

Right n. 33: The Right of the Companion

حق الصاحب

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ الصَّاحِبِ فَأَنْ تَصْحَبَهُ بِالْفَضْلِ مَا وَجَدْتَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَإِلَّا فَلَا أَقْلَ مِنَ الْإِنْصَافِ، وَأَنْ تُكْرِمَهُ كَمَا يَكْرِمُكَ، وَتَحْفَظَهُ كَمَا يَحْفَظُكَ، وَلَا يَسْبِقُكَ فِيمَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ إِلَى مَكْرَمَةٍ، فَإِنْ سَبَقَكَ كَأَفَاتِهِ. وَلَا تُقْصِرَ بِهِ عَمَّا يَسْتَحِقُّ مِنَ الْمَوَدَّةِ. تُلْزِمُ نَفْسَكَ نَصِيحَتَهُ وَحِبَاطَتَهُ وَمُعَاوَدَتَهُ عَلَى طَاعَةِ رَبِّهِ وَمَعُونَتَهُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ فِيمَا لَا يَهُمُّ بِهِ مِنْ مَعْصِيَةِ رَبِّهِ، ثُمَّ تَكُونُ [عَلَيْهِ] رَحْمَةً وَلَا تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابًا. وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

And the right of the companion is that you should act as his companion with nobility as much as you can, otherwise you should at least treat him with fairness. Honor him as he honors you, and guard him as he guards you, and do not let him precede you in generosity. And if he precedes you, then recompense him. Do not fall short of giving him the love that he deserves. Commit yourself to advise him, care for him, and help him perform the acts of obedience to his Lord, and help him restrain himself from any act of disobedience of his Lord that he might attempt. Then be a mercy upon him, and not a chastisement. And there is no power but in God.

To summarize the Imam's words, we can say:

- 1) Treat him with nobility as much as possible. At least be fair with him.
- 2) Honor him as he honors you. Try to be the first one to treat the other one with kindness. Return his favors.
- 3) Commit yourself to advise him to do acts of obedience to God.
- 4) Always restrain him from sinful acts. Try to be like a blessing for him.

We read the following in the Qur'an:

يَا صَاحِبِي السِّجْنِ أَرَبَابٌ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

“O my two companions of the prison! (I ask you): are many lords differing among themselves better, or the One God, Supreme and Irresistible?” [The Holy Qur’an, Yusuf 12:39]

In the Arabic text of the following verse, the word used for ‘a wife’ actually means a companion.

وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَى جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا

“And Exalted is the Majesty of our Lord: He has taken neither a wife nor a son.” [The Holy Qur’an, Jinn 72:3]

In the following verse the word companion refers to the Noble Prophet of God :

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ

“Your Companion is neither astray nor being misled.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Najm 53:2]

Thus, we can say that companion refers to someone that is with us either for a short time or for a long time. There is a right that is incumbent upon us for our companion.

Learning from Friends

One of man’s characteristics is learning from friends. We influence others. Others influence us. Therefore, the Holy Qur’an warns us about the possibility of deviation and depicts for us a scene in the Hereafter when man realizes that ignorant and tricky companions have corrupted him. Then he wishes that he had never made friends with them. However, then it is too late to be sorry. The Holy Qur’an says:

وَيَوْمَ يَعْضُ الضَّالِّمُ عَلَىٰ يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا

لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَنِي وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِلْإِنْسَانِ خَذُولًا

“The Day that the wrongdoer will bite at his hands, he will say, “Oh! Would that I had taken a (straight) path with the Apostle! Ah! Woe is me! Would that I had never taken such a one for a friend! He did lead me astray from the Message (of God) after it had come to me! Ah! The Evil One is but a traitor to man!”...” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Furqan 25:27-29]

Man’s state of extreme sorrow for following the footsteps of an evil friend is shown in these verses.

Although these verses refer to the Hereafter, there are many people who greatly suffer from the companionship of bad friends, lose their property, and honor.

Bad Companions as Viewed in the Traditions

There are many traditions that advise man not to make friends with bad people in order to prevent any losses and any future state of becoming sorry. Imam Ali said:

لَا تَصْحَبِ الشَّرِيرَ فَإِنَّ طَبْعَكَ يَسْرِقُ مِنْ طَبْعِهِ شَرًّا وَأَنْتَ لَا تَعْلَمُ.

“Avoid the companionship of wicked people since your nature will unknowingly adopt their wickedness.”¹

Imam Sadiq said:

مَنْ يَصْحَبُ صَاحِبَ السُّوءِ لَا يَسْلَمُ.

“Whoever associates with bad friends will not remain sound.”²

He also said:

مَنْ لَمْ يَتَجَنَّبْ مُصَاحِبَةَ الْأَحْمَقِ يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَتَخَلَّقَ بِأَخْلَاقِهِ.

“Whoever does not avoid the companionship of a fool will come close to adopting his behavior.”³

These traditions point out that man is influenced by his friends and will adopt their behavior. If his friends are stupid or wicked, then he will unknowingly adopt their behavior and act like them. The fact that the physicians have pointed out about contagious diseases is not limited to physical illnesses. Some mental illnesses are contagious too. When Imam Ali said: “... your nature will unknowingly adopt their wickedness...” he referred exactly to this fact. In addition, when Imam Sadiq said: “Whoever associates with bad friends will not remain sound...” he referred to this fact too.

The Consequences of Becoming Friends with a Fool

As an example of the consequences of becoming friends with a fool, consider the following story. A person needed to dig a well in his yard asked someone to come and dig one for him. A large amount of dirt was dug out of the well and piled up in the yard. He wondered what to do with that dirt. He went to a friend of his to ask for advice. His friend was a fool!

He told him to dig another well in the yard and then throw the dirt from the first one in it. He did the

same, but ended up with a large amount of dirt from the second well piled up on the other side of his yard. He went to his friend again to ask for more advice. His friend told him to simply pour the dirt from the second well he had dug into the first one!

As another example, consider the following story. Once a cow stuck his head into a large earthenware jar to eat, but his head was stuck in it. The owner thought for a while, but he could not find a way to get the cow's head out of the jar.

Then he went to the magistrate to get help. The magistrate came to the place where the cow was and ordered the cow's head to be cut off once he saw what had happened. They cut off the cow's head and it fell in the jar. They tried to bring it out but did not manage to do so. Then the magistrate ordered them to break the jar to get it out. Therefore, the jar was broken and the cow's head was chopped off too. This is the result of following the advice of a fool!

It has been narrated on the authority of Solomon:

لَا تَحْكُمُوا عَلَى رَجُلٍ بِشَيْءٍ حَتَّى تَنْظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ يُصَاحِبُ، فَإِنَّمَا يُعْرَفُ الرَّجُلُ بِأَشْكَالِهِ وَأَقْرَانِهِ وَيُنْسَبُ إِلَى أَصْحَابِهِ وَأَخْدَانِهِ.

“Do not express an opinion about a person before you consider with whom he keeps company, since a man is only known through the type of friends and associates he has, and is described in relation to his companions and intimates.”⁴

Imam Ali said:

لَا خَيْرَ فِي صُحْبَةِ مَنْ اجْتَمَعَ فِيهِ سِتُّ خِصَالٍ: إِنْ حَدَّثَكَ كَذِبَكَ وَإِنْ حَدَّثَتْهُ كَذْبَكَ وَإِنْ اتَّمَنَّتْهُ خَانَكَ وَإِنْ اتَّمَنَّاكَ أَتَاهَمَكَ وَإِنْ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ كَفَّرَكَ وَإِنْ أَنْعَمَ عَلَيْكَ مَنْ يَنْعَمُ بِهِ.

“There is no good in the companionship of one in whom six qualities are combined:

- 1 – Those who lie when they tell you something.
- 2 – Those who consider you to be telling a lie when you tell them something.
- 3 – Those who betray you after you trust them.
- 4 – Those who will accuse you of something after they trust you.
- 5 – Those who will not be grateful when you confer a favour on them.
- 6 – Those who, if they confer a favour on you, will make mention of it.”

Whom not to Associate With

Imam Baqir said: My father advised me as follows:

يا بُنَيَّ لَا تَصْحَبَنَّ خَمْسَةً وَلَا تُحَادِثْهُمْ وَلَا تُرَافِقْهُمْ فِي طَرِيقٍ. فَقُلْتُ: جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ يَا أَبَتِ، مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ الْخَمْسَةُ؟ قَالَ: لَا تَصْحَبَنَّ فَاسِقًا فَإِنَّهُ يَبِيعُكَ بِأَكْلَةٍ فَمَا دُونَهَا. قُلْتُ: يَا أَبَتِ، وَمَا دُونَهَا؟ قَالَ: يَطْمَعُ فِيهَا ثُمَّ لَا يَنَالُهَا. قُلْتُ: يَا أَبَتِ، وَمَنْ الثَّانِي؟ قَالَ: لَا تَصْحَبَنَّ الْبَخِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ يَقْطَعُ بِكَ فِي مَالِهِ أَحْوَجَ مَا كُنْتَ إِلَيْهِ. فَقُلْتُ: وَمَنْ الثَّلَاثُ؟ قَالَ: لَا تَصْحَبَنَّ كَذَّابًا فَإِنَّهُ بِمَنْزِلَةِ السَّرَابِ يُبْعِدُ عَنْكَ الْقَرِيبَ وَيُقَرِّبُ مِنْكَ الْبَعِيدَ. قُلْتُ: وَمَنْ الرَّابِعُ؟ قَالَ: لَا تَصْحَبَنَّ الْأَحْمَقَ فَإِنَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنْفَعَكَ فَيَضُرُّكَ. قُلْتُ: وَمَنْ الْخَامِسُ؟ قَالَ: لَا تَصْحَبَنَّ قَاطِعَ رَحِمٍ فَإِنِّي وَجَدْتُهُ مَلْعُونًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ فِي ثَلَاثَةِ مَوَاضِعَ.

“O my son! Be sure not to associate, converse or travel with five groups of people.” I asked him: “O father. May I be your ransom! Who are these five groups of people?” He replied: “Do not associate with corrupt people since they will sell you for morsel or less than that.” I asked him: “O father! What is meant by less?” He said: “They will desire it but will not get what they wanted.”

Then I asked: “O father! Who are the second group?” He said: “Do not associate with misers since they will deprive you of their property when you need it the most.” I asked: “Who are the third group?” He said: “Do not associate with liars since they are like a mirage. They will make the near seem distant to you and make the distant seem near.” Then I asked: “Who are the fourth group of people?” He replied: “Do not associate with fools, since they will cause you harm even though they intend to help you. Then I asked: “Who are the fifth group?” He said: “Do not associate with those who cut off ties with their relatives since I have found them cursed in three places in the Qur’an.”

Now let us consider the verses that Imam Sajjad referred to:

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتُقْطِعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعَمَّى أَبْصَارَهُمْ

“Then, is it to be expected of you, if ye were put in authority, that ye will do mischief in the land, and break your ties of kith and kin? Such are the men whom God has cursed for He has made them deaf and blinded their sight.” [The Holy Qur’an, Muhammad 47:22-23]

These verses are about a group of hypocrites. And for the second occasion:

وَالَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ

“But those who break the Covenant of God, after having plighted their word thereto, and cut asunder those things which God has commanded to be joined, and work mischief in the land; – on them is the curse; for them is the terrible home!” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Ra’d 13:25]

The ideological and scientific corruption of the materialistic people is summarized in the following three in the above verse:

- 1 – Breaking divine covenants, including natural, intellectual and religious ones.
- 2 – Cutting off relationships including ties with God, with divine leaders and with oneself.
- 3 – Corruption on the Earth.

In addition, the third verse reads as follows:

الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْخَاسِرُونَ

“Those who break God’s Covenant after it is ratified, and who sunder what God Has ordered to be joined, and do mischief on earth: These cause loss (only) to themselves.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Baqarah 2:27]

Visiting near relations is so important that the Prophet of God said:

صِلَةُ الرَّحِمِ تُعَمِّرُ الدِّيَارَ وَتَزِيدُ فِي الْأَعْمَارِ وَإِنْ كَانَ أَهْلُهَا غَيْرَ أَخْيَارٍ

“Establishing the ties of kinship will result in the development of towns and an increase in the lifespans, even if those who adhere to it are not of the good ones.”⁵

Imam Hasan’s Advice to Junadah

In a part of his advice to Junadah ibn Amyat, Imam Hasan said:

وَإِذَا نازَعَتْكَ نَفْسُكَ إِلَى مُصَاحَبَةِ الرِّجَالِ فَاصْحَبْ مَنْ إِذَا صَحِبْتَهُ زَانِكَ وَإِذَا خَدِمْتَهُ صَانِكَ وَإِذَا أَرَدْتَ مَعُونَةَ أَعَانِكَ
وَإِنْ قُلْتَ صَدَقَ قَوْلِكَ وَإِنْ صَلَّيْتَ شَدَّ صَوْلِكَ وَإِنْ مَدَدْتَ يَدَكَ لِفَضْلٍ مَدَّهَا وَإِنْ بَدَتْ مِنْكَ ثَلَمَةٌ سَدَّهَا وَإِنْ رَأَى مِنْكَ
حَسَنَةً عَدَّهَا وَإِنْ سَأَلْتَهُ أَعْطَاكَ وَإِنْ سَكَتَ عَنْهُ ابْتَدَأَكَ وَإِنْ نَزَلَتْ بِكَ إِحْدَى الْمُلِمَّاتِ وَاسَاكَ

“If you feel you need to associate with others, associate with the following people:

- 1) Associate with people whose association is like an adornment for you.
- 2) Associate with people who will protect you when you serve them.
- 3) Associate with people who will help you when you need help.
- 4) Associate with people who will accept what you tell them as the truth.

- 5) Associate with people who will strengthen any bonds of friendship that you initiate with them.
- 6) Associate with people who will accept your favors when you favor them out of nobility.
- 7) Associate with people who will cover up anything that might harm your honor.
- 8) Associate with people who will recognize your good deeds towards them.
- 9) Associate with people who will grant you when you ask, and if you are silent, give you without your asking.
- 10) Associate with people who will be sympathetic with you when you face hardships.”⁶

The Commander of the Faithful said:

لَا تَصْحَبْ إِلَّا عَاقِلًا تَقِيًّا وَلَا تُخَالِطْ إِلَّا عَالِمًا زَكِيًّا وَلَا تُودِعْ سِرَّكَ إِلَّا مُؤْمِنًا وَفِيًّا

“Do not be friends with anyone unless he is pious and intelligent. Only associate with a righteous scholar. Do not entrust your secrets to anyone except believers who honor their promises.”⁷

He also said:

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ صُحْبَةَ الْعَالِمِ وَاتِّبَاعَهُ دِينٌ يُدَانُ بِهِ، وَطَاعَتُهُ مَكْسَبَةٌ لِلْحَسَنَاتِ مَمْحَاةٌ لِلْسَيِّئَاتِ وَذَخِيرَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَفْعَةٌ فِي حَيَاتِهِمْ وَمَمَاتِهِمْ

“Know that associating with the scholar and following him is a practice with which God is served. Obedience to him results in the attainment of good deeds and the elimination of evil deeds. It will be a savings for believers, and an elevation in their position in this life and after death.”⁸

¹. Sharh Nahjul Balaghah, Ibn Abi al-Hadid, v.20, p.272.

². Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, v.2, p.65.

³. Ibid. p.64.

⁴. Safinah al-Bihar, v.2,p.27.

⁵. Tafsir-i-Namunah, v. 1, p. 105.

⁶. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, v.2, p.210.

⁷. Ibid. p.209.

⁸. Sharh-i-Risalat al-Huquq, Ghopanchi, p.209.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/a-divine-perspective-on-rights-a-commentary-of-imam-sajjads-treatise-of-rights/right-n-33-right#comment-0>