

Choosing Friends and Companions.

All praise are due to Allah and I bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship except for Allah and I bear witness that Mohammad (p.b.u.h) is His servant and messenger.

Brothers and sisters in Islam,

One of the more important facts of life is how one should choose his friends and companions. Hence the prophet (p.b.u.h) gave some instructions by way of examples on how to decide who you should take for a friend and who should you not. He (p.b.u.h) taught individuals to select the pious, the ones who fear Allah, the honest who likes good virtues for you as he likes for himself. He (p.b.u.h) also warns against evil-doers, so not to be taken as friends, the ones who brings nothing but evil and harm for your life and your hereafter. And this is what is meant by the following hadith. Reported by Imam Al-Bukhari and Muslim (r.a), Abu-Musa-Al-Ashari (r.a) narrated that the prophet (p.b.u.h) said:

“The case of (example of) pious (righteous) companion and that of an evil companion is like that of a person carrying musk (perfume) and one who blows into a furnace. The carrier of musk might give you some as a gift or you might buy some from him or atleast you might smell its pleasant fragrance. As for the other (the blacksmith who is blowing on fire) he will either set your clothes on fire or at the very least you will breathe the foul air issuing from the furnace (i.e you will get a bad and repugnant smell.”

A commentary by some Ulama on this hadith says: “This hadith enjoins that one should sit in the company of the pious persons and avoid the impious ones because the former has the quality of a perfume seller and the latter of a blacksmith. In the association of pious men one stands to gain all the time and ultimately becomes like them. In bad company one is out-and-out a loser and can never hope to gain and benefit from them.”

Brothers and sisters in Islam,

The Prophet (p.b.u.h) has given two examples to bring the meaning closer and clearer to the minds. In the first example, the prophet (p.b.u.h) talks about the good, pious and humble friend a companion, the one that all the time spent with will bring you nothing but goodness, happiness and benefit both for your Dunia (this life) and Akhirah (hereafter). Just like the gentlemen who deal with perfume. He may apply musk to your hand and that is beautiful, You could also buy some perfume from him to use it yourself or give to your wife to use and both ways you will enjoy and even if you miss out both of the above you still enjoyed the lovely pleasant fragrance in his surroundings. Similarly, the benefits you gain from the pious are numerous. For example (and not limited to):

- 1) knowledge which might help your deen and duniya;
- 2) he reminds you of doing ibadah and be obedient to Allah;

- 3) he warns you against committing sin or continuing being in one;
- 4) reminds you to be good to your parents and kinship;
- 5) he would also put your finger on your faults and defeats so you can change and fix them;
- 6) and he will remind constantly with good behaviours and beautiful manners not only by his words and talk but also by his actions and practice.

As Ulama said: “by his natural habits, man tends to follow and imitate those he sits with and accompany. Manners and souls are like army groups, lead one another to that which is good or to that which is bad.”

Brothers and sisters in Islam,

The second example given by the prophet (p.b.u.h) is the above hadith is regarding the bad and evil friends and companions who will lead to everything contrary to the first one. Evil company will lead you to harm, to destruction, to pain and suffering in this life and ultimately to a great loss and regret on the Day of Resurrection when it will be too late to regret or to repent on that day because the warning has come to you in this life in more ways than one. Allah says, -meaning:

“And remember the Day when the wrong-doer will bite at his hands, he will say: “Ah!! Would that I had taken a straight path with the messenger. Ah!! Woe to me!! Would that I had never taken so-and-so for a friend. He did lead me astray from Al-Huda (from the message of Allah) after it had come to me. And shaytan is but a traitor (a deserter) to man”. 25/27-29.

There, on the Day, one will wish he had never befriended or sat with the one among the propagators of misguidance who diverted him from true guidance and led him to follow the path of misguidance regardless of who that may be.

Brother and sisters in Islam,

The warnings in the Holy Quran and in the Sunnah are very strong and very clear. Will you not now heed to them before its too late for you?
