam and dies as a Muslim.”

12. Praise him in his presence and in his absence

It is a right one owes a brother that one should praise him in his absence and in his presence, in a way that conforms with the Sacred Law, since this is something that increases the purity of love.

Al-Tabarani and others have narrated: “When a Muslim – that is: a perfect (Muslim) – is praised, *Iman* increases in his heart.” This is because a perfect Muslim, when he is praised, thanks Allah for covering his shortcomings, and showing his good side, and through that his *Iman* increases. It is clear that this happens only before love has become completely pure and firm.

However, once love is pure and firm, praise is of no good at that stage. The (following poetry line) was recited:

*When love is pure between Sufi brothers,
And their loyalty firm, then praise is loathsome.*

13. Greet him cheerfully

It is a right one owes a brother that one should honour him when he comes across him, by meeting him with a (warm) welcome and a joyful face, by embracing him, if he is a (grownup) man, offering him something to sit on that protects him from dust (of the ground).

14. Make space for him in the gathering

It is a right one owes a brother that one should make space for him when one sees him in a gathering, since this is something that increases the strength of his love.

(It is stated) in a hadith: «The Muslim has a right that his brother should make space for him when he sees him.»

15. Address him with titles

It is a right one owes a brother that one should not call him merely by his name. Some people admonished: “When you address your brother do so with respect, then his love will become firm.” It is ill-mannered to call him without adding his *kunya* or his *laqab*, and giving him (titles like) “*Sayyidi*”. The same applies to his children and grandchildren, in their presence as well as in their absence.

16. Acknowledge what he has done for you, display his gifts to others, show gratitude

It is a right one owes a brother that one should acknowledge the favours he has (done), and one’s incapacity to repay them – especially if he was the first to offer a present, for one is incapable of repaying the very fact that he was the first to do it. Sheikh Muhyi al-Deen ibn Arabi (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy) said:

“(It is stated) in a hadith: «If someone has done something good then spread the word about it, for by making it known one shows gratefulness, and by hiding it one shows ungratefulness. Anyone who has not thanked people, has not thanked Allah.» “

17. Visit him every once in a while

It is a right one owes a brother that one should visit him every once in a while, for (it is stated) in a hadith: «Walk one mile to visit a sick person; walk two miles to put things right between two brothers; walk three miles to visit a brother for the sake of Allah!»

And in another (hadith): «The one who visits his brother in his home and eats from his food is of a higher rank than the one who feeds him.»

And in another (hadith): «If one of you visits his brother, and he puts something on the ground to protect him from the dust, Allah will protect him from the punishment of the Fire.»

And in another (hadith): «Visit (your brother) for the sake of Allah, for truly, whoever visits for the sake of Allah is escorted by seventy Angels.»

Al-Yafi'i narrated from some of the Awlia to have said: "I saw the Qutb in Makka (year 315 H.) riding a golden coach drawn by Angels in the air with golden chains, and I asked: 'Where are you going?' He said: 'To one of my brothers whom I am longing to see.' I said to him: 'Why do you not ask Allah to bring him to you?' He replied: 'Where would then the reward for visiting be, oh my brother?!' " (End of the quote.)

Imam al-Shafi'i used to visit his student Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (may Allah, Exalted is He, show mercy to both of them), and the latter would also visit him, and he recited – may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him:

*They say: Ahmad visits you and you visit him
I say: virtue does not leave his home
If he visits me it is out of his virtue, and if I visit him [it is for his virtue]
So in both cases the virtue is his.*

Imam Ahmad then replied to him:

*If you visit us it's a favour you give
And if we visit you it is because of the bounty in you
We do not miss your presence in any case, but
The one who yearns for you does not reach your rank*

Quoting from my Master (ʿAli) al-Khawwass – may Allah, Exalted is he, show him mercy: "Visiting the brothers does not bring an increase in Deen unless one sticks to the courtesies of visiting."

And Allah knows best.

18. Shake hands with the intention of tabarruk

It is a right one owes a brother that one should shake his hand every time one meets him, with the intention of deriving blessings from him and following the command (of the *Sunna*). Al-Tabarani narrated: «When two Muslims shake hands, their hands do not part until they have both been forgiven.»

And Abu al-Sheikh narrated: «When two Muslims meet, and one greets the other, the most beloved in the sight of Allah is the one who shows his companion the most joyful

face, and when they shake hands, Allah sends down upon them hundred (times) *Rahma*.»

19. While shaking hands recite Salawat

It is a right one owes a brother that, when one meets him and shakes hands with him, one should send blessings and peace upon the Prophet (s), and remind him of this.

Abu Ya'la narrated: «Whenever two servants who love each other meet, and they both send blessings upon the Prophet (may Allah send blessings and peace upon him), they will not depart without the sins of both of them having been forgiven – those committed previously and those to be committed in future.»

20. Give him presents, especially after a separation

It is a right one owes a brother that one should give him a gift once in a while, especially if they have been separated for a long time.

(It is stated) in a hadith: «When you give each other presents, you will love each other; and when you shake hands, resentment will go away from you.»

21. Advise him not to oppress the one who oppresses him, but to seek Allah's support

It is a right one owes a brother that one should advise him to abstain from doing injustice towards the one who treated him unjustly, and to instead seek support from Allah. Guiding an oppressed brother to seek support from Allah, the Exalted, and to submit to Him, praise be to Him, is one of the greatest acts of assistance (one can offer) a brother.

(It is stated) in the Zabur of Sayyiduna Prophet Dawud (peace be upon him): «O Dawud, do not treat unjustly the one who treats you unjustly, for the one who oppresses the oppressor, do I withdraw My support from.»

22. Help him to get married

It is a right one owes a brother that one should help him to get married. They (the Sheikhs) have mentioned that assistance with that is more virtuous than assisting the Quran reciters and the *mukatibs* (slaves seeking to free themselves by writing contract with their masters). It is, in fact, the best of all supererogatory good actions, since the greatness of the rewards is according to the greatness of the object. Were it not for marriage, there would be no *mujahid* (fighter for the sake of Allah) and no servant of Allah, the Exalted.

23. *Visit him and serve him when he is sick*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should not neglect visiting him and serving him when he is ill, especially at night.

(It is stated) in a hadith: «No one visits a sick person in the evening except that seventy thousand Angels go out with him and ask forgiveness for him until dawn. And the one who comes to (the sick person) at dawn, seventy thousand Angels accompany him and ask forgiveness for him until the evening.»

It is essential that the visitor should not eat in the house of the sick person. (It is stated) in a hadith: «If any of you visits a sick person, he should not eat anything (when he is) with him. »

24. *Advise him to write his will when he is near death*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should advise him to write a testament when he is about to pass away. Natural shyness should not prevent one from this, since the benefits are well known.

25. *When he is near death, wake at his bed*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should stay with him until dawn when he is in a state of death agony – maybe his term is reached during that time, so that one parts from him having fulfilled his right.

26. *Acknowledge his lineage*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should avow him when he claims lineage to some great personality, e.g. saint (*Wali*) or a scholar or a leading nobleman (*Amir*). From the admonishments of Sheikh Muhyid-Deen ibn Arabi (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy): “If your brother claims lineage to some great personality, beware of querying his lineage, even within yourself, so that you do not place yourself between that person and Allah (Exalted is He), and between him and the owner of the marital bed [i.e. questioning who his father is], and fall into a great sin.”

It has even been said that querying someone’s lineage is *kufir*.

27. *Don’t call him a kafir.*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should not call him an unbeliever because of any sin, even if people dispare him for it, since everyone knows how little (God-fearing and) cautiousness people have nowadays in the way they speak, and how

difficult it would be to know all the ways in which people are accused of *kufr*. And *takfir* (calling someone a *kafir*), as Shaykh al-Islam al-Subki (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy) said: “is a frightening thing, the least of its meaning is to state that the person will remain in the Fire forever, and that the rulings of Islam do not apply to him neither in this life nor in the afterlife.”

28. *Don't hate him. Hate his wrong actions – not him personally*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should not hate him as a person if he has committed some inappropriate action.

Quoting from my Master Ali al-Khawwas – may Allah the Exalted show him mercy: “When we show enmity towards the actions of someone, who the true God has ordered us to show enmity, it is from the *Shari'a*, but if we show enmity towards the person himself it is from our (human) nature; and bliss is (derived from) the *Shari'a*, not from the human nature. The most common amongst people is that they hate the person who has committed a forbidden act.” [rather than loathing his action]

When people hear about a person who is talked about for something they dislike, they even hate his children in addition to (loathing) his own person, and on top of that they show him contempt. Some may even think he is acting properly by showing him contempt, because he does not understand that it is pure ignorance to disdain a servant whom the true God (Exalted is He) cares for and has brought out from inexistence to existence.

So oh brother, beware, of the evil if this. The true God (Exalted is He) has not commanded you to show contempt to any of His creatures – all He has ordered you to do is to repudiate his actions if they go against the *Shari'a*, nothing else. So you (should) order the sinner (to do good) and forbid (him to do evil) without showing him contempt. Reflect upon the words of (the Prophet, may Allah bless him and send him peace) about the garlic tree: «It is a tree, the smell of which I dislike.» So he did not dislike the tree itself, he only disliked its smell, which is one of its attributes. From there it is known that our enmity to an unbeliever is is enmity to (his) attributes, the proof being that if they accept Islam and their situation improves, it is forbidden for us to show enmity towards them.

29. *Speak well of him, especially if you have had a conflict – this will facilitate reconciliation later, without staining love.*

It is a right one owes a brother that, if one happens to be in discord with him, one should increase one's efforts to make his good actions known, even more than before the discord occurred, catering for the love (between you). The pious predecessors used to praise their opponent everytime his name was mentioned in their presence, to the extent that anyone would think that he was one who held them in the greatest love.

So follow their example, oh brother, and do not stop speaking well of your brother the day you get angry with him, and beware of offending his honour – maybe one day you will be reconciled, and (what you said about him) will turn out to stain the purity of the love (between you). Remember the bread you ate in his house, and all the good things you used to (receive from him). (Unfortunately) few people do that!

30. Give priority to his need over your Sunnah acts of worship

It is a right one owes a brother that one should give priority to his needs above sunni worships, since it is known that a good action, that reflects (upon others) is superior to an action that benefits only the one who does it.

31. If you have offended him, do everything possible to obtain his forgiveness

It is a right one owes a brother that, if one has violated his rights in any way, one should rush to ask his forgiveness, hide one's face and bow one's head down to the ground, and stand at his door, displaying remorse about the wrong he has done his brother. He should continue doing this until his brother shows him mercy; and if he does not show him mercy, he should go back and blame himself and acknowledge that he is an oppressor (*zhalim*) –(unfortunately) not many people do that.

32. Accept his apologies

It is a right one owes a brother to accept his apology, even if it is invalid. Al-Tirmihi and others have narrated: «Anyone whose brother comes to free himself from a sin should accept his apology, whether it is valid or not, for if he does not do that, he will not be led to find water at *al-Hawd*. »

(The following verse) has been recited to this effect:

Accept the excuses of anyone who comes to apologize

– whether you find what he says pious or sinful.

The one who (appears to) please you outwardly (only) may be loyal to you

And the one who praises you may disobey you secretly.

And they recited:

*I was told: Such and such has done you wrong
But it is a shame for a noble young man to be humiliated*

*So I said: He already came to offer an apology.
Apology, for us, is the ransom for sins.*

And they recited:

*If a friend one day apologizes to you
Then forgive many of his wrong-doings
For al-Shafi'i narrated at hadith
With a sound chain from al-Mughira
From the Elect: That Allah erases
for a single apology thousand weighty sins.*

Quoting from my Master 'Ali al-Khawwas – may Allah show him mercy: “If your brother comes to you to apologize accept it, especially if you have been separated for a long time, and if any of you does not find softness in his heart for his brother, then he may turn the blame onto himself and say to himself: Your brother comes to apologize to you and you do not accept it – but how many times have you offended his right without turning towards him, so you are then worse than him!”

Some of the (Masters) have said: “The brother who makes it necessary for his brother to apologize is not a true brother and does not belong to the people of the Path, for the people of the Path offer their apologies to (all) created beings before they have a need to apologize to him.”

33. Be happy for him and don't envy him when people follow him and get attached to him

It is a right one owes a brother to be happy when many people follow him and turn towards him to attach themselves to him; anyone who is not (happy about it) is suffering from the illness of envy (*hasad*).

(It is stated) in a hadith: «Envy consumes good deeds as a fire consumes wood.»

From the admonishments of my Master 'Ali Wafa (may Allah show him mercy): “Be careful not to envy anyone whom Allah has preferred over you, so that Allah may not

transform you as He transformed Iblis from an angelic form to a satanic form because he envied Sayyidana Adam (peace be upon him).”

(It is narrated) in the episodes from the life of my Master Ahmad al-Badawi – may Allah give us the benefit of his blessings that the holder of the Iwan of Tanta named “The Moonfaced” was a great wali, but envy arose in him when my Master Ahmad al-Badawi came to Tanta, and people turned towards him and attached themselves to him, so his state was reversed and his fame vanished, and his position in Tanta today is where the dogs end up. The Friday speakers of Tanta came to his support and worked in his favor for some time. They built a great minaret at his *zawiya*. Then my Master ‘Abd al-‘Al (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy) came and kicked it with his foot, and from that time up to our time it has disappeared.

34. When he travels, see him off and hug him

It is a right one owes a brother that, when he wants to travel, he should not depart without one bidding him farewell, by hugging him, if he is a (grown-up) man, and by token if he is a young man. (It is mentioned) in a hadith: «When one of you departs on travel, he should bid farewell to his brothers, for Allah places *baraka* in his *du‘a*.»

35. When he returns from travel, visit him

It is a right one owes a brother that, when he returns from his travel, one should go to him in his home, greet him and express one’s joy over seeing him (return) safe and sound. The same applies when his children or others who are dear to him return (from a travel). Also when they recover from illness, it is their right their brother come to them and congratulate them for (returning to) health.

36. Consult him in every important matter

It is a right one owes a brother to consult him in every important matter, as the (Sheikhs) have mentioned that consultation increases the purity of love. (It is stated) in a hadith: «Anyone who wants to undertake something and consults a Muslim man, Allah will give him *tawfiq* so that his undertakings are rightly guided.»

My Master ‘Ali al-Khawwas (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy) used to say: “You should consult your brothers in every matter, for according to a hadith: «One who does *istikhara* will not fail, and one who consults will not regret » ”

And they recited (the following poetry line):

*Consult you brother in every difficult problem,
And approach the company of the eminent with respect and kindness*

And they recited:

*Consult you brother if one day you are afflicted with misfortune
Even if you are the one who is usually consulted
A lone individual will meet strife and opposition everywhere,
And can only see himself in a mirror.*

37. Take care of his family when he is away

It is a right one owes a brother that one should look after his family when he is away from them. (It has been mentioned) from the Sheikhs: “Anyone who does not look after his brother’s family when he is away has abandoned companionship.”

38. Take care of his family when he is away

It is a right one owes a brother that one should share one’s property and other things with him half and half. Sheikhs Abul Mawahib al-Shadhili (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy) said: “It is the duty of a *Faqir*, who engages in brotherhood for the sake of Allah to share half of his property with his brother, as the *Ansar* did with the *Muhajirun* when they arrived to them in Madina in a state of need.” So whenever someone claims brotherhood for the sake of Allah, test him on this criterion!

My Master Abu Madyan al-Tilimsani (may Allah allow us to benefit from him) said: ‘Anyone who distinguishes between his garments and his brother’s garments in terms of ownership has not offered true companionship.’

And he also said: “Companionship is not complete unless your heart finds joy and comfort with everything your brother takes of your property, your clothes and your food. And anytime you find restraint in your heart towards that, you are a hypocrite regarding companionship.”

Some (of the Sheikhs) have said: “Companionship between two people is not valid until one says to the other: Oh ‘I’, and one is not a brother who says ‘my drinking bowl’ and ‘my garment’.”

39. Accept his criticism

It is a right one owes a brother that one should not be offended by him if he says: “I abhor you.” Rather he should investigate which (of one’s) character traits is the reason of his dislike, and put an end to it. If that ends his dislike (all is well) – else one should repeat the (self-) investigation twice and thrice.

40. *Don’t expose his private matters*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should hide his secret if it is (un)covered, as (one would cover his) nakedness (‘awra), since it is haram to uncover it, to look at it or talk about it.

(It is stated) in a hadith: «Whoever covers the nakedness of his brother, Allah will cover his nakedness. And whoever uncovers the nakedness of his brother, Allah will uncover his nakedness »

Sheikh Abul-Mawahib al-Shadhili (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy) admonished: ”Beware of disclosing your brother’s secrets to others – Allah may hate you for that and you will lose (everything) in this life and the after-life.”

41. *Reject and cut off rumors spread about him (nameema)*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should never believe anyone who spreads rumors (namimah) about him [Namima means to relay to someone rumors about himself or about someone else]. The “Proof of Islam”, al-Hujjatu Imam al-Ghazali (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy) said that six things are obligatory upon anyone who is told rumors:

1. Not to believe him
2. To forbid him from doing it
3. To hate him for the sake of Allah
4. Not to have a bad opinion of the one about whom the rumor is spread
5. Not to delve into (the matter) trying to verify it.
6. Not to transmit the rumor.

(Quoting from) Sheikh Abul-Mawahib al-Shadhili (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy): “If someone transmits things that are talked about you companion, say: Oh you (whoever you are): I am certain about my brother’s good companionship and love, but uncertain regarding what you tell me, and one does not abandon what is certain for what is uncertain.”

(Quoting from) Sheikh Afdal al-Din (may Allah the Exalted show him mercy): “If someone informs you that people are saying things that offend of your honor, stop him and rebuke him, even if he one of the highest of your brother, an say to him: If you believe this about us, then you are just as (bad) as the one who is spreading these rumors – no you are even worse, for he did not tell us about these rumors, while you did. And if you think that what is said about us is not true, since we are far from falling into such things, then what is the benefit of telling us about it?!”

And we have mentioned in other (books) that anyone who want the love of their compnion to last should reject any rumors that are brought to him without any hesitation.

42. *Defend his honor*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should defend his honor – however with the best intention and with the best of wisdom and diplomacy.

It is mentioned in a hadith: “Whoever pushed away (attacks on) his brother’s honor, Allah will push away the Fire from his face on the Day of Rising.” (Tirmidhi)

Imam al-Shafi’i (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “From amongst the signs of brotherhood towards one’s brothers is to accept his defects, and cover his deficiencies, and forgive his faults.”

43. *Wake him up in good time before the prayer time*

It is a right one owes a brother is to wake him up before the time (of the prayer), so that when the time enters he is ready and alert. In that way he will not miss the emphasized sunnas, nor the initial takbir (of the imam when praying in jama’a).

Likewise, it is his right that one should wake him up for suhur; as compassion in mattrs of religion is above compassion of the sake or worldly matters. However this should be done with gentleness, as he might react negatively if he is woken up with harshness.

44. *Do not flatter him unless it is for some benefit in Deen*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should not spoil him [by not pointing out his errors out of fear to lose his friendship], for according to the hadith “Dis is Nasiha” (Religion is to offer good counsel) (Tirmidhi). The People (of tasawwuf) say: Brothers

will have the best (they aspire to) as long as they compete (for good), but when they are all at the same level, they will be destroyed.

One of the differences between spoiling someone and flattering him (e.g. by giving him advice in a nice way) is that you may flatter your brother in order to improve him, while you spoil him when your (are nice to him) for an egoistic benefit.

45. How to uproot resentment you may have against him

It is a right one owes a brother to suspect oneself of arrogance and hypocrisy, and when one finds him burdening, one should quickly proceed to uproot that inner (feeling).

A person was accompanying Abu Bakr al-Khattabi [d. 322 H.] – may Allah be pleased with him – and found in his heart a feeling of heaviness (i.e. resentment) towards him. The person said: “I gave him a gift with intention that this feeling should go away, but it didn’t. Then one day, when I was alone with him, I said to him: Place your foot on my cheek – but he refused. I then said to him: This is absolutely necessary, so he did it, and (the resentment) I had found inside me was gone.”

46. Accept his advice

It is a right one owes a brother to accept his advice, for (the Masters) say: Whoever directs to what frees you from the wrath of Al-Haqq (Allah, Elevated is He) has interceded for you. So if you obey him and accept his advice, his intercession for you will be accepted and will be of benefit for you, and if not, then seek refuge with Allah against people, whom the intercession of the intercessors does not benefit, because they turned away from the reminders.

47. Wait for him at the gate of Jannah

It is a right one owes a brother that, if Allah grants one entrance to the Garden, one should decide not to enter until unless one’s brother (also) enters – even if the time of (his) reckoning is long – and offer him one’s good deeds so (that he can) settle his accounts on the Day of Judgement.

48. Be concerned about his spiritual state

It is a right one owes a brother that one should neither eat nor drink, if one’s brother falls into sin or is being tried, until Allah turns towards him, or Allah frees him from that trial. Ibrahim b. Adham (may Allah be pleased with him) abstained from food for

forty days when a brother of his fell into a deplorable state, and he did not stop fasting until (this state) was lifted from him.

49. Encourage him to respect the Shari'a

It is a right one owes a brother that one should direct him to respect the sacred Laws of Allah, and to keep away from trespassing His limits, to point where, if he falls into the slightest sin, he will consider this small sin a major offence and complete violation (of the Shari'a). He should continue in this manner until he sees even a moment of heedlessness of Allah as more serious than zina and murder.

Then, when the path is completed, the wayfarer will return to what is more perfect, that is to honor Allah's limits in the way mentioned in the Shari'a, since a servant should follow what is prescribed according to the Shari'a, and fear a great sin more than a small sin, and a small sin more than a disliked act, and a disliked act more than one that does not conform to the best course.

The lawgiver (may Allah send blessings and peace upon him) clarified the degrees of the laws so as to teach us to differentiate them and respect them according to their degrees. The same applies to the section regarding acts we are ordered to do. A wajib act will be valued more than a recommended act, and a recommended act more than an act of courtesy, and we will regret (missing any such act) depending on how much emphasis the lawgiver put on it. So at the end (of the travel), the wayfarer will seem to have returned to the state he set out from – however his outlook is now different regarding the differentiation of degrees. If, in the beginning, the wayfarer considered the orders and prohibitions to be all at the same level, it was out of his awe in front of Allah, Elevated is He, so he respected the orders and prohibitions of Allah out of fear, so as to close the door of any infraction, by closing the eyes to the wisdom of their being various degrees. As mentioned in the Holy Law, in that there is high degree – and (beyond that, there are) higher degrees.

It is on that basis that one may understand the words of Al-Junayd (may Allah have mercy on him), "In my view there is no sin greater than heedlessness from Allah – elevated is He". For certainly, slander is worse than heedlessness – unless one realizes that heedlessness of Allah – elevated is He – is the reason why a servant falls into sins.

50. Advise him to hide his maqam

It is a right one owes a brother to order him to hide his maqam, if one notices that he inclines towards publicity. Whoever loves concealment is a slave of concealment, and

whoever appears in front of people before being given a permission specific to him, will be exposed to trials and ridiculed by people. The Awlia do not appear in front of the people until they are threatened of their being divested of their maqam (salb) unless they do so. An intelligent person will hide his maqam until Allah imposes on him to show in public, without him wanting it.

51. Show hostility to his enemies outwardly – but never inwardly

It is a right one owes a brother to display enmity outwardly to whoever shows enmity to him unjustly. However it is not permitted to make (such a person) an enemy internally. Even to someone who shows enmity to the Sheikh of mankind, it is not allowed to entertain inner enmity towards him. Rather, what is incumbent is to display enmity outwardly only. It is also incumbent on him to avoid someone who his Sheikh is angry with.

52. Stand when he appears in front of you

It is a right one owes a brother that one should rise to stand in front of him when he meets him – even if he dislikes it – especially in festive gatherings. (The Masters) have said: Beware not to abandon (the habit of) standing for your brother in festive gatherings, for this may engender feelings of hatred and rancor, that you may be unable to get rid of later.

53. Do not tell him any lie

It is a right one owes a brother that one should never tell him a lie, as in this lies contempt for him. (It is mentioned) in a hadith: “It is an immense deception if you tell your brother something and he believes that you are truthful, while you are lying to him.”

54. Pray for forgiveness and Rahma for him

It is a right one owes a brother, not to forget to pray for overlooking and forgiveness and compassion for him (from Allah), any time he finds himself in a pure state with his Lord, be it by night or by day, in sujud or otherwise.

55. Hatred for your brother is a sin at the level of kufr and magic

It is a right one owes a brother not to harbor feelings of hate and bitterness towards him, as (it is mentioned) in a hadith: “There are three things, if they are in a person, Allah will forgive him everything else: That he dies without associating anything with

Allah; that he is not practicing magic or following magicians; and that he does not hate his brother.”

The people (of tasawwuf) have said: “Anyone who in (his character) has hatred, or cunning double-dealing, or fraud, or disloyalty towards anyone, is untruthful to the path of the Sufis, and is not fit to call (people) to Allah, the Most High.”

56. Listen attentively when he speaks

It is a right one owes a brother, that when speaks, one should keep one’s eye fixed on him until he has finished speaking, for this indeed increases the purity of love. Conversely, being distracted while he is speaking, or cutting him off before he has finished speaking will give rise to aversion (and enstrangement).

57. Do not test him, as this may uncover hidden faults in him

It is a right one owes a brother that one should not put him to test, as testing is akin to uncovering a person’s nakedness. (The Masters) have said: “Be wary of testing your brothers, for Allah does not test His servants unless He knows them to fulfill (pass the test), so as not to put them to shame by displaying what is covered by their dress.”

Kisra (the Persian king) was asked: Would you not test (the people serving at your court)? He replied: In that case we would all be put to shame.

58. Showing him reverence when you part

It is a right one owes a brother to greet him with reverence and respect every time he parts from him.

Sheikh Muhyid-Din ibn ‘Arabi (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: “Even if the time of separation is brief – so as to hold the best opinion that Allah may diffuse a fragrance, or grant him one of those looks (by which) He (surveys) the hearts of His servants by day and night, so that, by it, he may rise to a higher maqam. If this act is properly done, one will have given (one’s brother) his right; and if it is not properly done, then one should show adab in front of Allah, in terms of dealing with (one’s brother) in ways commanded by the divine rank, i.e. to honor everyone who appears in its presence.”

And he said: “Very few examine themselves regarding (how they fulfill) this act, because of the heedlessness ingrained in the hearts.”

59. *When you see him doing something inappropriate, be convinced that he has repented*

It is a right one owes a brother, if one sees him (doing something) inappropriate, to believe that he repented the same moment and felt remorse from the depth of his heart.

Some of the salaf used to say: “I would be ashamed in front of Allah to cut off (i.e. deny the possibility of) tawba of a person who disobeyed his Lord, and then got out of my eye-sight behind a wall.”

And they said: “Whoever denies the tawba of any sinner, will, as a logical consequence, see himself as better than him, and anyone who sees himself as better than any other Muslim is a deceived ignorant, no matter what miracles he may have been given.”

60. *Preserve your love for him, even if he betrays you*

It is a right one owes a brother to maintain the love for him, even if he shows disloyalty or turns away – so as to preserve the love.

Ibn al-Khattab (may Allah show him mercy) said: “It was as if I dreamt of the Lord of Highness, and I asked Him: O my Lord, teach me something from Yourself without an intermediary! He replied: O Ibn al-Khattab, whoever does good to someone who wronged him is showing true gratefulness to Allah, and whoever wrongs someone who has done him good has returned the favours of Allah with ingratitude. – I said: Oh my Lord, this is sufficient for me, He said: It is sufficient for me. (End of the quote) ”

This has become an immense issue in our time, and the only ones remaining (acting upon it), are the dogs, as mentioned on the book “The virtues of dogs compared to many of those who are dressed in clothes” [by Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Khalaf al-Marzabani]

61. *Don't remind him of past favors (minna)*

It is a right one owes a brother not to remind him of past favors one did to him, when he disputes and forgets those favors. If one mentions the good he did at the time of dispute, it is an indication that there was no sincerity in it, and a proof that it was rooted in meanness, since a person whose (actions) are rooted in goodness never reminds his brother of the favors he did to him. Rather he would see that the brother who, for instance, ate with him or accepted his gift, has a favor over him.

(It is mentioned) in a hadith that “There are three (types of people) who Allah will not look at on the Day of Rising, nor will He purify them, and they will be given a painful punishment: The one who lets his garment down [out of arrogance], the one who claims gratefulness for his favors, and the one who markets commodities using false oaths.” [Sahih Muslim and others]

Some (of the Masters) have said: Reminding a person of one’s favor at the time of dispute is an evil that does not heal, i.e. it will not be forgotten, rather it will continue to stain the love every time it is remembered.

62. *Don’t dispute with him*

It is a right one owes a brother that one should not dispute with him, for disputes cut off the ties of love. (The Masters) have said: There is nothing to let religion go and to heat the heart but dispute. It engenders anger and hatred and deceit, to the point that it even occurs in the prayer and these occurrences become attached to one’s Qibla [lit.: to the destination of Hajj] – and the consequence if this are obvious.

(It is mentioned) in a hadith: “Endless dispute is enough to be a sin.”

The following poetry lines have been recited:

*Avoid the companion of evil and cut off his rope
And if you don’t find a sword (to cut him off) be vigilant
And love the the companion of truth and do not show off to him
Then you will atbtain pure love for him, as long as you do not dispute*

63. *Not to be in rush to detach yourself from him*

It is a right one owes a brother not to be quick to separate, as it is not praiseworthy to rush towards things like that. More often it is incorrect than correct, and we have mentioned in other places the conditions under which separation to be permitted.

64. *Not to reproach him for not giving you your rights*

It is a right one owes a brother not to hold it against him if he falls short of giving you your rights, so as to protect the love.

From the teachings of my Master ‘Ali al-Khawass (may Allah have mercy over him): “Leave (claiming any of) your rights to your brother as much as you can, and make yourself blind to any any fault pas of brothers who are from the people of chivalry

and good bearings; and beware of transgressing against anyone who transgressed against you. Allah Most High only permitted transgression to extend of returning equal with equal, and in practice, this equality is extremely difficult – perhaps the wrong (that you are paying back) has a greater impact on your opponent than (his wrong) had on you. Requittal is only a leniency given to those who are weak.”

65. Care for his children in his absence, and after his passing away

It is a right one owes a brother that one continue to feel compassion for his children and care for them after his death. The people (of tasawwuf) have said: “Whoever does not show compassion for his brother’s children in his absence, and does not take care of them after his death, is not truthful in his brotherhood.”

66. If he exhibits a (blameworthy) bid’a, don’t accept it and part company from him

It is a right one owes a brother not to confirm him on any (blameworthy) bid’a, and to leave him if does not revert from it – out of fear for himself, so as not be exposed to its calamities. The righteous salaf used to warn against sitting in the gatherings of the people of bid’a, saying: If someone has the slightest bid’a, beware of sitting with him. Whoever is tolerant in this respect, will draw upon himself its calamities, even after a long time.

67. Do not marry a woman he divorced or left behind

It is a right one owes a brother, not to marry a woman he divorced, or who remained a widow after him, even if he recommended him to do so, or she says: You are more entitled (to me) than any other.

So pay attention, o my brother, to what this section contains regarding your duties, If you see yourself complying to them, thank Allah Most High, and if not, you need to ask forgiveness by day and night for falling short of giving your brothers their rights,

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the universe!

Summary of points from
The Courtesy of Companionship - Rights one owes one's brother

By Imam Abul Mawahib Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha'rani

Rahimahu Allah wa nafa'ana bimahabbatihi

1. Minding one's own faults and ignoring others' faults.
2. Don't criticize. *Husn al-Zhann* - interpret your brother's actions the best way.
3. Wish forgiveness for him – as you hope for yourself.
4. Cover his mistakes and don't bring up sins from the past.
5. Don't judge your brother.
6. Don't look down on anyone.
7. Muslims are mirrors to each other. When you see a fault in your brother, it is likely to be a reflection of you your own faults.
8. See yourself below him, or else you will not benefit from being in his company.
9. Preferring him over yourself – give him anything he wants
10. Serve him when he is ill – no excuses. *Futuwwa* (chivalry) is to serve one's brothers.
11. Show him respect – especially if he is entitled to it.
12. Praise him in his presence and in his absence.
13. Greet him cheerfully, welcome him, embrace him and offer him something to sit on.
14. When he enters a gathering, make space for him.
15. Address him with titles - do not just call him by his name.
16. Acknowledge his favors and what he has done for you, display his gifts to others, show your gratitude.
17. Visit him every once in a while.
18. Shake hands with him, with the intention of gaining blessings from him (*tabarruk*). (Shaking hands is a Sunnah. Don't kiss on the face.)
19. While shaking hands recite Salawat.
20. Give him presents, especially after a separation (if you were angry at each other)
21. When he is oppressed, advise him not to oppress his oppressor but to seek Allah's support. (Whoever seeks retaliation for himself will not receive the support of Allah.)
22. Help him to get married.
23. Visit him and serve him when he is sick and spend the night with him.
24. Advise him to write his will when he is near death.
25. When he is near death, wake at his bed.
26. Acknowledge his lineage.
27. Don't call him a *kafir*.
28. Don't hate him. Hate his wrong actions – not him personally.
29. Speak well of him, especially if you have had a conflict or dispute with him. if one day you reconcile, so as not to stain the love between you and him.
30. Give priority to his need over your Sunnah acts of worship.
31. If you have offended him, do everything possible to obtain his forgiveness.

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32. Accept his apologies.
 33. Be happy for him and don't envy him when people follow him and get attached to him.
 34. When he travels, see him off and hug him.
 35. When he returns from travel, visit him.
 36. Consult him in every important matter.
 37. Take care of his family when he is away.
 38. Share your property with him.
 39. Accept his criticism.
 40. Don't expose his private matters.
 41. Reject and cut off rumors spread about him (*nameema*).
 42. Defend his honor.
 43. Wake him up in good time before the prayer time – so he does not miss his Sunnas or the tabkir in jama'a.
 44. Do not flatter him unless it is for some benefit in Deen.
 45. How to uproot resentment you may have against him.
 46. Accept his advice
 47. Wait for him at the gate of Jannah.
 48. Be concerned about his spiritual state
 49. Encourage him to respect the limits of Allah (Shari'a).
 50. Advise him to hide his *maqam* (spiritual status) – Allah will reveal it at the proper time.
 51. Show hostility to his enemies outwardly – but never inwardly.
 52. Stand when your brother appears in front of you.
 53. Do not tell him a lie about anything.
 54. Pray for forgiveness and *Rahma* for him in your intimate moments with Allah
 55. Hatred for your brother is a sin at the level of *kufr* and magic
 56. Listen attentively to him and do not interrupt his speech
 57. Do not test him, as this may uncover hidden faults in him, which is a form of spying
 58. Showing him reverence when you part
 59. When you observe him doing some improper action, be convinced that he repented
 60. Preserve your love for him, even if he betrays you
 61. Don't remind him of past favors (*minna*)
 62. Don't dispute with him.
 63. Not to be in rush to detach yourself from him
 64. Not to reproach him for not giving you your rights
 65. Care for his children in his absence, and after his passing away
 66. If he exhibits any *bid'a* (blameworthy innovation in religion), don't accept it and part company from him
 67. Do not marry a woman he divorced or left behind.
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