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THE POWER OF TAAROF IN IRANIAN CULTURE AND VARIOUS UTILIZATION

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to provide a comprehensive analysis and explanation of the Iranian traditional culture known as "Taarof". Taarof is a distinctive custom or etiquette in Iranian/Persian culture. It explores its usage in everyday conversations, as well as its application in business and political contexts. Additionally, it compares this culture to those of other countries, examining similarities and differences. Given its unique nature in Iran, many foreigners may find it peculiar and challenging to comprehend, yet it remains a prevalent aspect of Iranian culture. Simultaneously, the objective of this article is to clarify the linguistic aspects of this culture, with the intention of determining whether it can be classified as language manipulation employed to achieve specific objectives or targets during conversations, presentations, or formal business or political gatherings.

Keywords: Leak information, Theft, Challenges of IoT, Security System, Protection.

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INTRODUCTION

Taarof holds a distinctive and noteworthy position within Persian culture, having persisted as an integral component of Iranian civilization for numerous decades. Taarof is a sociocultural framework that regulates social interactions and talks in Iran, encompassing principles of courtesy and social etiquette. Demonstrating respect, hospitality, and dignity is a fundamental aspect of

Persian society, profoundly embedded within its cultural fabric. A comprehensive grasp of taarof is essential for anybody seeking to effectively traverse Iranian society, notably within the contexts of business and social interactions. (W. O. Beeman, 2019). Taarof encompasses a set of customary practices and behavioral norms that are specifically crafted to demonstrate reverence and humility towards individuals. It is a manifestation of heightened politeness that may perplex individuals who are not familiar with it. For instance, when a someone presents an item, such as tea or food, to another person, the recipient may initially refuse it, despite their desire for it. This is regarded as a courteous gesture, and the individual presenting the gift is anticipated to persist multiple times before the recipient agrees to it.

Taarof is founded around a rigid framework of reverence and dignity. Elderly individuals are accorded the highest level of reverence, while younger individuals are anticipated to yield to them. There is an expectation for men to demonstrate deference towards women, and individuals in positions of power or authority are afforded preferential treatment. Even unfamiliar individuals are anticipated to be greeted with hospitality and benevolence. (Mor din, 2009)

Taarof holds special significance within business contexts, since it possesses the potential to exert a substantial influence on negotiations and interpersonal connections. In the context of Iran, it is customary for business meetings to commence with casual discussion and courteous exchanges prior to delving into the core business matters. This is a method of establishing a connection and demonstrating deference for one's peers. Business professionals are also anticipated to demonstrate hospitality, frequently extending invitations to their colleagues for dinner or presenting gifts as a gesture of courtesy. (W. K. Archer and F. Minou-Archer, 1972) Nevertheless, taarof can pose certain difficulties for individuals who lack familiarity with it. Foreigners may encounter challenges in navigating social relationships, especially when they are uncertain about whether to accept or reject an offer. Improper handling of this situation can result in misunderstandings and potential offense. Taarof, despite its difficulties, is an essential element of Persian culture that holds great significance for Iranians. It is a means of demonstrating reverence, benevolence, and integrity, and it is a customary practice that has been transmitted over successive generations. Individuals that invest effort in comprehending and valuing taarof will observe that it facilitates the exploration of more profound connections and enhances comprehension of Iranian culture.

In summary, taarof holds significant importance within Persian culture as it serves as a governing force for social interactions and conversations within the context of Iran. Politeness and social etiquette encompass a structured framework aimed at demonstrating reverence, hospitality, and integrity. A comprehensive grasp of taarof is crucial for anybody seeking to effectively traverse Iranian society, notably within the realms of business and social interactions. Although taarof may appear perplexing to those unfamiliar with it, individuals who invest effort in comprehending and valuing it will have enhanced interpersonal connections and a more profound comprehension of Iranian culture. (Beeman, William O, 1986)

The History Behind the Iranian Culture of Taarof

The cultural practice of taarof in Iran possesses a rich historical lineage, tracing its origins back to the pre-Islamic era spanning several centuries. The custom of taarof is firmly ingrained in Iranian society and is seen in both casual social exchanges and professional contexts like business and politics.

One hypothesis posits that the practice of taarof can be traced back to its origins as a means of showcasing hospitality and generosity towards guests and visitors, thereby exemplifying the significance of cultivating robust social connections within Iranian society. Gradually, the custom of taarof underwent a process of formalization and assimilation into other facets of Iranian life,

encompassing business and politics.

According to an alternative hypothesis, taarof may have first served as a means of demonstrating deference and respect for persons occupying positions of authority or power. Taarof, in this particular setting, served as a means to exhibit modesty and respect, so mirroring the hierarchical structure of Iranian society.

Irrespective of its historical roots, taarof continues to hold significant importance within Iranian society, serving as a manifestation of the deeply rooted ideals of respect, hospitality, and generosity that permeate Iranian social dynamics. Although taarof may encounter constraints and challenges, especially in cross-cultural contexts, it continues to hold significant value as a component of Iranian identity and culture.

Taarof in Business Setting

Taarof holds great cultural significance in Iran and holds a crucial position in commercial environments within the country. Taarof is a formal framework of politeness and social etiquette that has been specifically created to demonstrate reverence, hospitality, and integrity. The concept of taarof plays a significant role in shaping social interactions, agreements, and relationships among Iranian business professionals and their counterparts inside the corporate arena.

Taarof is mostly utilized in business contexts in Iran to foster rapport and cultivate confidence among business associates. In the context of Iran, it is customary for business meetings to commence with casual discussion and courteous exchanges prior to delving into the core business matters. This is a method of establishing a connection and demonstrating deference for one's peers. Business professionals are also anticipated to demonstrate hospitality, frequently extending invitations to their colleagues for dinner or presenting gifts as a gesture of courtesy.

Taarof is also employed in corporate contexts, particularly in the context of negotiations. In the context of Iran, talks frequently entail a notable degree of taarof, wherein both parties endeavor to demonstrate respect and deference towards one another. Business professionals often employ a strategy known as verbal dance, when they present an offer while simultaneously asserting that the recipient is not obligated to take it. This dance may persist until both parties reach a consensus, serving as a means of showcasing mutual respect and a commitment to seeking a mutually advantageous resolution. (KimberlyDee, 2018)

Taarof is additionally employed as a means of demonstrating reverence towards individuals occupying positions of authority or influence. In Iranian corporate culture, there is a strong emphasis on seniority and hierarchy, with individuals in positions of leadership receiving preferential treatment. For instance, a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or a government figure may get a warm and respectful welcome, and they may be given preferential seating or the initial portion of food at a corporate dinner.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that taarof can pose difficulties in professional environments, especially for individuals who lack familiarity with it. Non-native individuals may encounter challenges when navigating social relationships, especially when they are uncertain about whether to accept or reject an offer. Improper handling of this situation can result in misunderstandings and potential offense. Hence, it is imperative for anyone engaged in business activities in Iran to acquaint themselves with taarof and its intricacies in order to establish prosperous business connections. (Sahar Esfandiari, 2018)

Here's a table illustrating examples of Taarof within a business context:

Table1. Taarof Within the Business Context

Situation	Taarof Example	Explanation
Meeting Introduction	Offering the best seat to a guest while standing until they sit.	Demonstrates respect and elevates the status of the guest.
Negotiating Deals	Initially refusing an offer out of politeness, even if it is desirable.	Shows humility and allows the host to insist, which adds value to the offer.
Gift Giving	Presenting a gift and insisting it's something small or not worthy.	Minimizes the giver's action to show humility, enhancing the receiver's appreciation.
Inviting for a Meal	Insisting on paying the bill for a business lunch or dinner, even after a refusal.	Displays generosity and hospitality, important virtues in Iranian culture.
Ending Meetings	Expressing reluctance to conclude discussions, highlighting the pleasure of the meeting.	Conveys respect and the value placed on the relationship over the transaction.

Taarof in Political Setting

The concept of Taarof holds significant cultural significance in Iran, since it serves as a guiding principle for social interactions and talks inside the country, including political contexts. Taarof is employed in Iranian political contexts to demonstrate reverence, deference, and hospitality towards individuals holding positions of power or authority. It serves as a means of showcasing allegiance, respect, and integrity, and it is profoundly embedded in the political culture of Iran.

Taarof is commonly employed in political contexts as a means of demonstrating reverence towards esteemed political authorities, like the President or the Supreme Leader. In Iran, there is a strong emphasis on seniority and hierarchy, with individuals in positions of authority receiving preferential treatment. In the context of engaging with a high-ranking political official, it is customary to employ honorific designations such as "Agha" or "Sir" while simultaneously demonstrating reverence and respect through verbal and non-verbal communication. (Umberto Eco, 2011)

Taarof is employed in political contexts as a means to exhibit hospitality and compassion. In the cultural context of Iran, it is customary to extend offerings of food, tea, or other refreshments to guests as a gesture of reverence and welcome. When engaging with a political person or entertaining them, it is crucial to provide them with the most advantageous seating arrangement, prioritize their needs, and consistently exhibit a readiness to surpass expectations in order to display respect and deference.

Taarof is also employed in the context of political negotiations and deliberations, wherein it assumes a pivotal function in fostering trust and cultivating interpersonal connections among involved parties. Taarof, a negotiation technique, encompasses a linguistic dance wherein each party endeavors to demonstrate respect and deference towards the other. The dance may encompass the act of presenting concessions or demonstrating a readiness to reach a compromise, while simultaneously asserting that the opposing party is not obligated to accept them. The

primary objective of this dance is to identify a resolution that is advantageous to all parties involved, while simultaneously upholding the fundamental principles of honor and respect that are integral to Iranian political culture. (Nancy Updike, 2011)

Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that taarof can pose difficulties in political contexts, especially for individuals from other countries who lack familiarity with the intricacies of Iranian culture. Misinterpretations may occur when individuals lack clarity on how to appropriately address offers of food or hospitality, or when they lack knowledge of the appropriate titles or forms of speech to employ while communicating with political people. Hence, it is imperative for those engaged in political activities within Iran to allocate sufficient time towards comprehending the concept of taarof and its significance within Iranian culture. This understanding is crucial for fostering fruitful connections and effectively maneuvering through the intricate realm of Iranian politics.

Taarof in the Modern Society of Iran

The utilization and interpretation of taarof continue to be prevalent in contemporary Iranian society, although potentially undergoing changes throughout time. Taarof is a deeply rooted tradition in Iranian culture and plays a significant role in social relations throughout the country. Although Iranian culture has been influenced by certain features of modernization and globalization, the practice of taarof continues to hold significant importance in social interactions within Iran. The persistent utilization of taarof in Iranian society serves as a testament to the significance of cultivating robust interpersonal connections and exhibiting reverence and compassion towards other individuals.

Taarof is prevalent in contemporary Iranian society, manifesting in diverse contexts such as business and politics, where it serves as a means to foster trust and cultivate interpersonal connections. As an illustration, Iranian entrepreneurs may present presents or cover expenses as a means of demonstrating their dedication to the collaboration and fostering positive sentiment. (Michael Slackman, 2011)

Nevertheless, the implementation of taarof may encounter some constraints and difficulties, particularly when applied in cross-cultural contexts. Misunderstandings or misinterpretations may arise, particularly among individuals who lack familiarity with the technique. It is imperative for persons to possess an awareness of the cultural intricacies associated with taarof and to engage with it in a manner that is both sensitive and empathetic.

The cultural phenomenon of taarof in Iran has undergone a gradual transformation, mirroring the dynamic social, political, and economic circumstances within which it is seen. Although the fundamental principles of respect, hospitality, and generosity that form the foundation of taarof have remained constant, the manner in which taarof is implemented may have undergone modifications in accordance with evolving cultural norms and societal expectations. (Shirin Jaafari, 2014)

A notable transformation that has transpired over the course of time pertains to the utilization of taarof inside commercial environments. The significance of taarof in economic transactions in Iran has been a longstanding component, however the particular practices and customs related to taarof may have undergone changes throughout history. In the past, it was more prevalent for business partners to provide extravagant gifts or other types of financial assistance as a means of establishing trust and fostering partnerships. In contemporary times, the focus may shift towards establishing enduring alliances founded on reciprocal admiration and confidence, rather than extravagant exhibitions of affluence or magnanimity. (Christopher de Bellaigue, 2012)

The culture of taarof has evolved over time, particularly in its application to ordinary social interactions. Although taarof continues to hold significance within Iranian social norms and customs, its specific practices may have undergone transformations in response to shifting cultural norms and expectations. In certain circumstances, taarof can serve as a means to exhibit social standing or construct hierarchies among social collectives. In alternative circumstances, it can be employed as a means of demonstrating reverence and hospitality towards individuals, without necessarily accentuating social standing or hierarchical structures.

In general, although the fundamental principles of respect, hospitality, and generosity that form the basis of taarof remain consistent, the particular manifestations and traditions linked to taarof may have undergone modifications over the course of time in reaction to evolving cultural, social, and economic circumstances. (Paul Sprachman, 2002)

Taarof From Linguistic Perspective

Viewing taarof as a means of manipulating language to achieve a specific objective is not accurate. Taarof is a fundamental aspect of Iranian culture, embodying a collection of principles and societal standards that prioritize reverence, hospitality, and magnanimity towards others. Although the act of expressing respect and reverence towards others may encompass the utilization of language and various modes of communication, its primary objective does not necessarily revolve around manipulating or deceiving people. (Newton et al, 2017)

It is imperative to comprehend that taarof constitutes a multifaceted cultural phenomenon encompassing several components such as language, conduct, and societal norms. Although it may appear unfamiliar or perplexing to individuals lacking familiarity, it constitutes an essential component of Iranian social interactions and serves as a manifestation of distinct cultural values and customs.

Furthermore, it is important to note that taarof, although encompassing the utilization of language and various modes of communication to convey respect and reverence towards others, is generally not employed in a manipulative or deceptive manner. Instead, its purpose is to cultivate connections and foster confidence with others, exemplifying a profound cultural conviction in the significance of hospitality, magnanimity, and regard for others.

In general, taarof encompasses the utilization of language and various modes of communication to convey reverence and deference towards someone, without the explicit intention of manipulating or deceiving them. The phenomenon under consideration is indicative of a multifaceted array of cultural beliefs and social conventions that have been deeply embedded throughout Iranian society. (Iman Barazandeh, 2018)

Limits and Pitfalls of Taarof in the Iranian Culture

Taarof a fundamental element if Iranian culture, serves as a means to foster robust interpersonal connections and demonstrate reverence and hospitality. However, its efficacy is subject to certain constraints and drawbacks, particularly when employed in an inappropriate manner. The Iranian culture has some potential limitations and problems associated with taarof. (Sarah Parvini, 2015)

1. Time-consuming:: Taarof can be an exhausting process, especially in corporate environments, where discussions may entail a verbal interplay of proposals and rejections. This can be exasperating for individuals who are accustomed to a more straightforward and effective method.

2. Challenge for non-native speakers: Taarof may pose difficulties for individuals who are not acquainted with the intricacies of Iranian culture, making it difficult for them to comprehend. If not managed appropriately, this might result in misinterpretations and uncomfortable circumstances.

3. Excessive commitment: Taarof can result in an excessive commitment, as individuals may extend offers that above their capacity or willingness to perform, driven by a desire to demonstrate respect and generosity. This phenomenon has the potential to generate impractical anticipations and disillusionment when commitments are not upheld.

4. Lack of genuineness: Taarof may occasionally be perceived as lacking genuineness or sincerity, especially when persons feel compelled to provide something they do not truly intend. Over time, this might result in a gradual erosion of trust and respect.

5. Power dynamics: The phenomenon of Taarof has the potential to perpetuate power relations within Iranian culture, wherein the concepts of seniority and hierarchy have significant importance. This can provide difficulties for individuals who lack positions of power, especially if they perceive a lack of equal regard and deference towards them.

6. Misinterpretation: Misinterpretation of Taarof can occur, especially in cross-cultural contexts, where individuals may lack comprehension of the meaning behind specific gestures or offerings. Such circumstances can result in perplexity and misinterpretations that can have an effect on interpersonal connections and commercial transactions.

To summarize, although taarof holds significance in Iranian culture, it is crucial to acknowledge its potential constraints and drawbacks. Individuals can effectively navigate social and business circumstances in Iran with respect and grace by acquiring knowledge about the proper utilization of taarof and being cognizant of its potential drawbacks.

Usage of Taarof in Other Countries and Cultures

Although taarof is exclusive to Iranian culture, there exist comparable cultural rituals in other regions that embody comparable principles of reverence, hospitality, and magnanimity. As an illustration:

1. In Arab cultures: Arab civilizations exhibit a comparable custom of repeatedly declining gifts or invitations before accepting them, akin to the practice of taarof in Iranian culture.

2. In Japanese culture: Japanese culture encompasses a customary practice of conveying humility and respect through linguistic and non-verbal means, akin to the concept of taarof observed in Iranian culture. (D M Rejali, 2016)

3. In Chinese culture: There exist several cultural traditions in Chinese culture that have certain resemblances to taarof in Iranian culture, namely in relation to the prioritization of respect, humility, and charity towards others. The following examples are provided:

3.1 Gift Rejection: Analogous to the practice of taarof in Iranian culture, it is customary for persons within Chinese culture to exhibit a tendency to decline gifts on several occasions prior to accepting them. This is regarded as a means of demonstrating humility and deference towards the donor of the gift.

3.2 Face Saving: The concept of saving face, which pertains to the avoidance of shame, holds significant importance in Chinese culture as a key element of social relationships. In public contexts, it is imperative to exhibit respect, politeness, and refrain from engaging in confrontations or engaging in direct criticism.

3.3 The Significance of Guanxi: Guanxi, a fundamental element of Chinese culture, pertains to the significance of establishing and sustaining social connections and relationships. In Iranian culture, establishing robust relationships and demonstrating respect and hospitality towards others is regarded as crucial for achieving social and financial prosperity, much like the concept of taarof.

3.4 Giving Face: Within Chinese culture, the act of demonstrating face, which entails exhibiting respect and honor towards others, holds significant cultural significance. This entails exhibiting reverence towards persons occupying positions of power and exhibiting modesty and decorum towards others.

4. In South Asian cultures: In South Asian societies, there exists a customary practice of extending hospitality and displaying generosity towards guests and visitors, akin to the principles embodied in the Iranian cultural value of taarof.

Although there may be variations between these cultural activities and taarof in Iranian culture, they exhibit comparable ideals and ideas. In essence, these cultural customs exemplify the significance of demonstrating reverence, hospitality, and magnanimity towards individuals, principles that are universally embraced across diverse global civilizations.

CONCLUSION

The practice of Taarof is widely regarded as a commendable behavior in Iran, since it holds significant cultural value in the country, symbolizing values such as respect, hospitality, and generosity. The practice of Taarof holds significant cultural significance within Iranian social dynamics, and persons who possess the ability to traverse its intricacies are frequently regarded as exhibiting politeness, courtesy, and good manners. Taarof is highly advantageous for fostering connections and exhibiting reverence and regard towards others, especially in formal contexts like commercial or political situations. In the aforementioned settings, the practice of taarof can play a crucial role in fostering trust and rapport among persons, hence facilitating the attainment of favorable outcomes.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that taarof may not invariably be suitable or indispensable in every circumstance. In certain instances, the process of taarof can be laborious or yield perplexity or misinterpretations, particularly in intercultural contexts when persons lack familiarity with its intricacies. Hence, it is crucial to employ taarof prudently and suitably, contingent upon the circumstances and the individuals concerned.

To summarize, taarof is widely regarded as a commendable practice in Iran, symbolizing reverence, hospitality, and magnanimity. Nevertheless, similar to any cultural custom, it is crucial to employ it prudently and suitably, contingent upon the circumstances and the individuals engaged.

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