

## PRACTICAL ADVICE ON HOW TO LOVE OTHERS

—St. Isaac the Syrian—

Whenever you meet another person, compel yourself to honor him more than he deserves. Kiss his hands and feet, and reverently hold on to them. Place his hands on your eyes, and compliment him for qualities he does not possess. And when you part from him, speak well of him with the best possible and most honorable words. In this way, you will draw him toward virtue, you will make him feel ashamed on account of the manner with which you greeted him, and you will simultaneously sow within his soul the seeds of virtue. By implementing such admirable conduct, you too will grow accustomed to it and will gradually acquire a commendable demeanor and immense humility, and without any effort you will attain exceptional virtues. Furthermore, if your fellow man happens to possess a certain shortcoming, when he is thus honored by you, he readily accepts healing treatment from you, feeling ashamed for being shown such honor.

Always maintain this way of sweetly greeting and honoring others, and never incite anyone to anger. Never bear malice, never shun anyone —neither on account of their faith, nor on account of their evil deeds. Neither reproach nor criticize anyone for anything; for we all have a common Judge in the heavens Who does not show favoritism. If you desire to help return your fellow man unto the strait path of truth, feel sympathy for him, and with tears of love in your eyes say only one or two words to him without being motivated by anger, lest he detects any sign of animosity within you. For love does not know how to become angry, or how to become irate, or how to censure others with hostility.

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