

THE ETIQUETTE OF ASKING PERMISSION IN FAKHRUDDIN ALI SAFI’S “ADAB UL-AS’HAB”

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Abstract: This article analyzes the etiquette of asking permission based on Fakhruddin Ali Safi’s “Adab ul-As’hab” within the context of the Islamic ethical system and modern social culture. The study examines the historical, religious, ethical, and philosophical foundations of asking permission and highlights its relevance in contemporary society.

Keywords: permission, ethics, respect, personal space, dignity, spirituality, etiquette, Islamic ethics, security, stability

In the Islamic ethical system, the etiquette of asking permission occupies an important place in ensuring the inviolability of private life and regulating social relations. In the Holy Qur’an and hadith sources, the social and ethical significance of this etiquette is extensively highlighted. This ethical issue is also given deep attention in the work “Adab ul-As’hab” (“The Etiquette of Friends”) written by Fakhruddin Ali Safi. The work is one of the important examples of the heritage of Eastern ethics and promotes a culture of communication based on honesty, respect, modesty, and permission in interpersonal relations. The study employed scientific-philosophical and socio-ethical analysis, as well as textual analysis. Ali Safi’s work “Adab ul-As’hab” was analyzed as the main source. In addition, Ash-Shifa, Sharh as-Sunna, verses of the Holy Qur’an, and hadiths were used as supplementary sources. The article comparatively analyzes ancient ethical principles and the norms of modern culture.

Asking permission is an integral part of ancient Islamic ethics. According to Ali Safi’s work, “The Companions never entered a stranger’s house without permission; they first greeted them and then asked for permission.”⁴ This itself is an expression of respect for a person’s private life and inviolability. Permission is not merely authorization, but also an ethical standard. In the Islamic ethical system, asking permission is regarded as respect for another person’s rights, recognition of social boundaries, and a symbol of consideration and modesty.

Sometimes, in modern society, we witness cases in which this principle is violated. Today, unauthorized interference in personal space (home, telephone, internet, conversation) is manifested in society as one of the forms of moral decline. Ali Safi noted the subtle aspects of asking permission:

Looking through a hole or opening the door without permission is not permissible (Sharh as-Sunna);

Refusing to give permission is a right;

When asking permission, it should be done politely, either verbally or by making a sound (for example, coughing or reciting tasbih).

According to the results of this study, the culture of asking permission is an important principle of the Islamic ethical heritage. It should be regarded not only within the religious and ethical system, but also within broader social culture as one of the fundamental expressions of personal privacy, respect, and mutual trust.

The analysis conducted on the basis of Ali Safi’s work revealed the following main conclusions:

Asking permission is the principle of recognizing personal boundaries. In his work, permission is described as the first condition for entering a house. Attention is drawn to the fact that this is not merely an expression of external etiquette, but an axiological value based on respect for a person’s inner space and private life and on refraining from violating them. In Islam, this principle is directly

established in verses 27-28 of Surah An-Nur of the Holy Qur'an: “O believers! Do not enter houses until you have been given permission by their owners...”

In Islamic thought, asking permission does not merely mean obtaining authorization; it means recognizing another person's freedom and taking into consideration their space, home, and even their circumstances. This principle undoubtedly indicates the formation of an ethical identity. In Ali Safi's expressions, this etiquette is manifested not only as an external practice but also as an internal virtue. This is because, in any society, the concepts of etiquette, consideration, and respect are fundamental factors of social stability.

In the modern era, however, these values are often disappearing: people interfere in one another's private lives, unauthorized information is distributed on online networks, and reading the phones or messages of close acquaintances has become commonplace. This is one of the signs of an ethical crisis. Ali Safi's views on permission offer an ancient yet practical approach to addressing this problem.

The order of asking permission and greeting is manifested as an ethical structure of social communication. When the Companions came into the presence of the Prophet Muhammad, they would stand at the door, greet him, and then ask for permission. The order was: first greeting, then asking permission, and then entering. This order demonstrates that respect, humility, social norms, and standards of etiquette had taken deep root in society.

Refusing permission is a human right. In Fakhruddin Ali Safi's work, it is acknowledged that the owner of a house may refuse to give someone permission to enter or may refuse entry by remaining silent. This confirms the principle of respecting an individual's will. The owner of the house determines for themselves whom they allow into their space.

In modern philosophical approaches, refusing permission is considered not merely an external legal action, but an ontological right expressing personal freedom and freedom of consciousness. This, for example, finds clear expression in J. Locke's idea of the “inviolability of private property.”⁷ A person owns their body, property, and space, and any interference with these without their consent can be interpreted as moral violence.

Therefore, refusing permission is not merely an act of resistance, but also a form of preserving a person's moral, social, and legal identity. From this perspective, Ali Safi was considerably ahead of his time - he presented the refusal to grant permission not as a “defect,” but as a virtue protecting human dignity. This principle is also consistent with modern theories of democracy and human rights.

Looking without permission, observing through a hole, or opening the door without permission are regarded as ethical violations. This aspect is mentioned in “Sharh as-Sunna.” In Fakhruddin Ali Safi's thought, such actions are considered an encroachment upon human dignity. This is particularly relevant in the age of modern information technologies. Looking at someone's phone, accessing social media accounts without permission, taking or posting photographs without consent - all of these are considered contrary to the principle of permission.

In modern ethics, “looking without permission” is not regarded as an ordinary action, but as an encroachment upon a person's private sanctity. This idea is deeply interpreted in the theories of G. Agamben concerning the “disclosure of the state of the private person” as well as in the theories of M. Foucault and Z. Bauman concerning the “surveillance society” According to them, looking is not merely observing with the eyes, but also a means of managing, controlling, and exerting influence.

Looking without permission is an expression of moral aggression toward an individual, conveying the attitude of “I am superior to you” The concept of “looking through a hole” presented in Ali Safi's work is directly comparable in today's digital era to cyber-intruders, that is, those who collect information without consent, unauthorized cameras, surveillance through networks, and

“digital voyeurism” Therefore, looking without permission can also be interpreted as a modern ethical problem that threatens personal sovereignty.

This is not merely external etiquette, but also demonstrates a person’s inner moral state - refinement, gentleness, consideration, and respect for the individual.

The etiquette of asking permission in Ali Safi’s work is regarded as a high social and ethical value in Islamic ethics and remains relevant in modern society. Asking permission is not merely a matter of etiquette, but also serves as a guarantee of spiritual security, human dignity, the inviolability of personal space, and social balance.

The etiquette of asking permission described in Ali Safi’s “Adab ul-As’hab” has profound socio-philosophical significance. This principle serves as an ethical foundation operating at various levels, including the inviolability of personal space, moral chastity, respect, culture, and social stability. In today’s globalized environment and conditions of digital freedom, these values need to be studied and applied anew in a new context.

Gentleness and modesty are required when asking permission. It is not enough merely to ask, “May I enter?”; rather, making a sound (such as coughing or reciting tasbih), knocking gently on the door, and waiting at the door while turning away are also interpreted as forms of polite communication.

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