

Sohbah (صحبة Companionship) with the Pious for the Sake of Allah (swt)

In the absence of the ruling by all that Allah (swt) has revealed, friendship and companionship have declined in both their form and their value. All too often, relations are built upon perceived material benefit, whether it is financial, worldly privileges or worldly status, whilst spending time with each other is for as long as material benefits are realized and end when that evaporates, so does the relationship. Moreover, the time that is spent together is spent in competing in worldly gains and inciting hunger for even more. Far from preparing one for the best Akhirah, Dunya is built in such companionship as the be all and end all. Such associations are corrupt and polluting, even corrupting the pious that engage with it. Far from elevating society according to Islam, formations stemming from such companionship keep it in a lowly state.

Indeed, Companionship based on disobedience, misguidance and sin is a source of grave regret on the Day that we will all stand before Allah (swt). Allah (swt) said, ﴿يَوْمَئِذٍ لَنُنْتِزِجَنَّكُمْ أَقْرَبًا مِّنْ دُونِهِمْ وَنَلْزِمَنَّالَهُمْ بِأَنفُسِهِمْ أَلْقَابًا مِّنْ دُونِهَا سَاءَ أَصْحَابُ الْآلِافِ﴾ **“Ah! Woe to me! Would that I had never taken so-and-so as an intimate friend! (29.) He indeed led me astray from the Reminder after it had come to me. And Shaytan is to man ever a deserter.”** [Surah al-Furqan 25:28-29]. This has the meaning, the one among the propagators of misguidance who diverted him from true guidance and led him to follow the path of misguidance, whether this refers to Umayyah bin Khalaf or his brother Ubayy bin Khalaf, or to someone else. Allah (swt) also warned humankind, ﴿الْأَخِلَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ﴾ **“Friends on that Day will be foes one to another except those who have Taqwa.”** [Surah Az-Zukhruf 43: 67:68]. Indeed, the Companionship of the evil and sinful has the most bitter of all fruits! Time spent with them is exposing the soul to pollution and one must be aware even, when one is spending time in order to bring them to Guidance.

The Final Nabi (saaw) was commanded by his Lord (swt) to seek the Companionship of those of piety, for the sake of Allah (swt), whilst warning him (saaw) of those who desire the pomp and glitter of the life of the world. Allah (swt) said, ﴿وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْعَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدَ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا﴾ **“And keep yourself (O Muhammad) patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His Face; and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, and who follows his own lusts, and whose affair has been lost.”** [Surah al-Kahf 18:28]. So, Allah (swt) commanded RasulAllah (saaw) to sit with those who remember Allah (swt), who testified Him (swt) as the sole Lord, who praise Him (swt), glorify Him (swt), declare His (swt) greatness and call on Him (swt), morning and evening, loyal servants of Allah (swt), whether rich or poor, strong or weak. In relation to the Ayah, Imam Muslim recorded in his Sahih that Sa`d bin Abi Waqqas who said, كنا مع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ستة نفر، فقال المشركون للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: اطرد هؤلاء لا يجترئون علينا! قال: وكنت أنا وابن مسعود، ورجل من هذيل، وبلال ورجلان نسيتهما اسميهما فوقع في نفس رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما شاء الله أن يقع، **“There was a group of six of us with the Prophet. The idolaters said, ‘Tell these people to leave so they will not offend us.’ There was myself, Ibn Mas`ud, a man from Hudayl, Bilal and two other men whose names I have forgotten. RasulAllah (saaw) thought to himself (saaw) about whatever Allah willed he should think about, then Allah revealed, ﴿وَلَا تُطْرِدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْعَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ﴾** **“And turn not away those who invoke their Lord, morning and afternoon.”** Thus, when the materialistic Quraysh asked RasulAllah (saaw) to turn away his weak but pious Companions (ra), such as Bilal, `Ammar, Suhayb, Khabbab and Ibn Mas`ud (ra), Allah (swt) forbade him from doing that.

Regarding ﴿وَلَا تَعُدُّ عَيْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا﴾ **“and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world,”** Ibn `Abbas (ra) said that this means, **“do not favor others over them, ولا تجاوزهم إلى غيرهم: يعني: تطلب بدلهم أصحاب الشرف والثروة meaning do not seek the people of nobility and wealth instead of them.”** So the sincere within those of influence and the people of power be mindful of the corrupting amongst them. They are wary when meeting those who will draw them to the Fire through the attraction of status and wealth. They refuse to follow the ignoble example of Quraysh, who looked down on those pure who would guide them to the Truth, because of their being lesser in wealth and status, though much higher in the wealth of piety and status in Aakhira.

Those who are truly ambitious for the good pleasure of Allah (swt) and zealous for the great bounties of Jannah, spend time with the pious, drawing near to them in Companionship. RasulAllah (saaw) said, **«الرَّجُلُ عَلَى دِينِ خَلِيلِهِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَحَدَكُمْ مَنْ يُخَالِلُ»** **“A man follows the Deen of his friend; so each one should consider whom he makes his friend.”** [Abu Daud, Tirmidhi]. In the age of isolation, they take time from their families and work engagements to spend time with those whom they love for Allah (swt) sake, knowing that this love will elevate them in rank in Jannah. Al-Bazzar narrated also with Hasan *isnad* (chain of transmission) from Abdullah b. Amr (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, **«مَنْ أَحَبَّ»** **“Whoever loved a man for the sake of Allah and said: I love you for the sake of Allah, and then they were admitted to the jannah, and the one who loved was of higher rank from the other, he would be joined with the one who loved.”**

In the era of capitalist individualism, let those who desire Companionship with the Prophet (saaw), meet to remind each other of increasing their devotion of Allah (swt). Rabi'a b. Ka'b said, “I was with Allah's Messenger (saaw) one night and I brought him water and what he required. **He said to me: «سَلْ» “Ask (anything you like).” I said: «أَسْأَلُكَ مُرَافَقَتَكَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ» “I ask your company in Paradise.” He (the Holy Prophet) said, «أَوْ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ» “Or anything else besides it.” I said, «هُوَ ذَلِكَ» “That is all (what I require).” He said, «أَعْنِي عَلَى نَفْسِكَ بِكَثْرَةِ السُّجُودِ» “Then help me to achieve this for you by devoting yourself often to prostration.” [Muslim]. Let those who have their eyes in the Aakhira, spend time eating with the pious companion. Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (ra) reported, **«لَا تُصَاحِبْ إِلَّا مُؤْمِنًا، وَلَا يَأْكُلْ طَعَامَكَ إِلَّا تَقِيًّا»** The Prophet (saaw) said, **“Keep only a believer for a companion and let only a pious eat your food.”** [At-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud]. In the capitalist era of meeting only for trade and business, let us excel in spending time for the best trade of all, the trade in our lives and soul for eternal bliss in Aakhira. Abdullah bin Amr narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saaw) said, **«خَيْرُ الْأَصْحَابِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرُهُمْ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَخَيْرُ الْأَجِيرَانِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرُهُمْ لِجَارِهِ»** **“The companion who is the best to Allah is the one who is best to his companion. And the neighbor that is the best to Allah is the one that is best to his neighbor.”** [Tirmidhi]. Let us not belittle any time or action in Companionship, with the pious, even if it were for the brief moment to shake hands. Narrated Qatada: I asked Anas, **«أَكَانَتْ الْمُصَافَحَةُ فِي أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ»** **“Was it a custom of the companions of the Prophet (saaw) to shake hands with one another?” He said, “Yes.”** [Bukhari] Let us benefit fully of the time we spend in companionship, not excluding anyone from it and paying it full attention. It was narrated from Abdullah that RasulAllah (saaw) said, **«إِذَا كُنْتُمْ ثَلَاثَةً فَلَا يَتَّجَى اثْنَانِ دُونَ صَاحِبِهِمَا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ يُحْزِنُهُ»** **“When you are three, two should not converse (privately) to the exclusion of their companion, because that makes him sad.”** [Ibn Majah]. In an age, where people do not have time to meet each other and satisfy themselves with passing messages on social media alone, let us undertake the live and lively contact in Companionship for the sake of Allah (swt).**

The esteemed friendship and Companionship for the sake of Allah (swt) elevated the Companions (ra) as the best of all generations. The habits of the Companions of Prophet Muhammad (saaw) is alone worthy of deep study and close adherence, because that is the group which is certified by Allah (swt) in Quran for their faith, benchmark, patience and perseverance. Allah (swt) said, **﴿وَالسَّبِقُونَ الْأُولُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ﴾** **“And the foremost to embrace Islam which are Muhajirin and the Ansar and**

also those who followed them exactly (in faith). Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. ...” [Surah at-Tawba 9: 100] Allah (swt) mentions that He is pleased foremost with the Muhajirin, Ansar and those who followed them, and that they are well-pleased with Him, for He has prepared for them the gardens of delight and eternal joy.

Indeed, it is the Islamic Companionship that built the best generation of the Ummah. The Companions of RasulAllah (saaw) established the Islamic State in Madinah. After the returning of RasulAllah (saaw) to Allah (swt), it was the Companions (ra) of RasulAllah (saaw) who established the first Khilafah (Caliphate) on the Method of Prophethood. In their strong Companionship are great lessons for those who seek to establish the second Khilafah on the Method of Prophethood. RasulAllah (saaw) said, **«تَكُونُ النَّبُوءَةُ فِيكُمْ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَكُونَ ثُمَّ يَرْفَعُهَا، إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْ يَرْفَعَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ مُلْكًا إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْ يَرْفَعَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ خِلَافَةً عَلَىٰ مِنْهَاجِ النَّبُوءَةِ فَتَكُونُ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَكُونَ ثُمَّ يَرْفَعُهَا إِذَا شَاءَ عَاصًا فَيَكُونُ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ ثُمَّ يَرْفَعُهَا إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْ يَرْفَعَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ خِلَافَةً عَلَىٰ مِنْهَاجِ النَّبُوءَةِ ثُمَّ سَكَتَ»** **“Prophethood will last with you for as long as Allah wants it to last. Then there will be Khilafah according to the Method of Prophethood, and things will be as Allah wishes them to be. Then Allah will end it when He wishes. Then there will be hereditary rule, and things will be as Allah wishes them to be. Then Allah will end it when He wishes. Then there will be an oppressive rule, and things will be as Allah wishes them to be. Then Allah will end it when He wishes. Then there will be a Khilafah according to the method of Prophethood.”** Then he (saaw) fell silent. [Ahmed]

In our era without the Anbiyyah (as), let us remember that those who will be acknowledged by those Anbiyah on the Day of Judgment will be those who made friendship with each other for the sake of Allah (swt). Narrated by al-Haakim who reported the following hadith on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar in his al-Mustadrak and said the narration is sound though it has not been narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, **«إن لله عباداً ليسوا بأنبياء ولا شهداء يغبطهم الشهداء والنبيون يوم القيامة لقربهم من الله تعالى ومجلسهم منه، فجنثا أعرابي على ركبتيه فقال يا رسول الله صفهم لنا وحلهم لنا قال: قوم من أفناء الناس من نزاع القبائل، تصادقوا في الله وتحابوا فيه، يضع الله عز وجل لهم يوم القيامة منابر من نور، يخاف الناس ولا يخافون، هم أولياء الله عز وجل الذين لا خوف عليهم ولا هم يحزنون»** **“Allah has servants who are neither Prophets nor martyrs, yet the martyrs and Prophets acknowledge their ranks and their nearness to Allah on the day of Judgment. Then a Bedouin bent on his knees and said: “O Messenger of Allah! Describe them and explain them for us.” He said: “They are of different peoples that do not belong to their tribes. They befriended each other and loved each other for the sake of Allah. On the Day of Judgment, Allah will make for them platforms of Light on which they will sit. People will fear, but they will not fear. They are Allah’s friends (awliyyaa’) azza wa jall, on whom there is no fear, nor shall they grieve.”** It is stated in Lisaan al-‘Arab: أفناء أي أخلاط الواحد فَنُو: the word ‘afnaa’ means mixed people.

Let us through Companionship for the sake of Allah (swt) build a generation of leaders that can follow in the footsteps of the Companions (ra). In our era, the influential and the people of power are exposed to great corruption and worldly temptations. So, let us all ensure that we make time to spend with the righteous and learned in Deen. Let us make sure that rather than inciting rivalry in worldly gains, our Companionship leads us to compete for the high rank in the Aakhirah, through better knowledge of Islam and an abundance of good actions, seeking the pleasure of Allah (swt). And may we soon see that the Ummah’s affairs are finally taken care of by a leadership whose eyes are fixed on the rewards of the Aakhirah, adhering to all that Allah (swt) has revealed in ruling and being sincere guardians for our great Deen.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

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