

Right n. 31: The Right of the Sitting Companion

حق الجليس

وَأَمَّا حَقُّ الْجَالِسِ فَأَنْ تُلِينَ لَهُ كَنَفَكَ، وَتُطِيبَ لَهُ جَانِبَكَ، وَتُنْصِفَهُ فِي مُجَارَاةِ
اللَّفْظِ وَلَا تُغْرِقَ فِي نَزْعِ اللَّحْظِ إِذَا لَحَظْتَ وَتَقْصِدَ فِي اللَّفْظِ إِلَى إِفْهَامِهِ إِذَا
لَفَظْتَ. وَإِنْ كُنْتَ الْجَالِسَ إِلَيْهِ كُنْتَ فِي الْقِيَامِ عَنْهُ بِالْخِيَارِ وَإِنْ كَانَ الْجَالِسَ
إِلَيْكَ كَانَ بِالْخِيَارِ. وَلَا تَقُومُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ. وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ.

And the right of your sitting companion is that you should treat him gently, warmly welcome him, be fair while talking with him, do not take your eyes off of him when you are looking at him, and pronounce your words clearly to help him understand what you say. And if you are the first one to go and sit with him, you can leave him when you wish. However, if he is the first one to come and sit with you, he can leave you when he wishes to. And you should not leave him without his permission.¹ And there is no power but in God.

Man as a Social Being

What is meant by “sitting companion” is friends or associates, be their friendship short-lived or for a long time. Whoever becomes our companion has certain rights incumbent upon us. Men of all ages at all times need companions since man has an instinctive desire for social living. Man suffers from loneliness. He would become happy if he has a good associate or friend.

The Role of Friends in Man's Personality

Each person's friends and associates have a great influence on his personality, worldly and religious affairs. Friends affect our behavior and the many aspects of our lives. This effect can be either positive or negative. This is so important that the Noble Prophet of God declared one of the criteria for each person's personality to be that of his friends. He said: "It is a great tragedy for one not to have any good friends."2 Imam Ali said:

مَنْ فَقَدَ أَخًا لَهُ فِي اللَّهِ فَقَدَ أَشْرَفَ أَعْضَائِهِ.

*"When one loses his own sincere friend whose friendship with him was for the sake of God, it is as if he has lost one of his body parts."*3

Now that it has become clear that a friend has a very important role in our life, it is vital to be careful in choosing a good friend so that we can have a long-lasting relationship.

How to Choose a Good Friend

Regarding the way to choose a good friend, Imam Sadiq said:

مَنْ غَضِبَ عَلَيْكَ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ فَلَمْ يَقُلْ فِيكَ سُوءًا فَاتَّخِذْهُ لَكَ خَلِيلًا.

*"Whoever gets angry with you thrice, but does not say anything bad about you – take him for your friend."*4

Stable and Unstable Friendships

Imam Ali said:

مَنْ اتَّخَذَ أَخًا بَعْدَ حُسْنِ الْاِخْتِبَارِ دَامَتْ صُحْبَتُهُ وَتَأَكَّدَتْ مَوَدَّتُهُ.

*"Whoever chooses a friend after properly testing him will have a lasting friendship with him."*5

Imam Ali said:

مَنْ اتَّخَذَ أَخًا مِنْ غَيْرِ اخْتِبَارٍ أَلْجَأَهُ الْاضْطِرَارُ إِلَى مُرَافَقَةِ الْأَشْرَارِ.

*“Whoever makes friends without proper considerations will have to put up with wicked friends.”*⁶

Associating With Wicked People

Saint Abdul Azeem Hassani quoted on the authority of Imam Baqir who said:

مَجَالَسَةُ الْأَشْرَارِ تَوْرَثُ سُوءَ الظَّنِّ بِالْأَخْيَارِ.

*“Associating with wicked people causes a bad opinion regarding good people.”*⁷

Imam Sadiq quoted on the authority of his grandfather on the authority of the Prophet of God :

ثَلَاثٌ مُجَالَسَتُهُمْ تُمِيتُ الْقُلُوبَ: الْجُلُوسُ مَعَ الْأَنْدَالِ، وَالْحَدِيثُ مَعَ النِّسَاءِ،
وَالْجُلُوسُ مَعَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ.

*“Associating with the following three groups of people will make your heart perish: sitting with ignoble ones, conversing with women and sitting with the rich.”*⁸

In another tradition regarding associating with the rich, Imam Sadiq said:

لَا تُجَالِسِ الْأَغْنِيَاءَ فَإِنَّ الْعَبْدَ يُجَالِسُهُمْ وَهُوَ يَرَى أَنَّ لِلَّهِ عَلَيْهِ نِعْمَةً، فَمَا يَقُومُ حَتَّى
يَرَى أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ لِلَّهِ عَلَيْهِ نِعْمَةٌ.

*“Do not sit with the rich. For a servant sits with them and he is aware of the blessings God has bestowed on him, but he rises up thinking that God has bestowed no blessing on him.”*⁹

In another tradition, we read that the Noble Prophet said: “Do not associate with the dead! They asked him: “O Prophet of God! Who are the dead?” He replied: “They are the wasteful rich, who are delved in the material life of this world and unaware of God. They see everything as wealth and money.”

Such people do not have a living heart. Thus, the Prophet considers them to be like the dead.

Associating with the dead will result in the perishing of one’s heart. That is why it is forbidden by the

Prophet of Islam . In Sifat ash-Shia Sadooq – may mercy be upon him – has quoted Imam Baqir who quoted on the authority of the Commander of the Faithful :

مُجَالَسَةُ الْأَشْرَارِ تُورِثُ سُوءَ الظَّنِّ بِالْأَخْيَارِ، وَمُجَالَسَةُ الْأَخْيَارِ تُلْحِقُ الْأَشْرَارَ
بِالْأَخْيَارِ، وَمُجَالَسَةُ الْأَبْرَارِ لِلْفُجَّارِ تُلْحِقُ الْأَبْرَارَ بِالْفُجَّارِ، فَمَنْ اشْتَبَهَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَمْرُهُ
وَلَمْ تَعْرِفُوا دِينَهُ فَانظُرُوا إِلَى خُلَطَائِهِ، فَإِنْ كَانُوا أَهْلَ دِينِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ عَلَى دِينِ اللَّهِ
وَإِنْ كَانُوا عَلَى غَيْرِ دِينِ اللَّهِ فَلَا حَظَّ لَهُ مِنْ دِينِ اللَّهِ. إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ كَانَ يَقُولُ: مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلَا يُؤَاخِيزُ كَافِرًا وَلَا
يُخَالِطُ فَاجِرًا، وَمَنْ آخَى كَافِرًا أَوْ خَالَطَ فَاجِرًا كَانَ كَافِرًا فَاجِرًا.

“Associating with wicked people will result in one being suspicious of the good people. Association of the wicked people with good people will result in them becoming good people. Association of good people with the sinners will convert them into sinners. Then if you are in doubt about someone and do not know the degree of his attachment to the decrees of religion, look at his friends.

If he associates with religious people, then he is a follower of God’s religion. However, if he associates with people who do not follow God’s religion, then he has not benefited from God’s religion. Indeed the Noble Prophet of God said: One who believes in God and the Resurrection Day shall not fraternize with an unbeliever or associate with an immoral person. Whoever fraternizes with an unbeliever or associates with an immoral person is an unbeliever and immoral.”¹⁰

With Whom to Associate

Imam Sajjad said to his children:

جَالِسُوا أَهْلَ الدِّينِ وَالْمَعْرِفَةِ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ فَالْوَحْدَةُ أُنْسٌ وَأَسْلَمٌ فَإِنْ أُبَيْتُمْ
إِلَّا مُجَالَسَةَ النَّاسِ فَجَالِسُوا أَهْلَ الْمُرُوءَاتِ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يَرْفُتُونَ فِي مُجَالَسَتِهِمْ.

“Associate with the people of religion and recognition (of God). If you cannot find any such people, then solitude is more companionable and safer. If you insist on associating with people, then associate with the people of honor who do not utter unseemly speech in their gatherings.”¹¹

Imam Sadiq said:

مَنْ جَالَسَ أَهْلَ الرَّيْبِ فَهُوَ مُرِيبٌ.

“Whoever associates with dubious people will be regarded as dubious.”¹²

Associate with Scholars

The Noble Prophet of God said:

إِجْلِسُوا عِنْدَ كُلِّ عَالِمٍ يَدْعُوكُمْ مِنْ خَمْسٍ إِلَى خَمْسٍ: مِنَ الشَّكِّ إِلَى الْيَقِينِ وَمِنَ
الرِّيَاءِ إِلَى الْإِخْلَاصِ وَمِنَ الرَّغْبَةِ إِلَى الزُّهْدِ وَمِنَ الْكِبَرِ إِلَى التَّوَاضُّعِ وَمِنَ
الْعَدَاوَةِ إِلَى الْمَحَبَّةِ.

“Associate with every scholar who calls you away from five things towards five things:

1. *From doubt to certitude*
2. *From dissemblance to sincerity (in deeds)*
3. *From desire (of this world) to abstinence*
4. *From pride to humility*
5. *From enmity to love.* 13

Thus, we realize the importance of visiting the scholars. Their effect on man’s spirit is clarified. We see why the Prophet of God invited us to associate with scholars.

The Role of Wise Companions

Imam Sadiq said:

الإخوانُ ثلاثةٌ: فواحدٌ كالغذاءِ الذي يُحتاجُ إليه في كُلِّ وَقْتٍ، والثاني في مَعْنَى
الداءِ وهو الأحمقُ والثالثُ في مَعْنَى الدَوَاءِ وهو اللَّبِيبُ.

“Brothers are of three kinds. The first kind is like nourishment that we need at all times; the second is like a disease, and they are the foolish ones. The third kind is like the remedy, and they are the

intelligent ones.”

Moa'tasim in the Minister's Party

Fazl Marwan was one of the ministers of the Abbasid Caliph Moa'tasim. He was so talented that he had attained an especial position near the Caliph.

To show the people his especial position near the Caliph, he invited the Caliph to an evening party. He decorated his large house with glamorous materials, beautiful flowers, golden and silver dishes and expensive rugs. He prepared the best of the fruits and confectioneries.

Once the Caliph entered his house, he felt jealous and brought the excuse that his stomach hurt, and left the house. The minister realized that his efforts had given a negative result. He consulted with his intelligent friend Ibrahim Mooseli who was present. Ibrahim thought for a short while and told him to accompany the Caliph to the court and wait for his letter. He also advised him to read the letter in the presence of the Caliph.

Fazl followed Ibrahim's advice. After a short while, he received a letter in which it was written: "Now that the party for the Caliph has ended, the owner of the rugs and the jewels has come to take them back. Please issue permission to give them back to their owner." Moatasim asked about the contents of the letter. The minister read the letter. Then when the Caliph realized that these were all borrowed, his hurt feelings ended. Thus, the intellect of a very intelligent friend was able to save a friend.

The Criteria for Honesty

Imam Sadiq said:

الصَّدَاقَةُ مَحْدُودَةٌ، فَمَنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ فِيهِ تِلْكَ الْحُدُودِ فَلَا تَنْسِبُهُ إِلَى كَمَالِ الصَّدَاقَةِ،
وَمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِيهِ شَيْءٌ مِنْ تِلْكَ الْحُدُودِ لَا تَنْسِبُهُ إِلَى شَيْءٍ مِنَ الصَّدَاقَةِ. أَوْلَاهَا أَنْ
تَكُونَ سَرِيرَتُهُ وَعَلَانِيَتُهُ لَكَ وَاحِدَةً، وَالثَّانِيَةُ أَنْ يَرَى زِينَتَكَ زِينَةً وَشَيْنَكَ شَيْنَةً،
وَالثَّلَاثَةُ أَنْ لَا يُغَيِّرَهُ مَالٌ وَلَا وِلَايَةٌ، وَالرَّابِعَةُ أَنْ لَا يَمْنَعَكَ شَيْئًا مِمَّا تَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ
مَقْدَرَتُهُ، وَالخَامِسَةُ أَنْ لَا يُسَلِّمَكَ عِنْدَ النَّكَبَاتِ.

“There are certain criteria for sincere friendship. Do not attribute perfection in sincere friendship to one who does not possess these criteria. Do not attribute any (degree of) sincere friendship to one who has none of these criteria. Firstly, his inner and outer self should be the same for you. Secondly, he should consider your honor to be his honor and your dishonor to be his dishonor. Thirdly, worldly wealth and position should not change him. Fourthly, he should not refuse you anything he has the capacity to

attain. And fifthly, he should not desert you in times of affliction.”¹⁴

The Prophet's Association with the Poor Pious Ones

Consider the following verse:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ
عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ
وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا

“And keep thy soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face; and let not thine eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this life; nor obey any whose heart We have permitted to neglect the remembrance of Us, one who follows his own desires, whose case has gone beyond all bounds.” [The Holy Qur’an, al-Kahf 18:28]

We learn from this verse that the value of men is not in their position or wealth. It has been said that the above verse was revealed under the following conditions. A group of the haughty rich people went to see the Prophet of God . Pointing at faithful men such as Salman, Abu-Dharr, Sohayb and Khobab they said: “O Muhammad! We will come to you if you sit at the highest position in the room and fend off these stinky folks who wear rough clothes.”¹⁵

This verse condemns the formation of various classes in the society, and attempts to establish ties between the noble people and the poor ones. In a similar way, Imam Sajjad has recommended respect for our companions, a warm welcome for them, polite conversation with them and a respectful farewell.

1. In the other version it is followed by: “You should forget his slips and remember his good qualities, and you should tell nothing about him but good.”

2. Shafi, v. 1, p. 192.

3. Sharh-i-Ghurar wa Durar, v.5, p.472.

4. Tarikh Ya'qubi, v.2, p.383.

5. Sharh-i-Ghurar wa Durar, v.5, pp.397-398.

6. Ibid.

7. Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, p. 191.

8. Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, p. 191.

9. Ibid. pp. 194-199.

10. Ibid. p. 196.

11. Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, p. 196.

12. Ibid. p. 197.

13. Ithna 'Ashariyah, p.202.

14. Ithna 'Ashariyah, p.343, quoted from al-Amali by Saduq, p.397.

15. Tafsir-i-Namunah, v. 12, p.414.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/divine-perspective-on-rights-a-commentary-of-imam-sajjads-treatise-of-rights/right-n-31-right>