

Good Companionship

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Source: A lecture given by the Shaykh with the same title

Good companionship, choosing and having good companions is extremely important for many reasons and from many aspects.

1. Mankind cannot live alone; every individual must live and interact with others.
2. Those people who you sit with and make your friends are inevitably going to fall into one of two categories. Either they are going to be good individuals - who guide and encourage you towards what is good and help you to accomplish that which Allaah has ordered, or they are going to be bad - encouraging you to do what is pleasing to Shaytaan, that which misleads you, and leads you to the Hell-Fire.
3. When the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) was sent with the Da'wah to establish the Deen of al-Isaam, he did not do it on his own. Rather, Allaah chose for him companions who accompanied him and who carried the Message until it was complete.

These three aspects show the importance of having good companions, companions who are Saalih (righteous). Such a companion will help you to do what is good and remind you of Allaah, he will enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil.

They also show the importance of avoiding keeping bad companions. Such a companion will have a bad effect upon you, they help you to do those deeds which are displeasing to Allaah and which lead to the Hell-Fire - and we seek Allaah's refuge from that.

The Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) explained the matter of good companionship, so that no room is left for doubt or confusion, when he said:

"A person is upon the Deen of his khaleel - close friend, so look to whom you befriend." [Abu Dawood and At-Tirmidhee]

This means that a person is upon the same manhaj (methodology) as his friend, the same tareeq (path) as his friend, the same nature, manner and behavior as his friend. So we must be careful about whom we befriend.

There is an Arabic statement - 'Your companion is what pulls you to something.' So if your companion is good, he will pull you towards that which is good. But if your companion is bad, he will only pull you towards that which is evil. We must choose our friends and companions carefully so that we take friends who are sincere, and who will order us with what is good and forbid us from what is evil. If he observes us committing sins he would warn us, if he becomes aware of our shortcomings he would advise us, and if he finds a fault in us he would cover it.

About this the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said, "A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. He neither betrays him nor tells him a lie, nor humiliates him." [At-Tirmidhee]

So should you see a fault in your brother, you should wish to remove that fault from him and not expose it to the people. This is what is required by brotherhood and again stresses the importance of choosing friends who are upon

the correct way, who are loyal, and who hide your faults whilst ordering you with good and forbidding you from evil, who stand beside you and support you, and co-operate with you upon all that is good.

The Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) also explained this great principle further in another narration, wherein he stated,

"Do not keep company except with a believer, and do not feed except a person who has taqwaa (fear of Allaah)." [Abu Dawood and At-Tirmidhee]

This principle is important from the standpoint of how the Deen is to be established, and from the standpoint of what brotherhood is and what it does.

Indeed, the reason that one takes a companion is to help him establish his Islaam, and to help him worship Allaah. We find a good example in the Prophet Moosaa - the one whom Allaah chose and spoke to. When Allaah sent him to Fir'awn, he said,

"And appoint for me a helper from my family, Haaron - my brother; increase my strength with him, and let him share my task (of conveying Allaah's Message and Prophethood), that we may glorify You much and remember You much." [20:29-34]

Moosaa wanted his brother to support him and help him, protect him and accompany him. And this is what the believers do for one another. For the thing that binds the believers together and makes them brothers is Eemaan. The Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said,

"There are three characteristics; whoever has them will taste the sweetness of Eemaan: That Allaah and His Messenger are more beloved to him than all else, that he loves a person and does not love him except for Allaah, and that he would hates to revert to unbelief just as he would hate to be thrown into the Fire."
[Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim]

Thus the connection between the believers is based upon Eemaan and sincere brotherhood. Be warned against taking any companion if such companionship is based upon other than this, for if you were to do that you would then bite your hands in grief. Just as:

"...the unjust ones will bite their hands in grief on the Last Day. Saying, "Oh! Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger. Ah! Woe to me! Would that I had never taken so-and-so as a friend! He indeed led me astray from the Reminder (the Qur'aan) after it had come to me." [25:27-29]

And Allaah says:

"And whosoever turns away from the remembrance of the Most Beneficent (Allaah), We appoint for him Shaytaan to be a Qareen (intimate companion) to him." [43:36]

So all of the physical togetherness that you see around you, which is based upon other than Eemaan will be wiped away on that Day, and it will be a source of misery and torture for them. Allaah says that those who love one another for other than the sake of Allaah will be:

"...foes one to another..." on the Last Day. [43:67]

It is only the brotherhood that is based upon Eemaan and Taqwaa that is the true and lasting brotherhood. All of those who come together for materialistic reasons; because of complexion, because of nationality, or for whatever other reason, will be enemies one to another "...**except al-Muttaqoon.**" Those who have Taqwaa, and love a brother only because he is upon the Path of Allaah and has the same Eemaan that they have; he has taken the path of the Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) and the Salafus-Saalih (righteous predecessors).

So be careful, before you slip and find yourself exposed to a fitnah, which you never imagined, all because you were not careful about whom you took as a companion.

The Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said,

"The case of the good companion and the bad companion is like that of the seller of musk and the blower of the bellows (iron-smith). As for the seller of musk, he will either give you some of the musk, or you will purchase some from him, or at least you will come away having experienced its good smell. Whereas the blower of the bellows will either burn your clothing, or at least you will come away having experienced its repugnant smell." [Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim]

The good companion has been given this similitude because he is righteous and will help you to remember Allaah. If he sees you make a mistake he will advise you and support you, whereas the bad companion would forsake you; leaving you at the time when you are most in need of him.

"And remember the Day when the Dhaalim (wrong-doer, oppressor) will bite at his hands, he will say, 'Oh! Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger. Ah! Woe to me! Would that I had never taken so-and-so as a friend! He indeed led me astray from the Reminder (this Qur'aan) after it had come to me. And Shaytaan is ever a deserter to man in the hour of need'." [25:27-29]

The bad companion is the Shaytaan from amongst mankind, and the Shayaateen are both men and jinns. Sometimes the harm that comes from the Shayaateen amongst men is greater than the harm that comes from the Shayaateen of the jinn. As a matter of fact the Shayaateen amongst mankind could probably teach the Shayaateen from the jinn a few things they didn't know!

So in this hadeeth, where the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said that the good companion is like the seller of musk - which is a particular type of perfume, one of the best - it is said that either you will take some from him or you will get some of its fragrance on you. It can be seen that from the good companion you will either pick up good actions and statements from his example - obeying Allaah because he does so and because he supports you in that, ordering what is good and forbidding what is evil, acquiring good characteristics and qualities and beneficial knowledge - or if he sees you becoming weak in your Eemaan he will advise you and help you.

A good example of this can be found in the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam), who was ma'soom (free from making sins). When he was making the hijrah (migration) from Makkah to Madinah he would not leave until he had chosen a companion to accompany him on his way. Abu Bakr offered to go with him and make the hijrah also, but the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) ordered him to wait until Allaah allowed him to do so. This implies that the fact that Abu Bakr was to be the Prophet's companion on this hijrah was a choice from Allaah, and so great a choice and such a blessing that Allaah mentioned it in the Qur'aan.

"Allaah did indeed help him (Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam)) when the disbelievers drove him out. The second of the two, when they (Muhammad (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) and Abu Bakr) were in the cave, and he said to his companion, 'Be not sad (or afraid), surely Allaah is with us'."
[9:40]

He (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said, 'Surely Allaah is with us', not 'with me', since Abu Bakr had supported the Prophet in the establishing of the Deen of Allaah, he had thus earned the right to be supported by Allaah also.

Abu Bakr - a good friend and companion, one who was willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of Allaah and to the service of His Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam); his blood, his wealth, his sweat, his tears and everything that he owned he gave for Allaah's sake. Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq, may Allaah be pleased with him and he pleased with Allaah, the first Khaleefah after the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) and his great companion, the best of this Ummah after the Prophet, sets for us this great example of the good companion who is like the perfume merchant.