

Only True Friends and Righteous Companions Will Benefit You

By Abu Khadeejah ‘Abdul-Wāhid Alam

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all creation; may Allah extol the mention of our noble Prophet Muhammad in the highest company of Angels and give him peace and security—and his family, his Companions and all those who follow him truly until the establishment of the Hour.

The children of Adam are created to love the companionship and friendship of others—and the one who is given wisdom seeks the company of those who will aid him in the world and in the Hereafter. So, from the people are those who take the noble, pious and truthful as their friends and companions because they will benefit each other—and then there are those who prefer the glitter of this world and seek only to satisfy their desires, so they take the evildoers and transgressors as their friends and they mutually harm each other and lead each other further and further away from Allah, the Mighty and Majestic.

Good friends and companions are a blessing from Allah in this world, and in the Hereafter. Allah, the Most High, said:

الْأَخِلَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ

“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.” (Az-Zukhruf: 67)

Friendship and companionship with evildoers will be a source of loss, regret and sorrow on the Day of Resurrection. Allah (the Most High) said:

وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَلْبِئْسَ الَّذِي كُنْتُ صَاحِبًا وَمَا آتَاكَ بِشَرِّ مَوْلًى
لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَنِي ۗ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِلْإِنْسَانِ خَدُولًا

“And the Day the wrongdoer will bite on his hands [in regret] he will say, ‘Oh, I wish I had taken with the Messenger a way. Oh, woe to me! I wish I had not taken so-and-so as a friend. He led me away from the remembrance after it had come to me. And ever is Shaytān to man, a deserter.’” (Al-Furqān: 27-29)

Bukhārī (no. 5534) and Muslim (no. 2628) report from Abu Mūsā Al-Ash'arī (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) that he narrated that Allah's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **"The similitude of a good companion and a bad companion is like keeping company with the seller of musk or keeping company with the blacksmith. So, the seller of musk will either offer you some free of charge, or you'll buy it from him, or you'll smell its pleasant fragrance. As for the blacksmith, either he'll burn your clothes, or you'll smell a repugnant odour."**

At-Tirmidhī reported in his Sunan from Abu Hurayrah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) that Allah's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **"A man is upon the religion of his close friend, so each of you should pay attention to whom he takes as a friend."**¹

His (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) saying: **"A man is upon the religion of close friend..."** this means that he takes on the habits of his friend, and his path and his lifestyle, **"so pay attention..."** meaning, reflect and ponder over who you're taking as your friend. So, if you are pleased with his Religion and character, befriend him and if not, keep away from him for indeed the temperament and nature are stolen goods (i.e., you take your character from your close friends).²

A wise poet said:

**Ask not about a person, rather ask concerning his friend,
Every person is a follower of his close friend.**

Every person has a propensity to follow his close friends and to be affected by them because the souls are like gathered troops. Bukhārī (no. 3336) and Muslim (no. 2638) reported from Abu Hurairah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) that Allah's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **"The souls are like gathered troops, those who like each other will have affection, and those who repel each other will differ."**

The souls created by Allah are either blissful or wretched—they are of two characters, one the opposite of the other. So, when they unite with the body in this world, they either attract or differ according to how they were created. So, good people will incline to good people and evil people will incline towards evil people.³

¹ At-Tirmidhī, no. 2378, declared sahīh by Shaikh Al-Albānī.

² See 'Awn Al-Ma'būd Sharh Sunan Abī Dāwūd, 13/123 of Shaikh Muhammad Shamsul-Haqq Al-Adhīmabādī (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ).

³ See 'Awn Al-Ma'būd Sharh Sunan Abī Dāwūd, 13/123.

From the Fruits of Having Good Friends and Fine Companions:

1. Good friends help you to be obedient to Allah, to worship Him and to keep away from disobedience and sins. Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) stated:

وَالْعَصْرِ
إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ
إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

“By time. Indeed, mankind is in loss. Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds, and advise each other to truth, and advise each other to patience.” (Al-Asr)

2. Good friends make you race to do good deeds and you compete to be good and obedient to Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ). You remind each other of attending the Masjid, to sit in the gatherings of knowledge, and act upon what you learn. Allah (تَبَارَكَوَتَعَالَى) stated:

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

“And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and for Paradise that is as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous.” (Aali ‘Imrān: 133)

And Allah stated:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَٰئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

“The believing men and believing women are allies and supporters of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakāh and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those are the ones Allah will have mercy upon. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and All-Wise.” (At-Tawbah: 71) And Allah (سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى) said in encouragement of racing to do deeds:

يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَّحِيْقٍ حَمِيْمٍ
خَتَمُهُ مِسْكٌ وَفِي ذَٰلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ

“In Paradise they will be given drink of pure sealed wine. Its lingering smell thereof will be of musk—and for this, let them strive who want to strive.”
(Al-Mutaffifin: 25-26)

Even when a young person is getting married, they should know that their spouse is a companion for life, inshā’-Allāh. So be sure you choose your partner very carefully, seek independent references from people who are known in the community, who are truthful and trustworthy, upon the Sunnah and Salafiyyah—be diligent in asking the important questions, don’t rush, take your time, and make the right decision. An evil companion in marriage is a calamity!

3. Being in the company of the righteous, in gatherings where Allah is mentioned, where the ahādīth of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) are revised and taught are gatherings of mercy and forgiveness. Bukhārī and Muslim reported from Abu Hurairah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) that Allah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: “There is a group of Allah’s angels who move about the streets searching for people who mention Allah. When they find a group doing that, they call each other, **‘Here is what you are looking for.’** Then they cover that group with their wings right up to the sky. When these angels return to the heavens, their Lord asks them, although He knows the answer, **‘What were My servants saying?’** They reply, **‘They were describing You with perfection and greatness, and were busy praising and glorifying You.’** Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) then asks, **‘Have they seen Me?’** They reply, **‘By Allah! They have not seen You.’** Allah says, **‘What would they have done if they could see me?’** They respond, **‘They would then be even more ardent in their worship, glorification, and praise.’** Then Allah asks them, **‘What did they want from Me?’** The angels reply, **‘They asked You for Jannah.’** He (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) says, **‘Have they seen it?’** They answer, **‘No, by You! They have not seen it.’** He asks, **‘What would they have done if they had seen it?’** They answer, **‘Had they seen it, they would desire it more eagerly, and would work harder to be deserving of it.’** Then Allah asks, **‘From what thing did they want Me to protect them?’** The angels answer, **‘They want protection from Hell.’** Allah asks, **‘Have they seen it?’** They answer, **‘No, by You! They have not seen it.’** Allah says, **‘What would they have done if they had seen it?’** They reply, **‘Had they seen it, they would have feared it and run from it even more.’** Then Allah says, **‘Be My witnesses: I have forgiven them!’** One of the angels then says, **‘But among them was a person who is not one of them—he had simply come for something he needed.’** Allah replies, **‘I have forgiven him**

too, just because he happened to sit with them—anyone who sits with these people will not be a loser.”⁴

‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) would say: “Were it not for three things, I would not like to live the life of this world: the thirst of hottest part of the day [while fasting], enduring through the hours of the night [in worship] and sitting with people who choose the best of speech just as one chooses the best dates.”

And how many people we know who have been guided, and they became of those who maintained and guarded their prayers, they abandoned the company of evil friends and they started inviting others to Allah! All of this is from the bounties of Allah and then due to good companionship. At-Tirmidhī reported in his Sunan from Abu Sa’īd (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **“Do not keep company except with a believer, and none should eat your food except for the dutiful God-fearing person.”⁵**

Al-Khattābī (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) stated: “This hadīth refers to the food that is given when you invite people to a gathering and does not refer to food given to the needy. That is because Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) said:

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا

“And they (the Companions) give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive.” (Al-Insān: 8) It is known that they had captives who were non-Muslims, not believers nor God-fearing [and they would feed them]. Allah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) warned against keeping company with those who are not God-fearing and warned against mixing with them and eating with them. That is because sharing meals brings about affection and love in the hearts.”⁶

From the Evil-effect of Having Bad Friends and Sinful Companions:

1. Sinful companions and friends turn you away from obedience to disobedience and they beautify sins in order to entice you. Bukhārī and Muslim report from Sa’īd ibn Musayyib (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) from his father that when Abu

⁴ Bukhārī no. 6408, Muslim no. 2689.

⁵ At-Tirmidhī, no. 2395.

⁶ See ‘Awn Al-Ma’būd Sharh Sunan Abī Dāwūd, 13/123.

Tālib was on his deathbed, Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) came to him and found Abu Jahl and Abdullah Ibn Abī Umayyah Ibn Al-Mughīrah sitting next to him. So, Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said to Abu Tālib: **“O my uncle, say: ‘Lā ilāha illallāh’, a sentence with which I will bear witness for you in front of Allah.”** Abu Jahl and Abdullāh Ibn Abī Umayyah said: **“O Abu Tālib! Will you abandon the religion of Abdul-Muttalib?”** The Messenger (ﷺ) did not cease to present these words to him and repeat them until the last words which Abu Tālib uttered to them where that he will stay upon the religion of Abdul-Muttalib, and he refused to say, ‘Lā ilāha illallāh’. So, Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: **“By Allah! I will continue to seek forgiveness for you so long as I am not prohibited from that.”** Then Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) revealed:

مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أُولَىٰ قُرْبَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ
أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ

“It is not for the Prophet and those who have believed to seek forgiveness for the polytheists, even if they were relatives, after it has become clear to them that they are companions of Hellfire.” (At-Tawbah: 113)

And Allah revealed concerning Abu Tālib addressing Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ):

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

“Verily you guide not whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He knows best those who are the guided.” (Al-Qasas: 56)⁷

2. Most of the gathering of the sinners do not involve the dhikr of Allah or reminders. Rather, there is in them disobedience of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). So those who participate in these gatherings will feel loss and great regret on the Day of Judgement. At-Tirmidhī reported from Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: **“There is no gathering of people wherein Allah is not remembered and the salutations, peace and security are not invoked for their Prophet except that that will be a cause of regret and loss for them. If Allah wills, He will punish them, and if He wills, He will forgive them.”⁸**

⁷ Bukhāri no. 3884, Muslim no. 24.

⁸ At-Tirmidhī, no. 3380.

3. Evil friends will invite you and encourage you to behave like them—they commit sins and fall into what is harām, so they will call you to do the same. As you begin to follow them, sin and disobedience will get easier—you will regard your opposition to the commands of Allah and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) to be minor, you will get comfortable with sins and invite others to join you, becoming a caller to Jahannam. It is ascribed to ‘Uthmān Ibn ‘Affān (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) that he said: **“The fornicating woman would love it if all women were fornicators.”** Though the narration is not authentically established from him, nevertheless, it is known that people who openly engage in sins invite others to join them: people who fornicate also want others to fornicate, those who watch movies want others to watch movies, those who listen to music want others to do the same. This is what we are experiencing all over social media and mainstream media—people inviting others to sin and disobedience. Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) stated in His Book:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفُحْشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“Verily, those who like that fornication and immorality should be propagated among those who believe, they will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah knows and you know not.” (An-Nūr: 19)

Furthermore, friendships that are built upon sin, wrongdoing and transgression against Allah’s Religion tend to break down over the slightest differing or when they no longer see a benefit for themselves. On the other hand, friendships that are built upon obedience to Allah and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), love of Allah and His Religion, fear of Allah and being dutiful to him, are friendships that remain and don’t come to an end—indeed, these friends are united once more in Paradise among the best of companions.

In conclusion, my advice to the Muslims, young and old, is to attend the gatherings of Ahlus-Sunnah and the Salafis, to mix with the best of Muslims, to benefit from the classes of learning, to be humble in front of others, not seeking except the Face of Allah and His good pleasure. If you are truthful and sincere upon the Sunnah, Allah will guide you to the best of friends and companions, bārakallāhu feekum.

And all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all creation; may Allah extol the mention of our noble Prophet Muhammad in the highest company of Angels

and give him peace and security—and his family, his Companions and all those who follow him correctly until the establishment of the Hour.