



ADAB OF NASEEHA

**KEY NOTES FROM A DISCOURSE DELIVERED BY
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Adab of Naseeha

Every Prophet came with advice. We inherit this quality as revealed through the Quran.

Intention

When giving advice, if you are not sincere, it is not considered as advice. Never let your goal be to criticise or expose the person. This is a disease especially towards scholars. When you see his rank rise, and his popularity increase, you are sitting there waiting for him to slip up. And if he does, it is all over social media. 'So and so said this' etc. It is Sunnah to cover people's mistakes. If you turn around and defame others, Allah will do the same to you. There is always a better way of conveying advice.

Assess the situation

If you feel that by giving a person advice it may result in hostility or hatred towards you, then you should refrain from giving advice.

If you give advice, you shouldn't feel that you must be listened to. This is not a sincere intention. Naseeha should be for the sake of Allah. Whatever the outcome, it shouldn't bother you. Why? Because the reason you came to him is for the sake of Allah.

Approach

When giving advice, you should have empathy. The recipient should feel love and that the advice is for his benefit. 'Love for your brother what you love for yourself'. You don't want Allah to be angry with you, likewise you wouldn't want Allah to be angry with him.

Don't give advice in a belittling way. Don't patronise your brother. Use and choose the words particular to that individual. If he is younger, be very kind. As soon as you are harsh, they will have this perception that Islam is harsh and all about being corrected. Advice should be projected as a form of education.

Practical Example

A beautiful example was at the time of Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain, may Allah be pleased with them both and their noble family. They saw an individual perform wudu with so many mistakes. When he had completed his wudu, they approached him and asked for his opinion on which of the brothers he thought performed wudu better. They then demonstrated the wudu practically to him. When they had completed their wudu, they asked the individual for his opinion. He replied that they were both perfectly performed. The intention was to show the individual the correct way without directly informing him and without reprimand.

Words

Secrecy is key. Automatically people will feel love and inclination to listen because you have taken them away from people's eyes and ears to advise them.

When someone is presented with their defaults, they automatically become defensive. Pride, anger may come to the fore which is what Shaytan wants. You could be sincere, and have good intentions but if you use the wrong words the objective could be defeated. The Quran says, "Call to the way of Thy Lord with hikmah". You have to be beautiful and gentle in your words.

Knowledge of what you are advising about

It could be embarrassing if you give naseeha to someone who knows the situation better. For example, if you notice someone praying differently than you. If you tell them they prayed incorrectly, they may be from another madhab. It is better to enquire first. "Is there a reason you did so and so" etc

Acting upon what you preach

The Quran mentions, "...Do you exhort people towards righteousness but do not act upon it yourselves?"

Time and Place

Some advice cannot wait, such as if you notice an error in one's wudu or awrah in salah. Or matters pertaining to aqidah. If it is something that can wait, then maybe wait until next time. If there is a dispute between two parties, separate them but do not give advice straight away. Why not? Because his state is not ready to receive advice. Wait until he is calm.

Who should give advice?

The best way for advice to be given is through someone who the recipient respects. It could be a father, brother, close friend or the Imam. Sometimes an unknown person's advice is not so easily accepted. Matters pertaining to the community should go through the Imam who should address the congregation in the best way. There is no hostility in this way. The person who raised the issue will still receive the reward for bringing this matter to the attention of the community.

An example was from the time of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. A Companion (may Allah be pleased with them all) presented a matter to the Prophet. The Prophet waited until the next sermon and addressed the topic in a general way without mentioning the person's name. This is the best way, the Sunnah way.

Adab of receiving advice

Never get angry. Everyday in your prayers you recite, “Guide me to the Straight Path”. You are asking for guidance. So if Allah sends someone to you to remind you of your shortcomings, you shouldn’t get angry.

Thank people for their generosity, care and effort. Even if their method of delivering the advice is wrong. Because it is from Allah. Unfortunate is the one who is not reminded of his shortcomings. He may be going through life without being corrected.

Final Thoughts

If the way in which give advice is wrong, don’t be surprised if the recipient doesn’t react in the best way. The fault in this case lies with the giver of the advice, not the recipient.