

Islamic Greeting (of Salaam): A Religious, Historical, and Sociolinguistic Perspective

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Islam has attached an evident great significance to greeting and made it part of the ethical system of the Muslim personality and manners with all their personal, interpersonal and social dimensions in addition to the religious ones. Concerning the last dimension, Muslims are guided by the Quran and Sunnah (or prophetic tradition) to make greeting perfect. As Islamic manners are done with different canons: compulsory and recommended (Wajib and Mustahab), and, forbidden and disliked (Muharaam and Makrooh), greeting is also controlled by them. Greeting of Islam is ruled by these canons with relation to some variables like: rank , manner , position , medium , age, number ,gender , tone, and religion of the greeted person. The canons extend not only to control Muslims greetings of each other but also to the greetings of non-Muslims, places, and even dead people. This extends the importance of the act of greeting to be not only a prerequisite to interaction or communication, but also a religious duty upon which one's act could be sinning or rewarded. Socially, greeting function differs with different religions and cultures. Muslim societies became civilized to the extent in which different forms of greeting became acceptable; still, Muslims tend to use the greet of Islam due to commitment to their religion and love to be rewarded for that. In this study, a brief historical account is given about the greet of Islam (salaam) focusing on the religious value that governs it semantically, syntactically and pragmatically in a socio/linguistic analysis to show how the act of greeting is governed by different canons and variables so that to be a religious act and not merely serve a pragmatic function.

0. Wordings of Greeting with peace (Salaam)

Terminologically this salutation (of Islam) means wish you safety. Before Islam, people greeted each other with different expressions that are either time bound or free (to use Halliday's, 1973 words). Time bound greetings are like "An'im Sabahan" (have a blissful morning) or "An'im Masa'an" (have a blissful evening) or "Huyiita Sabahan or huyiita Masa'an" which means may you live and be greeted each morning (or evening). Time free greetings are like: "Hayaaka Allah" (which means may Allah make you live longer) or "Abaita Alla'na" (never be cursed) or with "Salaamun 'Alaika" (peace on you) (to express peacefulness and deny war). It is worth mentioning that greeting with "salaam" in the latter is an invocation for one to be safe from all kinds of harm, and not only to live as in the former. With Islam they exclusively used "Assalam alaykum" and called for using it. It means I wish you nothing but safety from all that is bad (Ibn Manzoor, 1300 h: 289).

As-Salaam is one of the 100 attributes of Allah which means Being safe from defect or shortcoming. In this sense greeting with as-salaam alaika means to be endowed with the attribute of Allah seeking all that is good and safe from whatever bad. It means also to be safe from each other (Ibid:290). As-Salaam and as-salaama have the same meaning, Tabataba'i says (vol.11 : 36), and it seems to him that the meanings of peace and safety are

close to each other. The difference is that peace is safety by itself while safety is peace added to what one be safe from. You can say "he is in peace" but "he is safe from such and such" (ibid).

These words of supplication for the addressee (or greetee) for peace and blessings have been referred to in the Qur'an as well as Sunnah (in sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him)).

1. Greeting with Salaam (Peace) in the Glorious Quran

In the Glorious Quran Allah Commands Muslims to spread the greeting of “salaam”
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

"O you who have believed, do not enter houses other than your own houses until you ascertain welcome and greet their inhabitants. That is best for you; perhaps you will be reminded". [24:27]

وَإِذَا حُيِّئْتُمْ بِهِ بِحَبِيبَةٍ فَكَبِّرُوا بِأَحْسَنِ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا

"And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet [in return] with one better than it or [at least] return it [in a like manner]. Indeed, Allah is ever, over all things, an Accountant." [4-86]

Muslims typically greet each other with the Arabic phrase "Assalam alaikom". The complete form of the Islamic greeting is "Assalam alaikom wa Rahmatullahi wa barakatuh". And the complete answer is "Wa alaikom assalam wa Rahmatullahi wabarakatuh (Al Saeed:53-4). However, one can say only "Assalam alaykum" and that suffices, and the proper response would be "wa-alaykum assalam" .

The Quran instructs believers to address each other with a greeting of peace: "peace be upon you: peace be upon you too".

"Such a greeting is meant to reflect the serenity that comes to Muslims through their submission to God. It also heralds the peaceful relations that should exist between all Muslims" (Gulevich, 2004:189). This "ceremonial salutation is a prayer of peace and well-being for one another in this world and in the Hereafter" (Ghamidi,1971:2). As a word of salutation, the word Salaam appeared in definite and indefinite conditions in the Glorious Quran with different meanings (see appendix)

2. Greeting in Prophetic Tradition

It is related (as being from Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.)) that Allah, the Exalted, was the first to order Adam to greet angels and see how they would respond. Adam said: 'As-Salaam Alaikum' .They said: 'As-Salaam Alaikum wa rahmatul'lah'. They added: wa rahmatul'lah'. This greet became Adam's greet and the greet of his offspring. Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) ordered the Companions to greet one another with Salam upon entering Madinah (Al-O'shan,n.d :74).

The Prophet also said: "You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I not guide to something, which, if you do it, will make you love one another? Spread greetings of peace among yourselves (Ash-Shulhuoob, n.d.:55). And in another Hadeeth said : "The rights of a Muslim upon another Muslim are six" and when asked what they are he said: "If you meet a Muslim, then extend to him greetings of peace " (ibid :55).It is a source of love and intimacy as prophet Muhammed (pbuh) said that, if people want him to teach them how to love each other, this id done through greeting (As-Sabhani,1410 h.:19)

Greeting others accumulates the good deeds of Muslims counted by Allah (Al-Mufeed, 1414 h.: 60). Islam makes greeting a means to impart love and show how man is positive towards others. It is of being modest to start others greeting, Imam As-Sadiq says (Al-Kulaini: 1367: 646).

3. The Roots of "Salaam" (and "peace") in Different Religions

Greeting with peace is as old as humanity. This form of greeting is rooted in different religions other than Islam among which Judaism and Christianity.

3.1. Judaism

Greeting with "s̄lm" is acknowledged in the Septuagint and translated as "peace" (Lieu, n.d : 166). The "semitic formula of greeting and farewell, oral or written, is the root 's̄lm'...(in which) a wider range of meaning than the English 'peace' may often be intended" (ibid:164).

Referring to Hebrew letters from wide geographical provinces from 630-587 and Aramic ones 500-400 B.C.E. (ibid: 165) found that both express the greeting in its simplest form (peace) though not commonly. The more commonly used is the extended greeting in a separate clause or as a prayer in which gods grant the recipient "peace" as in "I send you peace" which is more prosaic. Peace is combined also with favour, prosperity and long life (ibid). "Peace be with you" are the words with which Jesus greeted his disciples. It is a greeting and a blessing that stands for the Hebrew word "Shalom".

It's also not just a call for a cease fire between all the warring factions found in this world, whether among family or friends or neighbours. No, when used as a greeting, it is much more than wishing someone well and that their life would be free from conflict... It points to God's promise of a new creation flowering after the Fall that occurred in the ancient garden. It points to a multi-coloured form of fruitful living in the richest of blessings. It speaks of the budding of a restored relationship with God, of a broken world made whole again.

(Christi:1-2)

www.christourking.ca/sermons/john20_19_31_2017.pdf

3.2. Christianity

Another form of greet in the New Testament is to be doubled or expanded as in "Peace be multiplied to you" (Lieu: 166). Or as in this greeting with an apostolic stamp from *Epistula Apostolorum* (160 C.E.): "Grace to you and peace from the Almighty God through our Lord Jesus Christ be multiplied in knowledge of him" (ibid:176-77)

The apostle of Christ (Paul) used this expression: "Grace to you and peace from God" ((1 Cor. 1:1-2) quoted in Lieu:167) recalling Semitic conventions of using separate clause and "peace". Not only he used a Semitic greeting, but, combined it also with another benefit of grace; which is of Aramic or Hebrew precedent. He uses a form with Scriptural feel in his letters.

This ancient greeting is still in use today among Jews; however, among the majority of those who still use it, it seems to no longer carry with it the same kind of weightiness it once did. Its secular use seems to have swallowed-up the sacred sense of the word. So, now, among modern Jews, it serves as a simple "Hello" or "Goodbye" (and since the same word is used for both it's makes you wonder how anyone can know whether they're coming or going).

Sadly, its use, even in this sense, as a simple greeting, even in Israel, is on the decline.

www.christourking.ca/sermons/john20_19_31_2017.pdf

"Grace and peace to you" is to mean: "I hope good things are coming your way and your life is free of trouble". It is a way of saying, "I care about you" (Graham, 2016).

4. Greeting Manners in Islam

Greeting is a tool that enhances social communication. It helps people to make each others' presence felt, or to show attention, or suggest a kind of relationship of people who come in contact with each other either in passing, or to start a conversation.

Islam calls for greeting and makes it part of worship. It is a means to impart love and warmth to people in the society. It is from "Sunnah To Initiate Greetings Of Peace" but it is "waajib (compulsory) To Return The Greetings" _capitalized in the origin (Al-Shalhuob.n.d.:55). It is a good deed for everyone to start greeting whether old or young, rich or poor, with or without high stature; for this shows humbleness, generosity, love and intimacy. All these traits trigger faith, which lead to Heaven (AL-Jar-Allah, n.d :5). To show the importance of greeting prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said " Do not answer he who starts talking before greeting" (AI-Kulaini,1367:644)

Salaam is expressed verbally and physically (usually in combination) and is sensitive to some para- and extra- linguistic features.

4.1 Linguistic Features of Verbal Greeting

There are some conventions that rule verbal greeting, which are related to the format of greeting, response, and tone.

4.1.1. The Verbal Format

The best format of greeting with "salaam" is : 'Assalamu Alaikum warahmatul'laahi wa baraaaktoho' (Al-O'shan,n.d :74). This format neglects number. The form should come in **plural** even if the greetee is singular. The same **order** should be followed and it is not praiseworthy for one to reverse it and greet another by saying: 'Alaikum as-Salaam'. The Prophet (p.b.u.h) said: ' Do not greet another by saying: 'Alaikum as salaam', for this is the greeting one greets the dead with.' (ibid: 74-5). This is supported by (Al-Shalhuob: 58-9) referring to authentic narrations.

4.1.2. Response to a Greet

Responding to a greet is also ruled by Islamic conventions. It is Wajib (i.e. a compulsory duty) to respond to the greeting unless in some conditions (see 3.1.4 below), otherwise one would be sinning (AlShalhuob:n.d.:56). There is a consensus among the scholars in this issue: that it is compulsory to return greetings of peace ; the proof is in verse 86 in An-Nisa Sura "When a (courteous) greeting is offered you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy. Allah takes careful account of all things" : وإذا حييتم بتحية فحيوا بأحسن منها أو ردوها . The following conventions are greatly considered by Muslims:

1. The responder should reply with conjunctive "and: wa" (و) as in : "Wa" 'Alaikum as-Salaam' in plural.
2. If one greets a group of people, it will be better if all of them respond, but, it is sufficient for one of them to respond (Al-O'shan,n.d: 75). There is no sin upon not returning the greet by others, Al-Shalhuob says referring to Ali Bin Abi Talib saying "when a group passes by, it is sufficient for one of them to give greetings of peace, and as for those who are sitting, it is sufficient for one of them to respond" (Shulhuob:56).

3. If two meet and greet each other then both should respond to each others' greeting (ibid: 77).
4. "It is necessary for one to respond to the Salam written to him in a letter as it is compulsory to respond to the Salam that is uttered" (ibid :83).
5. It is praiseworthy for the one who cannot respond to the *Salam* for a valid reason to explain why he could not ; (for more details see (ibid: 82).

Response to a greet has less importance than starting it. If a greeting equals seventy good deeds it is accounted as sixty nine for the one who starts it and only one good to the one who responds (Al-Majlisi:11). Even angels response to the one who greets fellow believers (ibid:6).If the salaam is done voluntarily response to it would be compulsory (Al-Kulaini,1367:644.vol 2).

4.2. (Para)-linguistic Features

These features are associated with variations in tone of voice as tone.

4.2.1. Voice volume (or Tone)

Not only is it praiseworthy to use a certain form, but also to make it audible. One should repeat the Salam three times if the gathering is large and one is unsure if all have heard the greeting properly. The Messenger of Allah would repeat the Salam three times (Al-O'shan,n.d : 76). It is Sunnah (binding prophetic tradition) to repeat greeting (AL_Salhoob:59).

As the given situation requires, the voice level of greetings may vary. "It is Sunnah to Initiate Greetings and Respond To Them out Loud" _capitalized in the origin (Al_Shalhoobn.d:59) for it is a "blessed and good greeting" (ibid: 60). Yet, one should not raise his voice when greeting another if there are others sleeping there. The pitch should be audible to those who are awake but would not disturb a sleeping person (Al-O'shan: 77, Al-Shalhoob: 66).

4.3. Extra-linguistic Features

These are connected with properties of the situation in which the language is used.

4.3.1. Physical Greeting (Gestures)

It is forbidden in Islam to greet with gestures (like waving or other hand movement), unless in certain conditions: "for example one is busy with prayer, one is too far away from the other person, one is mute, or the person is deaf"(AL-Shalhoob: 70). In these conditions, one is allowed to give the appropriate gesture. The physical method of giving Salam is by handshaking ,hugging, and kissing (Al-O'shan,n.d: 80), but not bowing.

Discussing shaking hands, kissing, or nodes Gulevich (2004:187) says:

Greeting customs vary by country, culture, and by the degree of closeness and trust in the relationship between two people. In the Arab world people may greet same sex friends with a handshake, or an embrace and a kiss on the cheek. Unrelated men and women will usually not kiss one another in greeting.

4.3.2. Handshaking (or Motioning)

One of the best ways to greet is to shake hands. Greeting each other with shakes makes hatred vanishes as in the prophetic tradition (Al-Souooti,1401: 507). It is related that handshaking is first initiated by the people of Yemen (Jaru-Allah :23)

- If Muslims meet, their greeting of each others' should be accompanied with shaking hands; this makes their sins be forgiven (Al-O'shan,n.d: 80). To show the value of shaking hands to his followers, Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) "would not remove his hand from the person who shook his hand until he would remove his hand" (ibid: 81). Yet, this is to be done with restriction with women
- Similarly, related to shaking hand the situation in which one greets deaf and mute. One should greet the people with special needs by motioning with their hands and uttering the Salam (ibid: 83).

4.3.3. Hugging

Some state that hugging in Islamic culture is specific to traveling. Some scholars have stated that hugging is appropriate if someone has been absent for a long period of time, or, if the person is a man of honor and stature in the community (ibid: 81)

4.3.4. Kissing

4.3.4.1. Kiss in Islamic tradition

In Islamic literature, some scholars mention that:

one may kiss the other's head, as for kissing the hands many Scholars disliked it ... Kissing someone's face, cheeks or lips is prohibited... Some Scholars legalized kissing the hands of the pious, and hands of the scholars out of respect for them. In general, it is unpraiseworthy for one to kiss anyone else's hand...If someone wants to kiss anyone else's hand on account of that person's ascetic behavior it is not blameworthy...If one kisses another's hand due to that individual's wealth and influence then it is highly unpraiseworthy.

(ibid)

4.3.4.2. Christian Holy Kiss/Hug

Christians also greet each other with a kiss (in Sunday worship service).

Brothers and sisters in Christ will greet each other with warm handshakes, a holy kiss, or both. The verbal greeting is a hearty "God Bless You." Although local brothers may not always greet each other with the kiss at every service, visiting brothers from other congregations most often will. Sisters are much more apt to practice this greeting even on the local level...It is well to mention that the practice of the "holy kiss" is often replaced with what we might call the "holy hug." Some believers are more comfortable with the hug. This type of expression does not necessarily indicate a lesser degree of charity: however, scripture really does encourage the greeting with a kiss ... on the cheek and not on lips lest someone might be offended when a brother or sister offers the cheek. The cheek kiss has and is still offered in mid eastern culture and we can assume this is what the early church practiced, and was encouraged by the apostles. The apostle Paul states in Romans 16;16 "Salute one another with a holy kiss, the churches of Christ salute you." Salute has a similar meaning as greet.... All brothers and sisters will greet each other within the same gender, brother to brother, and sister to sister.

<http://www.acc-nazarean.org/truth-for-our-time.html>

In many epistles one also may find a call for Christians “to greet one another with a holy kiss”, that “servants of Christ need to zealously press forward”. www.valleybible.net It is mentioned that “In Jesus’ and the apostles’ days, kisses are primarily for relatives, teachers, rulers, and those we love as an expression of love (Luke 15:20; Acts 20:37), respect (Luke 7:45) and honor (Luke 7:38, 45; 22:47)” (Lee, 2017: 2). “The physical act of Christian kissing is the horizontal connection between the spiritual relatives of the family of God...[A]postles encourage this physical act among believers with an intent to forge unity in Christ” (ibid: 4). Thus, the

“key purposes of physical gestures in the form of kissing, hugging, and shaking hands are (1) to be reminded of our renewed status in Christ, i.e., the vertical aspect, (2) the unity of the body of Christ, i.e., the horizontal aspect, and (3) the witnessing value to the gospel, i.e., the external aspect.”

(ibid:12)

4.3.5. Standing up

In formal situations, people are accustomed to stand up to greet the one coming if they are seated. But, during the Prophet’s life time and the Rightly Guided Caliphs, no one would do so because the prophet disliked that; unless with those coming from a trip. It is narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) stood up to greet Ikrimah (Al-O’shan: 82). “He also got up to greet (Sa’d b. Mu’aadth) and said to the Ansar ‘Stand up to greet your master’, when he came forward to greet in the case of Bani Quraidhah” (ibid).

4.4. Conditions for not Replying

It is being disliked to greet people who are praying or reciting or in sermon or ablute (or are in restrooms), or, eating or fighting, or other acts (AL-Jar Allah :32).

5. Greeting Conventions in Islam

Greeting does not take a static form in Islam but it is graded, situation-specific, and ruled by some conventions. Furthermore, Islamic conventions control both the verbal and physical aspects of greeting. These aspects vary with relation to status, age, sex and in addition to other ones. Greeting in Islam is sensitive to the following variables:

5.1. Manner (Gradation)

Greeting of peace can be intensified and extended that one gets reward for the extension. There are three grades from least to best. Al-Shulhuoob (n.d.:57) states them from the best as: “best, second best, as third best” as :

1. The best greeting is “ ‘Assalaamu A’laikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakaatuhu ’ :Peace as well as the mercy and blessing of Allah upon you”.
2. The second best is: “ ‘Assalaamu A’laikum Warahmatullah’ Peace and the mercy and of Allah upon you ”.
3. The third best is ‘Assalaamu A’laikum’: Peace upon you”.

Response, or greet in return, is also graded according to them. One should give a similar or better greeting (ibid)_An-Nisa Sura verse :86 above). In case that one greets with the best greeting(no.1) , the respondent “should not add anything after ‘Wabarakaatuhu’ even if that is where the other person ended”(ibid:58).

5.2. Situational Specificity

The greeting of Islam changes with situation. There are some conditions that are related to the greetees' kinetic activity, others related to identity.

5.2.1. Greeter's Activity

Greeting covers a considerable area in our daily life. Being as such makes it connected with different daily activities and situations that the greeting person should be aware of in order to know when to greet and when not to do.

5.2.1.1. When Recommended not to Greet.

It is not recommended to greet in the following situations :

- Greeting People doing religious services:

Greeting **one who is praying** is a matter of debate among Muslim authorities. Some say that one should not start greeting while praying but one should reply if greeted, for it is obligatory in Islam to reply to a greeting even when praying; otherwise one would be sinning (Al-Khou'i, n.d: 198). Yet one's reply should be verbally the same as the greeting in definiteness and number, audible, and some other requisites (ibid: 198-200).

For others it is "lawful for one to greet one who is praying. The praying person should respond with a hand motion. There is no specific method in doing this, for the Prophet would greet at times using his hand and at others with his head. What is authentically reported is that he would greet by waving his hand." (Al-O'shan:78). As stated in Al-Shalhoob (p:71) : "It is permissible to greet Someone Who Is Praying, And The Latter May respond With A Gesture".

It is lawful for one to greet **one who is reciting the Qur'an** and he must respond " (Al-O'shan:71). Even if one extends the greeting, the reciter must respond (Al-Ashoor: 72).

- It is unpraiseworthy for one to greet one who is relieving Himself (Al-O'shan:78) (in the restroom) and it is recommended for him to later return the greeting after he performs ablution. (Al-Shalhoob:72) because it is a matter of dislike to remember or mention Allah except while in a state of purity (ibid:73).

5.2.1.2. When Recommended to Greet

In Islamic conventions, the one who is arriving is recommended to initiate greeting (ibid: 61). There are many authentic narrations supporting this. "It is Sunnah for the Rider to Greet The Pedestrian The Pedestrian To Greet The One Who Is Seated, The Few To Greet The Many, And The Young To Greet The Old" (ibid:62). The one who passes by should greet the one sitting regardless of who is younger or older, or alone or one from a group sitting (ibid).

- "It is of the Sunnah that the rider gives salam to the one who is walking and that the walking should give salam to the one who is seated "(Al-O'shan:75-6)
- "If two greet each other in their cars, or while they are walking, the younger of the two should greet the other. If the elder greets the younger then he will receive the reward " (ibid:76). If they are of the same age "the one who initiate the greeting is the better of the two", (Al-shalhoob:63) states, and when one avoids this recommended act of precedence that does not necessarily mean that he performs a disliked act rather he forsakes the better deed.

Recurrence of salaam is natural in Islam. It is recommended to "give greeting of peace ,even if the same situation repeated over and over again", Al-shalhuoob states referring to what the Prophet said :

When one of you meets his brother, he should give him greetings of peace;and if they [then] become separated by a tree or a wall or a [large]stone [as they are walking],he should greet him when they meet again (after having passed the barrier that separated them)

(ibid: 64)

5.2.2. Greetee's Identity

5.2.2.1. Religion

Muslims are forbidden to initiate greetings of peace to the Christians or Jews (people of the Book); and, "when it is necessary to greet them, one should use a wording other than the Islamic greeting, like "How are you?", or whatever (Al-Shalhuoob:67).

Some see that it is lawful for one to greet a group of people among who may be some non-Muslims, but his intention should be to greet the Muslims (Al-O'shan:77). "Scholars agree that it is permissible to initiate greetings of peace to a gathering that contains a mix of Muslims and disbelievers" (ibid: 68). "with the intention of addressing Muslims"(ibid:69)

Yet, one should not initially greet the People of the Book with Salam. One can greet them with a greeting other than the *Salam*. If the non-Muslims greet the Muslims with *Salam* but it is not clear what they actually say, one should respond by saying: '**Wa alaikum**'. But if it is audible and clear, then one can respond appropriately (ibid: 77). In the same sense, one should reply to a greet from the people of the Book (Christians and Jews) with "Wa-'alaikum" only (ibid: 67)

5.2.2.2. Gender

Scholars take the issue of greeting a strange woman differently in Islam. Some legalized it and others prohibited it.The preponderant opinion in this issue is that "If the woman is elderly then there is no sin in greeting her (verbally) with salaam; but, if she is young, then it is not appropriate" (Al-O'shan: 76). Some Islamic authorities forbid greeting strange women unless if there is no fear of temptation: that "if one comes across a young beautiful woman, it is not permissible to greet her, but that if she is old, it is permissible" (Alshalhoob: 64).

If a woman greets she should say "Alikum As-Salaam" and not "As-Salaam Alaikum" (Al_Qumi,1363:470)

5.2.2.3. Greeting Dead

Not only alive people should be greeted in Islam but also the dead. It is mentioned (in Al-O'shan: 83) that is appropriate to give *Salam* to those who are in the grave. There are different formats for this Salam, of them is the following: 'As-Salaamo Alaikum daara qomin mo'me'neen wa in'naa in shaa'Allah be'kom laa'he'qoon.' i.e. May you be safe and secure O believers. We will soon, by the will of Allah, be with you'. It is related that prophet Muhammed (pbuh) prohibited using the reversed order of salaam "Alaika As_Salaam" for it is the greet of dead people. (Sunan Ibn dawood)

5.2.2.4. Greeting Places

Salaam in Islam extends to inanimate beings as places whether home or Masjid.It is recommended that one extends greeting of peace to entering one's home (AL-O'shan:78).

It is praiseworthy for one to give the Salam upon entering his home, even if it is empty. It is narrated that Ibn Umar said that if one enters an uninhabited home, let him say: 'As -Salaamu alaina wa ala e'baadil'laahis'saaliheen'.

(ibid.)

Another place that worth greeting in Islam is the Masjid. "It is praiseworthy for him who enters the Masjid to perform Tahiyatul Masjid" (ibid). Before greeting people there, One should pray two units (Tahiyatul-Masjid) upon entering a Masjid (Shalhoob:75).

*It is not lawful for one who enters the Masjid while the Imam is delivering the Khutbah (Sermon) to greet those in the Masjid with Salam. Those who are listening should not respond to him verbally, but greeting him with a hand motion is lawful. If one greets someone next to him in the Masjid during the Khutbah, he should shake his hand and should not speak. He should respond to him after the first Khutbah is over. If one greets the other during the second khutbah, he should not respond until it is over.(AL-O'shan p:78-9, AlShalhoob:77)

5.2.3. Number

It is taught in Prophetic Tradition that : the smaller group should give Salam to the larger group (Al_oshan:77). One should also use plural pronoun even if one is responding to the greeting of a single Muslim: Wa-'Alaikumas-Salaam instead of Wa-'Alaikas-Salaam (Al-Shalhoob: 57).

5.2.4. Age

It is recommended to greet young children to encourage and train them early in their lives "to apply Islamic manners" and to "accustom oneself to the qualities of humbleness and gentleness in dealing" (ibid : 65).The Prophet used to extend greetings of peace to them.

It is praiseworthy for one to greet the youngsters. Messenger of Allah (pbuh) used to do it.' (Bukhari) (Al-O'shan:77) .

Concerning the response to a greet, Shalhoob mentions the opinion held by the majority of scholars (ibid: 65-66): "no sin imputed to the child for not returning the greeting; nonetheless, children should of course be trained to extend and return greetings of peace". But, an adult has to respond to a child's greeting and "he sins if he does not respond". He states that the reason is that compulsory acts of worship are not binding to upon children (ibid: 65).

5.2.5. Medium:

If greeting with salaam is not direct but reported, one should reply to the greet to both the one who conveys the greet (the reporter) and the one greeting. "One should respond to the greeting of an individual if he sends it with another" (Al-Shalhuob (n.d:75) says referring to a man came to the Prophet saying: 'My father gives you his Salam.' The Prophet responded saying: 'Alaika wa ala abeekas salaam.' (May peace be upon you and your father) (Al-O'shan:76).It is recommended to greet the person who conveys a greeting on the behalf of others .

5.2.6. Rank (power)

Imam Ridha says that one who greets rich people differently from greeting the poor will have the anger of Allah in the doomsday (Al-Amili, : 64)

Yet, when one enters a place and greets people among whom there are some clerics, one should greet all first, then he should give another greet to the clerics to show or give them prestige even if there were only one (AL-Jar Allah : 25).

5.2.7. Relationship

In Sunnah, one should greet his fellow Muslims with the Salam. It is related that the Prophet said : " Greet those whom you know and those whom you do not know", and said: " Of the signs of the Final Hour is that people will greet one another only if they know them" (Al-O'shan:75).

Referring to the same saying of the Prophet, (AL_Shalhuob:61) says: the greatest benefit of making greeting inclusive is uniting the hearts of Muslim and keeping them free from rancor or hatred.

5.3. In Leave-taking

The Prophet (pbuh) said: 'If one of you completes the sitting let him give Salam. If one wants to stand up to leave let him give Salam'.(AlOshan:79)

It is Sunnah to give As-salaam when parting from others (Al-Shalhuob: 80).

6. Principles of Greeting

In sociolinguistic studies greeting is associated with courtesy and politeness, which make it have a social function. The functions of greeting for Goffman (1971: 74) are : "politeness, presence validation (for self and others), threat denial, petition preliminary, display, and identity establishment for self and others" that the main functions are to (re)establish relations and acknowledge social status. Firth (1972:1) takes greeting as an indicator of social acceptability of encountering with others, and, which reduces anxiety. Goody (1972) views the social function of greeting in "opening a communicative act and establishing and maintaining identity and rank". It shows also the availability of interlocutor (Felecan, 2015: 5).

Some linguists, as Searle (1969) and Firth (1972), see greeting as formulaic and have no propositional content or denotational value. Others believe that greeting can communicate some information depending on the context. It can ask for or give some information, or, sanction some actions (as Duranti_ 1997 found in his empirical study of Samoan greeting).

There are different forms of greeting which are chosen socially according to some variables as: degree of intimacy or familiarity and distance, age, gender, identity, social rank, setting, kinship, and dispensation (Laver, 1981). Social communication is contingent on appropriateness of greeting. An inappropriate greeting could be a face-threatening act if power and distance variables are violated while an appropriate one could be face saving act (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Absence of greeting or greeting response is not neutral rather it violates politeness rules and threatens the faces of interlocutors (Shleykina, 2016:59).

Shleykina classifies English verbal greeting according to presence or lack of the time indicator, contextual factors, and lexico-semantic content (ibid: 61-62) into:

- Time free (as hello), time bound (as good morning), and seasonal (as happy new year) (Halliday: 1975).
- Formal and informal according to contextual factors such as power, distance, age, number, and level of formality (Greere, 2005; Leech & Svartvik, 2002).

- Personal and non-personal: personal greetings demonstrate interest in the greeted person while non-personal shows interest in non personal and common topics.

7. Discussion

Islam is a religion of ethics and manners. Like many other religions, it calls people to be perfect with virtues and avoid vices. These manners have some personal, interpersonal and social dimensions in addition to the religious ones. Like any matter in life, greeting is part of communicating with others and, therefore, it is never neglected in Islamic teachings. Muslims are guided by the Quran and Sunnah (or prophetic tradition) to make greeting perfect. There are some conventions that govern greeting in Islamic canons of what is forbidden, liked, compulsory, and recommended. It is being liked to give greeting but compulsory to return it. The one who initiates greeting has the utmost favour and gets reward from Allah. The one who responds is less rewarded (has less favoure from Allah), and should have an excuse if not responding. Salaam is done voluntarily but response is compulsorily. There are certain conditions in which gestures or waving is allowed to accompany greeting: greeting a mute people or a person far in distance. Greeting is usually accompanied with handshaking, hugging, or, kissing (the latter is disliked in Islam).

There are some restrictions on greeting in Muslim culture that it is governed by the situation and the activity of the greeter and greatee in addition to some other variables. A praying person should not greet but should reply if be greeted in a certain formula. A relieving person should reply later because it is disliked to mention Allah unless in a state of purity. Other variables are related to greatee's identity. Muslims should not start greeting non_Muslims, or, greet them but not with Islam greeting (of salaam). Places also should be greeted in Islamic culture as if they were inhabited. It is recommended to initiate greeting youngsters to teach them how to be humble and gentle. People should be greeted equally whether rich or poor, acquaintance or not. This imparts intimacy and love.

Although greeting is seen by most linguists as formulaic, it is not entirely so. The formulae the greeting takes differ with different variables and contexts. Most of what linguists say about greeting is general and can be taken universally. The difference lies in the function greeting has and the role it plays in our life which differs in different cultures. Greeting is "useful tool for comparing between cultures and it is not merely a conversational opening" as Jibreen (2010: 24) concludes.

Verbally greeting could be analyzed with relation to different levels of language. Semantically, if we examine the formula of Islamic greeting we find that the propositional content is the core of the act. If greeting in other cultures is simply formulaic and phatic, in the Islamic culture the matter is tremendously different. The Islamic greeting transmits wishes and inclinations of safety and a pray for mercy and blessing to the greatee. Having such an inclination towards people the greeter seeks rewards from Allah, and this makes greeting an act of worship rather than a mere means to maintain social communication. It is a (religious) face saving act that imparts safety and not only maintains social communication and, therefore, greeting in Islam has a religio-pragmatic function.

Syntactically, the order of words is bound to the greatee. The natural order in the best greeting is "As-Salaam Aleikum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuh" and the response "wa Alaikum As-Salaam wa Rahmatullah wa Barakaatuh". The order changes with the greatee's identity: a woman greets with "Alaikum As-Salaam" and the dead is greeted with "Alaika As-Salaam" in a shift in number from plural to singular.

As for the level of phonology, uttering a greeting is subject to some measures. There are conditions in which it is recommended to greet loudly while other conditions require to greet in a low voice (see 4.2.1.)

Socially, greeting is bounded by variables that direct social communications as power, distance, gender, number, identity, rank, age, medium, and relationship. The social function of greeting as seen by linguists is to establish identity and rank of self and others. Since greeting indicates social acceptability and reduces anxiety, the absence of greeting or its response violates politeness. In Islam, this extends to be respectively as an act to be rewarded for, or, sinning against.

8. Conclusions

Studying the greeting of Islam (salaam) religiously, historically and linguistically comes with following findings:

1. Islam greeting (salaam) is part of the ethical system of the Muslim personality and manners on the personal, interpersonal, and social levels. On the personal level it is an act of worship if one follows the canons of Islam in performing it the right way. It establishes the identity of self and others in a way that maintains social communication on the interpersonal level. Salaam is a face saving act that that generates positive feelings and induce in the greetees positive emotions. It is also intended to narrow the social distance and eliminate social differences (on the social level). It generates social interaction and interpersonal closeness since it is not conditioned with acquaintance, and Muslims are taught to greet whoever they meet.
2. The typical greeting of Muslim culture (salaam) if traced historically is the only greet preferred along the history of Islam due to its religious value. Despite the fact that is rooted in Judaism in the Hebrew word "shalom" and "peace" in Christianity, Muslim culture is the only religious culture that has continued using it as it is regarded as a part of worship.
3. Greeting manner of Islam is governed by Islamic canons of compulsory and recommended, and, forbidden and disliked. These are related to some variables of : identity, gender, age, rank, number, medium, and relationship.
4. Verbally, the formulaic greeting of Islam " Assalam alaikom wa Rahmatullahi wa barakatuh" has many alternative greeting formulae with para and extra/linguistic features for each contextual situation (governed by the variables mentioned in this study) not to be violated semantically, syntactically, and phonologically. Any violation occurs signifies a religious disobedience in the act of greeting.
5. Reply to a greeting in Islam is also governed by some rules where it could be excused not to reply or obligatory to reply in different situations. Since greeting enhances social acceptability and reduces anxiety to have a peaceful society, absence of greeting or greeting response is regarded as a sin in Islamic tradition; let alone as being impolite.
6. In terms of manner, Islamic greeting could be graded from least to best, upon which reward from Allah also grades.
7. Greeting with Salaam is not used only in initiating a greeting, rather, it is used also in departing from others.

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Appendix

Definite and indefinite forms of salaam

1.1 Definite

1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1 The word as-salaam comes definite in the following ayas (or verses) with different senses:

٢ ولا تقولوا لمن القى اليكم السلام لست مؤمنا/ ٩٤ النساء

3 In (An-Nisa Sura :Verse 94) "salaam" is given the sense of peace.

٤ يهدي به الله من اتبع رضوانه سبيل السلام / ١٦ المائدة

5 In this context (of AL-Ma'idah Sura, verse 16) it means : (safety from misfortunes that disturb happiness here (in this life) and in the afterlife (Tabataba'i:263-4) vol 5.

٦ لهم دار السلام عند ربهم وهوليلهم بما كانوا يعملون/ ١٢٧ الانعام

7 In AL-An'aam Sura (verse: 127) it means be safe from hidden and apparent vices. A place where no threat of death, harm, sickness, poverty, or any loss of a dear person or distress and sadness. (Tabataba'i:366) vol 7.

٨ والله يدعوا الى دار السلام / ٢٥ يونس

9 A different sense is given in Yunus Sura (verse:25). As-salaam is one of the attributes of Allah because the transcendental Being of Allah is goodness itself that is void of evil (Tabataba'I :36 vol. 10). Heaven is called Dar As-salaam because its residence see no harm or evil. It is the House of Allah the Sublime who is distant from whatever evil or harmful (ibid:37).

١٠ والسلام علي يوم ولدت ويوم اموت ويوم ابعث حيا / ٣٣ مريم

11 As-salaam here (in Maryam Sura, verse: 33) is close to safety and being definite makes it comprehensive. Jesus seeks safety to himself in three positions that summarize his being. (Tabataba'I :48 vol. 16)

١٢ قد جنناك باية من ربك والسلام على من اتبع الهدى / ٤٧ طه

13 The meaning that as-salaam is said to give (in Ta-Ha Sura, verse:47) is farewell to refer to the end of mission. Briefly the religious mission is safety to those who follow the right path and happiness to those guided with it that they see no distress here or in the afterlife (ibid:170).

١٤ هو الله الذي لا اله الا هو الملك القدوس السلام / ٢٣ الجثر

15 As mentioned in AL-Hashr Sura (verse: 23), it is an attribute of Allah that shows He meets believers with safety from any harm (Tabataba'I :265 vol. 19) .

16 1.2. Indefinite

16.1.1.1.1.1.1.1 In the following Quranic Suras salaam is in an indefinite form and given different contextual interpretations:

١٧ واذا جاءك الذين يؤمنون بآياتنا فقل سلام عليكم / ٥٤ الانعام

18 In this verse (54) from AL-An'am Sura "Salaam" means safety that Allah orders prophet Muhammad to give to believers who commit a sin and repent to be forgiven and mercified. (Tabataba'i :105, vol. 7)

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- ١٩ ونادوا اصحاب الجنة ان سلام عليكم / ٤٦ الاعراف
- 20 "Salaam", here, also refers to being safe from any harm. (AL A'raaf, verse:46)
- ٢١ دعواهم فيها سبحانك اللهم وتحيتهم فيها سلام / ١٠ يونس
- 22 To be in an absolute safety in Heaven (Yunus :10).
- ٢٣ قيل يانوح اهبط بسلام منا وبركات عليك / ٤٨ هود
- 24 "Salaam" in (Hud:48) refers to greet with safety.
- ٢٥ ولقد جاءت رسل ابراهيم بالبشرى قالوا سلاما قال سلام / ٦٩ هود
- 26 In Hud Sura (verse 69) Abram and the angels greet each other with indefinite condition to show grandeur and respect. Abram's greet is in the مرفوع mode to show that he greets them with a better greet . For rhetoricians a greet in the mode مرفوع is stylistically higher than منصوب. (Tabataba'i :332 vol. 10).
- ٢٧ سلام عليكم بما صبرتم فنعم عقبى الدار / ٢٤ الرعد
- 28 Salaam in Ar-R'ad Sura (verse: 24) means to be in peace and safety. (Tabataba'i :382 vol. 13)
- ٢٩ خالدين فيها بأذن ربهم تحيتهم فيها سلام / ٢٣ ابراهيم
- 30 In Ibrahim Sura (verse :23) greeting each other in paradise is done with salaam : such a greeting of safety and peace (Tabataba'i :48 vol. 12).
- ٣١ ان المتقين في جنات وعيون ادخلوها بسلام امنين / ٤٦ الحجر
- 32 AL-Hijr Sura (verse: 46) describes pious people entrance paradise with "salaam" or peace and residing safe from any harm or evil. (Tabataba'i :179 vol. 12)
- ٣٣ يقولون سلام عليكم ادخلوا الجنة بما كنتم تعملون / ٣٢ النحل
- 34 Angels in An-Nahl Sura (verse:32) assure believers verbally to be secure. (Tabataba'i :250, vol. 12)
- ٣٥ وسلام عليه يوم ولد ويوم يموت ويوم يبعث حيا / ١٥ مريم
- 36 Salaam in Maryam Sura (verse:15) means a grand safety from whatever harmful or threatening to the self in the three situations of birth , purgatory after death , and on the day of resurrection (Tabataba'i :19, vol. 14).
- ٣٧ قال سلام عليك ساستغفر لك ربي انه كان بي حفيا / ٤٧ مريم
- 38 In the same Sura (verse:47) Abraham's father Aazar (his paternal uncle) threatens him but Abraham meets him with generous greet of safety (salaam) (Tabataba'i :62, vol. 14).
- ٣٩ قل الحمد لله وسلام على عباده الذين اصطفى / ٥٩ النمل
- 40 Salaam in An-Naml Sura (verse: 59) implies submission to messengers and readiness to follow their guidance (Tabataba'i: 415, vol. 15).
- ٤١ سلام عليكم لانبئني الجاهلين / ٥٥ القصص
- 42 Salaam in AL-Qasas Sura (verse:55) again means you get safety from us. It is also a sign of leave-taking and departure being dissatisfied with them. (Tabataba'i :55, vol. 16)
- ٤٣ تحيتهم يوم يلقونه سلام واعد لهم اجرا كريما / ٤٤ الاحزاب
- 44 When believers meet Allah (as described in AL-Ahzab Sura, verse:44) He and angels receive them with salaam that they will be in peace and safety from any harm or torture. (Tabataba'i :350-1, vol. 16).
- ٤٥ سلام قولنا من رب رحيم / ٥٨ يس
- 46 In Ys-Sin Sura (verse:58) salaam comes indefinite with the omission of predicate to bring the effect of amplification. It is a greeting from Allah and not from angels (Tabataba'i :106, vol. 17).
- ٤٧ وتركنا عليه في الآخرين . سلام على نوح في العالمين / ٧٩ الصافات

- 48 Verse 79 in As-Saffat Sura gives an extensive greet from Allah to Noah in all the worlds. It is the only extensive greet from Allah to whoever beneath Him (Tabataba'i: 153, vol. 17).
- ٤٩ وتركننا عليه في الآخرين . سلام على ابراهيم / ١٠٩ الصافات
- 50 Another indefinite greet in the same Sura (verses :109,120, and 130) to show amplification (Tabataba'i:160, vol. 17).
- ٥١ وتركننا عليهما في الآخرين. سلام على موسى وهرون / ١٢٠ الصافات
٥٢ وتركننا عليه في الآخرين. سلام على ال ياسين/ ١٣٠ الصافات
٥٣ وسلام على المرسلين. والحمد لله رب العالمين / ١٨١ الصافات
- 54 As for the greet in verse 181 (the same Sura) it is to all messengers and a call to be secure from any harm given from Allah (Tabataba'i:187, vol 17).
- ٥٥ وقال لهم خزنتها سلام عليكم طبتم فادخلوها خالدين/ ٧٣ الزمر
- 56 Verse 73 in Az-Zumar Sura reports that Guardians of Heaven receive believers with a greet of security that they would not find else than satisfaction (Tabataba'i:315, vol 17).
- ٥٧ فاصفح عنهم وقل سلام فسوف يعلمون / ٨٩ الزخرف
- 58 Verse 89 in Az-Zukhruf Sura gives an order from Allah for leave-taking: to leave them peacefully (Tabataba'i:136, vol 18).
- ٥٩ ادخلوها بسلام ذلك يوم الخلود / ٣٤ ق
- 60 Salaam in Qaf Sura (verse: 34) is associated with entering Heaven safe from any harm (Tabataba'i:385, vol 18).
- ٦١ اذ دخلوا عليه فقالوا سلاما قال سلام قوم منكرون/ ٢٥ الذاريات
- 62 Salaam is an ellipted form of Salaamun alaikum. Abram (in Adh-Dhariyat Sura, verse 25) greets angels with a better greet. (Tabataba'i:309, vol 18)
- 62.1.1.1.1 (for details see xxvii below)
- ٦٣ فسلام لك من اصحاب اليمين/ ٩١ الواقعة
- 64 Angels (in Al-Waqi'ah Sura, verse :91) convey to the believer a greet from Allah telling them that he is one of those who follow the right path (Tabataba'i:162, vol 19).
- ٦٥ سلام هي حتى مطلع الفجر / ٥ القدر
- 66 Salaam in this aya (verse5 Al-Qadre Sura) refers to Providence: to be safe from any visible and invisible harm (Tabataba'i :472 vol. 20).
- ٦٦ ولقد جاءت رسلنا ابراهيم بالبشرى قالوا سلاما/ ٦٩ هود
- 68 Angels and Abram greet each others in Hud Sura ,verse:69 .It is indefinite to bring amplification and show grandeur (Tabataba'i:332, vol 10).
- ٦٩ اذ دخلوا عليه فقالوا سلاما قال انا منكم وجلون/ ٥٢ الحجر
- 70 Angels say "salaam" which means we greet you with salaam (security from Allah) (Tabataba'i :190, vol. 12) as given in Al-Hijr Sura ,verse 52.
- ٧١ لا يسمعون فيها لغوا الا سلاما / ٦٢ مريم
- 72 In this verse (63) from Maryam Sura Salaam is close to safety in meaning. To say : you are safe from me means you will not see any harm from me while to say :peace on you means all that you get from me is not harmful. (Tabataba'i :83, vol. 14)
- ٧٣ قلنا يانار كوني بردا وسلاما على ابراهيم / ٦٩ الانبياء
- 74 Salaam is mentioned in Ai-Anbiya Sura (verse 69) in the sense of safety.
- ٧٥ واذا خاطبهم الجاهلون قالوا سلاما / ٦٣ الفرقان
- 76 "Salaama" in (Al-Furqan Sura, verse 63) refers to a sound speech and not ill-speech or twitter when speaking to ignorant people and got bored with them (Tabataba'i :260, vol. 15)

٧٧ ويلقون فيها تحية وسلاما / ٧٥ الفرقان

78 In the same Sura (verse 75) Angels receive believers with greet to fear not and be safe. Again the greet is indefinite to show grandeur. (Tabataba'i:266, vol. 15)

٧٩ لا يسمعون فيها لغوا ولا تأثيما، الا قليلا سلاما سلاما / ٢٦ الواقعة

80 Verse 26 (Al-Waqi'ah Sura) reports that in Heaven believers never hear ill speech or have vain talk. They greet each other with salaam, the same act (Tabataba'i:139, vol 19).

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نقال: ٧٧٠٨٠٦٠٨١٥

تحية الاسلام (السلام) : منظور ديني ، وتاريخي ، ولغوي اجتماعي

عني الدين الاسلامي بالتحية عناية واضحة وجعلها جزءا من المنظومة الاخلاقية لشخصية المسلم بابعادها الذاتية وبين ذاتية والاجتماعية فضلا عن البعد الديني. ويسترشد المسلمون بالقرآن والسنة (او الموروث النبوي) لاتقان تحيتهم. وحيث ان الاخلاق الاسلامية تحكمها قواعد في الواجب والمستحب والمحرم والمكروه فان للتحية نصيبها من ذلك. فتحية الاسلام تحكمها متغيرات تشمل المرتبة، والاسلوب، والموقع، والوسيلة، والعمر، والعدد، والجنس، ونبرة الشخص المحيى ودينه. وتمتد القواعد لتحكم، ليس فقط تحية المسلمين فيما بينهم، وانما تحية غير المسلمين وتحية الاماكن بل وحتى تحية الموتى. وهذا يضاعف اهمية فعل التحية ليصبح ليس شرطا اساسا للتفاعل فحسب بل كذلك واجب ديني يثاب المرء عليه او يأتى بسببه. ومن الناحية الاجتماعية تختلف وظيفة التحية باختلاف الاديان والثقافات. فعلى الرغم من ان المجتمعات الاسلامية اصبحت متمدنة الى حد يجعل اشكال التحية المختلفة مقبولة فيها، لازال المسلمين يميلون الى استخدام تحية الاسلام بسبب انتمائهم لدينهم وحبهم للثابة. يقدم البحث في هذا السياق عرضا تاريخيا موجزا لتحية الاسلام (السلام) مركزا على القيمة الدينية التي تحكمها دلاليا ونظما وتداوليا في تحليل لغوي اجتماعي لبيان كيف يمكن للاحكام المختلفة والمتغيرات ان تحكم فعل التحية ليصبح فعلا دينيا وليس مجرد فعل لوظيفة تداولية.