

Table of Contents

Publisher's Preface

Introduction

Definition of Friendship

Friendship and Its Deep Effects on Human Character

Principles and Criteria of Choosing a Friend

A. Friendship for the Sake of God

B. Wisdom

C. Intimacy

D. Magnanimity

E. A Closer Look at the Intimate Friend

Test of Friendship

Techniques to Test Friendship

A. Listening to the Heart

B. Comparative Method

C. Asking for Help

D. Provocation Method

E. Natural Method

Forbidden Friendship

How to React When a Friend Makes a Mistake

Limits of Friendship

Mutual Duties of Friends

A. Affective Duties of Friends

١. Greeting, Shaking Hands, and Embracing (Kissing) while Smiling
٢. Asking about a Friend's Personal Information
٣. Respecting Friends
٤. Making Friends Happy

B. Cognitive Duties of Friends

١. Trust-Making in the Atmosphere of Friendship
٢. Letting Your Friend Know about Your Love!

C. Behavioral Duties Between Friends

١. Welcoming and Seeing Friends off
٢. Paying Attention to What a Friend Says
٣. Tolerating a Friend's Criticisms

Bibliography

Publisher's Preface

An active and stable society needs a re-analysis of culture in different social, political and economic aspects. Islam has a comprehensive plan for all these aspects, for its founder is familiar with the nature of human soul and society and has put forward the best and most comprehensive recommendations for reaching it. Islamic scholars have always wanted to present this culture and have made many attempts in this respect. Now that an Islamic republic government is established in Iran, it is necessary that we move toward Islamic teachings with a plan-oriented approach to govern an Islamic society. To present a comprehensive and methodological plan based on the Islamic culture, which is nowadays called Culture Engineering itself, needs to be analyzed from the cultural point of view. To devise an educational system and the necessary sub-systems for its application without

having a comprehensive scheme of religious culture will be void. Along with this and with the aim of preparing the grounds for such a view, the research center of Razavi University of Islamic Sciences presents to thoughtful readers the series “Culture of Social Relations in Islamic Teachings”, the result of years of hard work by the researchers at its Education Unit. “Friendship and Kindness” is one of the topics in the series. The author has tried to present the importance, the results and the limits of friendship and the bilateral duties of friends, based on religious teachings in simple language. He has also tried to show techniques and rules of friendship in Islam. It goes without saying that this book is an introduction and just a glance at the topic and is presented as the first step.

It is here necessary to thank all who helped us to finish this book. It should be mentioned that this

is the eighth book published in this series. Our other publications include “Techniques of Conversation,” “Techniques of Discipline,” “Normal Character and Behavior,” “Optimism or Pessimism,” “Consultation and Guidance,” “Compromise and Forgiveness,” and “What Is Trustworthy? What Is Disloyalty?”

The Research Center

of Razavi University of Islamic Sciences

Introduction

Islam is the most social monotheistic religion and the Qur'an, in many cases, greatly emphasizes developing relations among the members of religious community. But it should be taken into account that continuous and constructive relations need certain prerequisites.

“O ye who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other..”¹

From the viewpoint of the Qur'an the believers are brothers², which means they feel responsible, compassionate and intimate for one another, and even divine prophets are considered as the brothers of people³. This is the best symbol of friendship in the religious community and it has

¹ The translations of the verses of Holy Qur'an are from **Abdullah Yusufali**.

² Chapter 3 (The Family of 'Imran), Verse 101.

³ “The Believers are but a single Brotherhood”, Chapter 49 (the Inner Apartments), Verse 10.

⁴ “...their brother Noah said to them”, Chapter 26 (the Poets), Verses 107, 124, 142

very important applications in the process of forming a society. Friendship is the natural need of human beings and the necessary requirement for their social life and has always been present in different societies, but religion has used it in the best way to strengthen the foundations of society, considering it as one of the major priorities.

Chances of friendship provide a natural arena for transmission of culture and social exchange, so humans can improve their character as they develop more friendships. Moralities and good manners as well as immoralities and bad manners can be easily and sometimes unconsciously spread and transferred in the context of friendship. That is why governments and the streams of power, by the aid of multimedia, form the culture of society's friendship to provide the kind of social acceptance they want.

Islam has well understood the importance and the deep effect of chances of friendship. In its

teachings, traditions and also in the manners of the Family of the Prophet, Islam has presented an all including culture regarding the issues of friendship. By presenting theoretical and practical roles of friendship in a religious community, Islam has tried to improve relations on the one hand and develop morality and educate people on the other. The present book is an introduction to present the vast and useful area of the culture of friendship based on religious foundations.

Definition of Friendship

The voluntary relationship among people who have common tastes, interests, and culture is called friendship.

Friendship and Its Deep Effects on the Human Character

The need for human beings to have friends and intimate friendly atmosphere is undeniable. The feeling of loneliness is one of the most

crushing psychological moods of human beings. Friends and friendship enhance the human's tolerance against difficulties of life. According to researchers, the patients who have incurable diseases with few friends die sooner than those with a lot of relations or those with happy and supportive families. Friendly relationships make us feel that we belong to a group and feel membership in the group. This kind of membership has its own advantages, one of which is reliable unity, the kind of bond on which one can rely in times of trouble. Friendship also results in emotional stability and helps us understand our position vis-a-vis others; it means our friends' reactions against our speech, behavior, and emotion help us know who we really are and understand the difference between right and wrong. Lastly, this state results in our balance and reformation of our character and helps the improvement and strength of our

abilities against the situations and happenings in the world around. Another function of friendship is the exchange of information and skills and sharing the experiences of others, for friendship is a chance to use others' facilities to improve and thus practically expand one's assets. One of the most important functions of friendship is helping others, for friendship is a chance for individuals to help others and fulfill their positive and constructive role in social improvement of the learned people of society. By doing so, the person will have self-respect and also a positive role in the process of the development of others' character. All of these will result in the mental health of individuals and will gradually help the improvement of morality and human values and finally the movement towards perfect human character, which is the desire of the leaders of religion.

Friendship (i.e. thoughtful friendship) changes a person into a group; it makes movement and has the role of reforming and leading people to perfection. It is based on the presupposition that affection towards another believer is one of the highest levels of faith¹ and that holy Abraham could gain the position of God's friendship.²

Whoever deprives himself of the practical culture of friendship is deprived of many capabilities and becomes a lonely and incapable person. About such a person, the Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.) says: "The believer is a friend and companion and others make friends with him, and there is no use in the one who does not make friends with others (i.e. does not enter the circle of friends) and who is not made friends with"³

¹ Muhammad Ibn Yaqob Kolaini, Kafi, Researcher: All Akbar Ghaffari, V. 2, P. 120.

² "For Allah did take Abraham for a friend", Chapter 8 (Women), Verse 120.

³ Molla Mahdi Naraqj, Jamea al-Saadat, V. 2, P. 200.

The great leader of Islam (P.b.u.h. & h.f.) considers friendship a blessing from God and also an important possibility and says: “If God wants to bless somebody, He gives him a good friend who will remind him (of things) when he forgets (them) and who will help him when he remembers (things).”¹ Those who are rejected by their companions or who are not accepted as members or friends as they expect usually suffer from instability of character. They are anxious and worried in their private lives and will cause disorder in the collective activities, and also disharmony and violence in society.² It should be taken into account that “friendship” is not something accidental and simple but a long and complex process which has an important role in the destiny of human beings. But there are also traps and challenges. To

¹ Muhammad Baqer Majiesi, Bihar al-Anwar, V. ٧٤, P. ١٦٤.

² All Shariatmadari, Psychology of Education, P. ٢٥٤.

establish this kind of relationship, to improve it, to keep its necessary order and to properly deal with the problems in its way, one needs reflection, a plan of activity and skills.

It would be highly simplistic to say:” Start your friendship and everything will take care of itself.” It would be like believing that by just putting the key in the switch, leaning back in the seat, and leaving the car to itself, one can drive in the street! It is just the reverse. Starting a close, useful and stable relationship demands precise compatibility, continuous observation and different complex skills. Skills like the choice of friends, close examination of the needs of friends, taking correct approaches towards friends, showing friendship by physical and psychological methods, trust-making to direct and strengthen friendly relationship in sublime and befitting ways, dealing with the plagues of friendship and recognizing the limits of friendship.

The Principles and Criteria of Choosing a Friend

Two points indicate the importance of choosing good friends:

١. the humans' high potentiality to be affected by the situations, specially by friends and the ones of their age

٢. the gradual and hidden nature of this effect Friendship is humans' investment, and friends

are stable investments in the transaction of life. Which clever merchant chooses his merchandise accidentally and without any criteria? Which traveler starts his journey without a concordant companion? Which subtle person chooses his mirror, by which he evaluates his appearance, without forethought and consultation? Which believer chooses his religion without research and investigation?! Let's consider what the leaders of religion have said in this regard:

The holy Prophet says, “First choose your friend then start your journey.”¹ And he also says, “A believer is a mirror for his fellow believer,”² and “Everyone has the religion of his friend.”³

According to these, the important criteria of choosing friends in different stages of life are brought up and the principles of finding friends are brought forth. The stability of friendship and taking the most out of this important element in the foundation of human character depend on using these criteria. Religious texts and the findings of human sciences emphasize the following criteria:

A. Friendship for the Sake of God

Monotheism is the most fundamental element in Islamic thought and human nature has the most obvious and hidden dependency on this reality. Any sweetness without God will result in lasting bitterness and every difficulty with God is success.

¹ Muhammad Ibn Yaqob Kolaini, Kafi, V. 4, P. 287.

² Shaikh Sadoq, Mosadefat Al-Akhavan, V. 1, P. 45.

³ Aboiqasem Payandeh, P. 724.

Imam Hussein (P.b.u.h.) in his invocation called “Arafa” says, “My dear Lord! the one who has lost you, has not gained anything, and the one who has found you has found everything...”¹

The important characteristic of a useful friendship is its being for God, which can bring divine blessing, mercy, and satisfaction.

The friendship for God is out of sincerity, not greed. It is based on values, not on superficial and false things. It is for the sake of belief, not for material interests. It lasts in the afterlife, not limited to the short days of this life. Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.) says: “Any friendship based on anything except God is aberration and is impossible to rely on.”²

His holiness also says: “Divine friends have a stabler friendship, because of their motives for friendship.”³

¹ Shaikh Abbas Qomi, Mafatih Al-Jenan.

² Muhammad Muhammadi Rey-Shahri, Mizan al-Hikmah, V. 1, P. 45.

³ Ibid, V. 1, P. 45.

B.

Wisdom

Man's life is full of new happenings. In these happenings, new problems arise, the problems not experienced before and he may not know how to solve them. Wise friends who freely and sincerely advise us based on their intelligence, thought, and experience are the best helpers on such occasions. Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.) says: "Do not associate except with a virtuous wise person, do not mix except with a chaste sage, and do not confide your secret except to a faithful believer!"¹

C.

Intimacy

Many individuals, in times of difficulty and danger slowly withdraw and so to speak do not bother themselves. These are friends only in the moments of success. Friendship starts with equal behavior from both sides and what spoils it are being self-centered on the one hand and being obedient on the other.

¹ Muhammad Baqer Majiesi, Bihar al-Anwar, V. i, P. ۱۷۰

Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.) says: "I wish you the friendship of honest and sincere brothers, for they are sources of adoration in time of blessing and means of protection in time of trouble."¹

D.

Magnanimity

Some people are great in science, technology, art, literature, social positions or in other areas. But few people in addition to being great are magnanimous too. Greatness is the result of mental and physical ability but magnanimity is brought about by the development of spirit and character. A magnanimous and noble-minded person sees other people's good deeds, is hopeful, and does not twit anyone for his favors. He is a source of glory and prestige. He is patient with the wrong-doings of others. He is high-minded and joyful and is benevolent towards others. That is why the Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.) says: "The most fortunate person

¹ Ibid, V. Vξ, P. ١٨٧ .

is the one who associates with the high-minded and the generous.”¹
And also one day his holiness said to his friends and companions, “Do not be like flies!” They were astonished and asked, “Not like flies?” He answered: “Don’t you see that flies leave clean and pure things and sit on impure and dirty things?”
Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.) says: “Accept your brother’s excuse and if he does not have one, help him to find one. If you know your brother needs something, do not let him express it.”²

A Closer Look at the Intimate Friend

An intimate friend is one who cares more than others for his friend and tries to keep their friendship. He knows it well that his friend is neither an angel nor a prophet but just a human being like others, and a little better; thus if he finds

¹ Muhammad Baqer Majiesi, Bihar al-Anwar, V. ٧١, P. ١٨٥.

² Nahj al-Balaghah, Letter ٣١.

out his friend's fault, he keeps it secret and conceals it. If his friend makes a mistake, he accepts his apology and forgives him. These characteristics make friendship fine and the memory of the friend's generosity great and lasting. A sincere and intimate friend is one who believes by his heart in the following guideline by Imam Baqer (P.b.u.h.): "Love your Muslim brother. Want for him whatever you like for yourself, and do not want for him whatever you do not like for yourself. Ask him whenever you want something from him and whenever he asks something from you, give it to him. Do not deprive him of any good of yours; thus he won't do it either. When he comes to visit you, welcome him and respect him. You are part of him and he is part of you; if he becomes angry and breaks up with

you, do not break up with him and wait for his dislike to calm down.”¹

A person with such a disposition is a gem who deserves to make friends with, and devotion for him and his company are a precious possession.

Test of Friendship

Every choice is based on a kind of evaluation and on the recognition of criteria based on evidence, and the best way for this is testing. Testing is an arena where the pure are separated from the impure and pretenders lose their masks and are separated from true friends. It is a chance for a person to find out who deserves the great gift of his heartfelt love, company, and friendship. The kind of friendship out of which hatred and enmity

¹ Mirza Hussein Noon, Mostadrak al-Wasael, V. 9, P. 80.

are produced and spreads nothing but the seeds of evil and shame is better never to start or continue.¹

This kind of test sometimes reveals the pure gold inside some friends and makes one seriously protect his friendship, as Imam Reza (P.b.u.h.) says, “Anyone who finds a friend in the way of God has in fact got a room in paradise.”² This test sometimes also shows the poisonous nature of some so far as Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.) says: “Loneliness is better than having a bad friend”³

Now we should understand this saying of the Imam of the believers All (P.b.u.h.): “Do not trust a friend before testing him.”⁴

¹ The Holy Qur’an also refers to some seeming worldly friends as Foes in the afterlife, except those with whom one has started friendship based on virtue: “Friends on that day will be foes, one to another, except the pious”, Chapter 43 (Ornaments of Gold), Verse 17.

² Aziz-ollah Atarodi, The position of Imam Reza (P.b.u.h.)

³ Muhammad Baqer Majiesi, V. 71. P. 199.

⁴ Muhammad Muhammadi Rey-shahri, Mizan al-Hekma, V. 4, P. 37/13.

The Techniques to Test Friendship
A. Listening to the Heart

Love is a code in the heart. If **one** finds another person's pure and honest love in one's heart, one should know that the other person also has a pure love for him. But sentimental and instinctive signals are different from honest emotional motives and differentiating between them needs deliberation, searching one's soul, and sometimes consulting good people. Once a man asked Imam Sadeq (P.b.u.h.), "Someone says that he wants to be my friend, how should I know he really likes me?" The Imam answered: "Ask your heart! If you love him, he loves you back."¹

B. Comparative Method

The real friend is one who prefers his friend to others. His friend's friendship, happiness, and company are preferred to others'. Prophet (P.b.u.h.

¹ Muhammad Baqer Majiesi, V. ٢٤, P. ١٧٢.

& h.f.) says: "An amorous friend is someone who has three characteristics: He prefers his beloved friend saying to others', his company to others', and his happiness to others'."¹

C. Asking for Help

"Taking" friends, the friends in time of peace, are many, but "giving" friends, the friends in time of need and difficulty, are few. Imam Sadeq (P.b.u.h.), in this regard, says: "A friend can be tested by three things. If he has these tendencies, his friendship is pure and honest; otherwise, he is a friend in time of peace and welfare but not one in time of difficulty: Ask him to lend some money, trust him with some money, and ask him to join you in your trouble."

Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.) says:

"How many your friends are when you count them, but how few they are in time of trouble!"

B. Provocation Method

Excitements are the ground for the revelation of secrets. At the time of excitement, the inner realities run from the unconscious to the heart and the mind, and then they are manifested in behavior. Every human being shows his real face in a moment of anger. There are not few friends who have talked about their hidden hatreds in a moment of anger and thus have cursed their friends. Imam Sadeq (P.b.u.h.) says: "If you want to know whether your friend's claims about you are right, make him angry. If he remains your friend, he is your friend indeed; otherwise he is not."

E. Natural Method

¹ Muhammad Baqer Majiesi, Bihar al-Anwar V. ٢٤, P. ١٧٢.

Nature, travel, and personal lives are situations where formality, hypocrisy, and false appearance leave the human heart and mind, and the true or false nature of a friend's claims is evaluated from all perspectives, and these

situations provide a better chance to know friends. Imam Sadeq (P.b.u.h.), gives the following advice in this regard: “Don’t call anyone a friend, but call him an acquaintance, unless you travel with him.”¹

Forbidden Friendship

Friendship is a golden chance which can either come to affluence and make profit or destroy one’s possession and cause much harm. Social psychology deals with destructive and serious effects of abnormal social groups in risking the health of society.² Some common moral and behavioral diseases are developed by friendship and company; these include lying, deceit, cheating, anger, violence, envy, stinginess, prejudice, terror, and anxiety.

However, those with the mentioned disorders can be restored to normal people with the help of experts of education and psychology and can start

¹ - Muhammad Baqer Majiesi, Bihar al-Anwar, V. 11, P. 110.

² - For more information, see Normal and Abnormal Behaviors, Shokooh Navabi-Nejad

healthy social relations. But for the general public, specially adolescents who have pure emotions and are very susceptible, must be wary of friendship with such people. To increase the chance of success, these red lines should be observed.

In some traditions four types of forbidden friendship have been recognized. These include friendship with a fool, a stingy person, an evildoer, and a liar.

Human character is the result of heredity, nutrition, learning, environment, and determination. Environment, specially gatherings of friends and people of the same age, have special impression. Human reactions are transferred to others through one's behavior. After a while, the person follows the manners and behavior of his friends. In addition, if society considers the good and the evil the same and offers them the same chances for friendship and communication, there will not be any practical encouragement for the good or any punishment for the evil. It should also be noted

that this isolation for abnormal social groups is transient and as soon as they put away their stupidity, envy, bad behavior, lying, etc. they are welcomed back by the religious community. Imam Sadeq (P.b.u.h.) says: “A good friend is like a perfume seller and a bad friend is like a blacksmith. The first one may give you some perfume, or you may buy some from him or at least you may enjoy his sweet smell, but the second one may burn your clothes and make you dirty, or you may receive bad smell from him.”¹

Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.) advises his son Imam Hassan (P.b.u.h.) in this way: “Do not make friends with a fool; he wants to help you but will harm you. Do not make friends with a stingy person; he will deprive you of what you need most. Do not make friends with an evil-doer; he will sell you at the lowest price. And beware of making friends

¹ - Muhammad Baqer Majiesi, Bihar al-Anwar, V. ٧١, P. ١٩١.

with a liar, he is like a mirage, making near things appear far and far things near.”

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How to React When a Friend Makes a Mistake

Most people do not show all their talents and are not perfect in all aspects; thus “mistake” in a friendly relationship is inevitable. It is in ups and downs of mistakes, reflections and attempts to improve that humans reach their perfection. Every fall is a chance to become stronger and another stand-up. Expecting perfection from a friend and considering him flawless is itself a mistake in a friendly relationship. Both exaggerating and ignoring a mistake are wrong. It is better to look at mistakes as curable diseases and answerable questions.

One should first look at himself and be in search of his own faults and defects. Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.), in this regard, says: “How blessed is the

¹ - Muhammad Reza, Hikam al-Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.), V. 1, P. 318

one whose concern for his own mistakes prevents him from looking at others' mistakes!"¹

With this approach, selfishness slowly gives way to realism and a fair person, instead of justifying himself, starts to admit his own faults, and complain about himself; then the door of repentance is opened for him. He apologizes to his friends and this will be the beginning of a valuable social culture. His friends become flexible too, and pretending to be right goes away. It should never happen that they start to look for each other's mistakes, for Imam Baqer (P.b.u.h.) says: "If a believer starts a friendship with his brother, then looks for his flaws and mistakes, with the intention of showing them to him one day to annoy him, he is closest to blasphemy."

A compassionate friend, who is scarcer than any gem, should be kept and its way is a combination of generosity, feigning negligence

¹ - Ibid, V I, P

(neglecting some of his mistakes), and wise advice along with seeking help from God.

To correct a friend's bad behavior, patience and attention are the first steps; the next is being familiar with effective methods. One can say, "I think differently," "Don't you think it would be better to do it in this way?"; "Let's see the facts together"; "What you say is justifiable, but there is also another approach", and "Some think in this way...."

For the change in behavior to happen, one should be patient. However one should avoid degrading, insulting, sulking, or depriving a friend from kindness.

Sometimes not talking and preparing an impressive situation and trying to remove obstacles are more influential than any verbal advice. Using elements like encouragement and punishment (meaning avoiding to show excessive kindness, and not physical punishment), preparing a good atmosphere and changing troublesome situations,

conveying them in the form of a story, appreciating good behaviors, showing examples and positive models, asking warning questions and alike can be useful at this stage.

Limits of Friendship

We live in a material world. In this world, everything has a limit. Knowing these limits and the harms that could result if they are not observed is necessary. Friendship, too, has a limit. To exceed the bounds is the beginning of fall.

Imam Sadeq (P.b.u.h.) says: “Friendship has its own limits and one who does not observe them should not be considered a friend.”¹

One of the limits of friendship is that a friend should consider his brother’s good and bad characteristics as his own.² He should not also be

¹ - Muhammad Baqer Majlesi, Bihar al-Anwar, V. ٧١, P. ١٧٣.

² - Ibid.

indifferent towards his brother's faults and should help his brother as far as he can.¹

Another limit of friendship is loyalty to the bond of friendship and keeping secrets is one of its articles. Imam Sadeq (P.b.u.h.) says, "Revealing the secrets of your friend is betrayal."²

At the time of consultation, a friend's rights should also be observed. Exaggeration and flattery and also guiding a friend to something which is of no good to him are the cases of betrayal in friendship. Even hiding facts and hypocrisy are also betrayal. Shouldn't a friend be like a clean mirror which shows our reality? That is why Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.), at the beginning of his Caliphate, says this:³ "Do not talk to me as you talk to aggressive kings. Do not keep away from me as you keep away from angry people. Do not try to

¹ - Ibid.

² - Ibid V. ٧٥, P. ٧١.

³ - Nahj al-Balaghah, edited by Shaikh Muhammad Abdoh, a part of Sermon ٢١٦, V. ٢, P. ٢٠١.

hide realities from me and do not think it will be difficult for me to accept truth from you.”

Extremism in friendship is also exceeding the bounds. Friendship has different levels and in each, as required, friends should know something about the secrets and personal lives of their counterparts. One should not reveal his and his relatives' secrets to someone just because of friendship. The passage of time and fate may make your friend a foe one day and then by a little knowledge of your secrets, and by the temptation of Satan, he may start insulting you. Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.) says: “Be moderate with your friend; he may become your enemy one day, and observe limits with your enemy; he may become your friend one day.”¹

Respecting a friend's position is another necessity of friendship. Imam Sadeq (P.b.u.h.) says: “O son of Loqman! if you want your brother's friendship with you to be pure, do not

¹ - Muhammad Baqer Majiesi, Bihar al-Anwar, V. ٧١, P. ٢٥٣.

make inappropriate jokes with him, avoid arguing with him, do not boast for him, and do not quarrel with him.”^١

Mutual Duties of Friends

Friendship is “construction”, so it is a skill and needs art. It is not easily made, but it quickly disappears. Friendship is based on pillars, which are the mutual duties of friends. Whoever tries to perform these duties will soon become a garden full of butterflies, and whoever neglects his duties in a little while he will become a desert, a place of winds and thorns. Psychiatrists say human character is made of three aspects:^٢

١. Cognitive aspect: This aspect deals mostly with understanding, learning, educational methods and the related systems (like memory, attention, recollection, and

^١ - Muhammad Baqer Majiesi, Bihar al-Anwar, V. ٧٨, P. ٢٩١.

^٢ - All Akbar Self, Taxonomy of Educational Goals, P. ٥١.

recognition) and also with the improvement of abilities and mental skills.

٢. Affective aspect: This aspect deals mostly with the changes in interests, approaches, values, esteem, and compatibility.
٣. Behavioral or Psychomotor Aspect: This aspect deals mostly with functions, activities, and bodily and external deeds.

In talking about the mutual duties of friends, we will here consider the needs of human character in all these three aspects.

A. Affective Duties of Friends

١. Greeting, Shaking Hands, and Embracing (Kissing) while Smiling

No door is unlooked without a key. The key to friendship is greeting. A stable friendship needs a good beginning, which greeting can provide. It helps to improve the affective stability of the addressee. The messenger of mercy, Prophet Muhammad (P.b.u.h. & h.f.), always took lead to

say hello and shook hands afterwards. He never let his hand go before the other person'¹ and said, "Shaking hands with a believer is superior to shaking hands with angles,"² and he always advised others to do so and so explained its reason:

"Shaking hands wipes out enmity".³

Attempting to shake hands from anyone, young or old, is a sign of interest affection and provides grounds for friendship and relationship. However, in some social groups it is customary that shaking hands with the young should start by the old, but it seems harmless if the young start shaking hands as a sign of affection towards the old.

That is why Abu Ubaidah, one of the companions of Imam Baqer (P.b.u.h.), says: "I was with the Tmam on a trip. Whenever he dismounted or mounted to do something, he shook hands with

¹ - Muhammad Baqer Majlesi, Bihar al-Anwar, V. 77, P. 10.

² - Muhammad Ibn Yaqob Kolaini, Osul al-Kafi, Edited by Ali Akbar Ghaffari, V. 2, P. 183.

³ - Muhammad Baqer Majlesi, Bihar al-Anwar, V. 77, P. 10.

me. If he came back to do something else after some time, he did it again. And in this way, he continued the trip. I told the Imam, 'It seems you mean something by doing so?' His holiness replied, 'When a believer shakes hands with his brother, they leave each other sinless'¹ (i.e. by doing so, God forgives their sins).''

Embracing (kissing) is another part of an affective and intimate relationship between two friends. When a person spices greeting his friend with a kiss, he gets all the potentials of friendship and its deep effect in developing human and moral relations. The best place to kiss is between the eyes on the forehead. Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.) tells his son Imam Hassan (P.b.u.h.) in his will: "My Son, whenever you see a believer, kiss him on the forehead, the place of light."²

¹ - Muhammad Ibn Yaqob Kolaini, *Osul al-Kafi*, Edited by Ali Akbar Ghaffari, V. 2, P. 179.

² - Ibid.

Definitely the forehead of a believer deserves to be kissed because it is the place by which he prostrates before the Sublime Lord.

All this can be strengthened by a smile on a cheerful face. The best thing that can make someone popular among his friends and the greatest factor that makes hearts closer are a smile out of cheerfulness and benevolence, but surely not an artificial and seductive smile. The Messenger of Allah (P.b.u.h. & h.f.) says: "You can never attract people's attention with your wealth, so visit them with your smile and cheerful face."¹

The companions have said they have never seen anyone more smiling than the Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.).² The Imam of believers, Ali (P.b.u.h.) has said: "Cheerfulness entraps love."³ On the other hand, sourness and a gloomy

¹ - Muhammad Ibn Yaqob Kolaini, *Osul al-Kafi*, Edited by All Akbar Ghaffari, V. 2, P. 102

² - Muhammad Ibn Yaqob Kolaini, *Osul al-Kafi*, Edited by All Akbar Ghaffari, V. 2, P. 102

³ - Abd al-Wahed Amodi, *Ghorar al-Hikam and Dorar al-Kalem*, V.2, P. 28

expression are very effective in distancing hearts from each other and breaking the bond of friendship. Imam Baqer (P.b.u.h.) says in this regard: “Bitterness and gloomy expression of face cause enmity and widen the gap between God and man.”¹

Looking has also its own story. With the kind of look at people and with a smiling or a gloomy expression, one can make others understand whether he wants to continue his relationship with them or not. One should not forget that the speaker’s looking at the audience and the audience’s looking at him have an important role in the duration of friendship. A speaker should avoid staring and also should occasionally and appropriately look at his audience.

۲. Asking about a Friend’s Personal Information

One of the secrets of friendship is to remember the names of friends. The first signs of

¹ - ‘Muhammad Baqer Majiesi, Bihar al-Anwar, V. ۷۰, P. ۱۷۶.

one's personality are revealed in his name. People are fond of their own names and their relatives' names, specially if they have a good and nice name. Since a long time ago, people have tried to make their names everlasting and that is why they have made so many donations and have left so many things.

Napoleon, though very busy, remembered the names of almost all of the people he met and in meetings he tried to hear the names of those present. Whenever he did not hear someone's name, he said, "Sorry, I didn't hear your name well." He even asked the spelling of names, and when he talked, he tried to mention names whenever occasions arose. Then he wrote the names in his notebook.¹

The Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.) frequently said:

"Whenever one of you makes friend with someone and starts a bond of brotherhood with him, he

¹ - Dale Carnegie, Rules of Making Friends, Translated by Muhammad Reza Akbari Beiraqi, P. ۱۵۰

should ask about his name, his father's name, his clan and his home. Because this is one of the indisputable rights of a friend, which results in the purity of brotherhood; otherwise, their friendship is stupidity.”^١

He also said: “The weakest of people is the one who meets someone, becomes fond of him, but does not ask about his name, his ancestry, and where he lives”^٢

What adds to friendship and affection is to call a friend the way he likes it most; therefore the Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.), to respect his companions, called them with the nickname they liked most.

٢. Respecting Friends

The tendency to keep and improve self-esteem in humans and the feeling of worthiness are inherent, instinctive and undeniable. One's

^١ - Muhammad Baqer Majiesi, Bihar al-Anwar, V. ٧١, P. ١٤٦.

^٢ - Ibid

recognition and evaluation of himself are also important factors in social motivation and happiness, and in creating the feeling of self- confidence.

No one can be indifferent towards the judgments made about one's character; it is because human nature does not let him to be so. Humans naturally like to hear others' positive and approving ideas about themselves. If someone cannot satisfy this natural need by rational ways, he will choose unlawful methods to compensate for this inferiority and contempt. Therefore one of the easy ways to improve friendship and attract other people's love is talking about their attractions, capabilities, and values. By doing so, people's character will be respected practically. According to great religious leaders, respecting good characteristics is referred to as one of the duties of friends. The Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.), in this regard, says: "If one of your brothers comes to

visit you and you respect him, it will be as if you have respected God.”¹

Imam Sadeq (P.b.u.h.) also says: “Honor your companions and friends and respect them. Don’t attack, harm, being stingy and be devoted servants of God.”

The cornerstone of cooperation with any human being is to know how to respect him. The first step in learning the art of respecting others lies in not looking down on them. A tradition says: “Do not degrade believers, for the least important one to you is considered important by God.”²

In the biographies of the Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.), it has been mentioned that he never pointed at someone with a finger but with a whole hand. When someone sat beside him and talked to him, he did not turn just his face towards him but his whole body. When one of the companions visited him, he stood up to respect him and spread his

¹ - Muhammad Ibn Yaqob Kolaini, *Osul al-Kafi*, edited by Ali Akbar Ghaffari, V. 2, P. 206

² - *Ibid.*

cloak for him on which to sit and gave him his cushion. He divided his look among his companions; he did not let himself to ride on horseback while someone followed him on foot. He would give him a ride on the back.¹

4. Making Friends Happy

One of the greatest blessings of God given to humans is emotions, which have an effective role in their lives. Human life in all its stages of development, even in childhood, is full of emotions, without which life would look dark, gloomy, and mechanical. Also, man's health is somehow dependent on his emotional health and it has an important role in human activity, the degree of his success, and his effectiveness. One of the most important emotional feelings is happiness and cheerfulness. Happiness results in the feeling of satisfaction, tranquility of mind, self-confidence, and emotional balance.

¹ - Allamah Tabataba'i, Sonan al-Nabi, P. 47

Based on this, making his friends happy is one of the duties of a friend. The honorable Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.) says: “Whoever welcomes his brother with something pleasant to make him happy will be made happy by God on the day when he goes to visit Him.”¹

Learning from everlasting religious examples, we are told that it is necessary for a believer to visit his fellow friends with a happy and graceful face, though he himself may be internally sorrowful. This cheerfulness creates in one’s counterpart happiness, hope, positive emotions, and emotional balance and also decreases social pressures. In addition, this person himself can enjoy the reaction and responsive effect of his cheerfulness.

On the contrary, someone who takes away his friends’ happiness is respected neither by his

¹ - Shaikh Sadoq, Masadaqat al-Ekhvan, P. ٦٢.

friends nor by God, but will face their anger.

The Prophet (P.b.u.h.&h.f.) has said:

“Whoever welcomes his brother with something unpleasant to annoy him will be annoyed by God after visiting Him (on Judgment Day).”¹

B. Cognitive Duties of Friends

1. Trust-Making in the Atmosphere of Friendship

Friendship needs trust from both sides and this needs time. To gain somebody's trust, you should first show that you deserve his trust and it is he who should confirm you. Thus slowly the buds of trust blossom and will soon yield the fruit of empathy. Two souls will combine and two hearts will become closer when mistrust gives way to trust. In fact the passage of time will make people trust each other more and friendship itself creates friendship.

¹ - Muhammad Baqer Majiesi, Bihar al-Anwar, V. 11, P. 300.

The Imam of Believers, Ali (P.b.u.h.), gives a warning in this way: “Suspicion should not change your behavior towards a friend about whose qualifications you were sure.”¹

Imam Sadeq (P.b.u.h.) says: “When a person says ‘Woe!’ to his brother in religion, their bond of friendship is broken, and if he tells him ‘you are my enemy’, one of them becomes an unbeliever, and if he accuses him, his faith dissolves in his heart like salt in water.”²

That is why the Imam of the Pious, Ali (P.b.u.h.), says: “Justify what your friend does in the best possible way, and you will see something that changes in your attitude towards him will come forth, and try your utmost not to suspect what you hear from him.”³

¹ - Abd al-Wahed Amodi, Ghorar al-Hikam and Dorar al-Kalem, V. 2, P. 264.

² - Muhammad Ibn Yaqob Kolaini, Osul al-Kafi, edited by Ali Akbar Ghaffari, V. 2, P. 170.

³ - Muhammad Baqer Majiesi, Bihar al-Anwar, V. 11, P. 187

٢. Let Your Friend Know about Your Love!

Hidden love is like fire under ash; it is there but no one can see it. The great figures of mysticism cried out their love. Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.) in “Komeil Supplication” while weeping and mourning, says, “You the beloved of the devoted...”^١

And surely only the Creator deserves to be loved. Others deserve love as much as their affinity with Him. This love towards the beloved should be expressed and even cried out, and in practice, too, one should act as He likes. Imam Sadeq (P.b.u.h.) says: “When you love someone, let him know it. This will strengthen your relationship.”^٢

It is quoted from Anas that one day a man was sitting beside the Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.). Someone passed by and the man told the Prophet, “Dear Prophet, I like this man.” The Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.) said, “Have you ever told him

^١ - Shaikh Abbas Qomi, Mafatih Al-Jenan, Komeil Supplication.

^٢ - Muhammad Ibn Hassan Horr Ameli, Wasael al-Shia, V. ٨, P. ٤٣٥

that?"The man replied, "No." The Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.) said, "Tell that to him" The man stood up and caught up with him and said, the sake of God." The man replied, because of whom you love me love you!"¹

Dale Carnegie quotes Abraham Lincoln: "An old proverb says that a drop of honey can trap more insects than a barrel of colocynth. Humans are the same! Because if you want to attract someone you should show him that you are his true friend and this is like that drop of honey which traps his heart."

It should be noted that making friends with spiritual love is totally different from sensual feelings and the eruption of sexual lust. A young person who starts shaking, loses his mind and shows strange behavior when he sees a beautiful face, is more under the influence of instinct and the

¹ - Mottaghi Hindi, Kanz al-Ummal, edited by Safvat al-Saqqa, V. 9, P. 170.

eruption of emotions than under the influence of emotions derived from common sense.

Friendship with the pure gradually makes an individual more experienced, perfect, and flawless and is a light from Heaven, the heat of which makes one taste the divine warmth and brightness. But street loves make one voracious, bad-tempered, hollow, and then he loses his identity, and other deviations, and different crises are also caused by such loves.

Therefore, the enemy of one's love towards the real beloved is one's inner self and sensual passions which should be controlled by rational thinking and one should stop their revolt and control oneself.

“· kings, we killed, the enemy of outside

But a worse enemy remained inside

We can't kill it, even with the mind on our side

A rabbit can't trap this lion inside

This self is the hell and a dragon in hide

Even seas can't reduce this fire inside

It swallows seven seas all wide

Its devastating fire is not decreased inside It devoured the entire world wide

But its stomach cries waiting for more inside So strong isn't the person who goes to break in the enemy side

The real hero is the one who breaks himself from inside”^١

C. Behavioral Duties Between Friends

١. Welcoming and Seeing Friends off

One of the simple things that have a deep effect on human relationships and strengthen the bonds of friendship and reveal the results of affection is welcoming a traveler or a guest and also seeing him off, for this shows his worth in the eyes of the host. The religious leaders have had the same habit. Tmam Hassan Askari (P.b.u.h.) says about Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.): “When Jafar Ibn

^١ - Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi, edited by Muhammad Estelami, Book One, Verses ١٣٨٢ on

Abi Taleb returned from Habasha, the Messenger of God (P.b.u.h. & h.f.) stood and moved twelve steps forwards to welcome him, kissed him between the eyes and cried because of the joy to see him again.”¹

And in this way, he conquered so many hearts in a short time. Along with this, Imam Reza (P.b.u.h.) quotes the Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.): “It is the right of a guest to be accompanied to the door of the house when he leaves you.”

۲. Paying Attention to What a Friend Says

We all like to be good speakers and sometimes we are, but there are few people who understand the value of listening.

Humans do not need much training to speak, but to listen to someone, one needs to be trained.

You must have heard this wise saying that someone who is a good listener is also a good

¹ - Muhammad Ibn Hassan Horr Ameli, Wasael al-Shia, V. ۸, P. ۵۵۹.

speaker. That is why deaf children have difficulty in speaking too. The experts of consulting institutes are well aware of the mystery of the art of good listening in helping their visitors to let out their emotions and to provide mutual trust. They also consider this as the best ground for change and correction in the following stages.

The Holy Qur'an has ordained that silence and attention should reign when the Qur'an is read aloud and this is considered as a sign of respect.¹ The great Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.) also considers listening to one's brother as an instance of manly behavior.² Also the Qur'an, in talking about choosing aims and valuable words, refers to listening and praises it.³ Learning listening skills requires a lot of experience, innate aptitude, and

¹ - "When the Qur'an is read, listen to it with attention, and hold your peace: that ye may receive Mercy" Chapter V (The Heights), Verse: 204

² - Mottaqi Hindi, Kanz al-Ummal, edited by Safvat al-Saqqa, V. 3, P. 67.

³ - "Those who listen to the Word, and follow the best (meaning) in it: those are the ones whom Allah has guided, and those are the ones endued with understanding", Chapter 29 (The Troops, Throngs), Verse: 18

educational effort. When you listen to someone, you are actually encouraging him to continue talking and that person also becomes happy and considers this a sign of your interest in continuing relationship with him. By asking some open-ended questions,¹ by confirming logical and favorite words (for example by nodding), by looking at the speaker, by smiling, and also by thinking about the content of the speaker's words, one can strengthen the bond of friendship on the one hand and understand new things on the other. Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.) says that good listening is the ground for going ahead in good deeds.²

¹ - Open- ended questions are the opposite of short- answer questions. Questions of the first type like "Which of the objects in this room attracts your attention more?" can help to continue the relationship. These questions ask about the quality and make the person questioned explain. On the contrary, the questions of the second type like "Did these objects attract your attention?" make the relationship short and the relation comes to an end, because they ask about the quantity and he can finish the conversation with a short answer.

² - Lilee Waseti, Oyon al-Hikam va al-Mavaez, Researcher: Hussein Hussein Birjandi, P. ۴۵۳.

According to the researches, most of us talk about 120 words per minute, while we can four times more than this number in a minute. This means for any minute of talking, we should naturally consider a time for thinking about 480 words. Now if we have not learnt the skill of good listening, we become tired very quickly and on many occasions mind does other things, and we practically become confused about getting what the speaker says. However, the people who have learned how to listen take advantage of the extra time of their mind in understanding the things the speaker says, in analyzing them, in comparing them with other things he or others have said, in evaluating and judging them, in discovering the things understood in the margin from the unsaid things. They can also be seriously affected by what the speaker says, be excited, and change or correct their behavior.

The Holy Qur'an introduces the Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.) as the possessor of this skill and when hypocrites of Medina reckon called him "ozon" (always listening and ready to listen), he says 'This characteristic is the best for you people.'

Dale Carnegie says: "If you want people to seclude you and make fun of you when you leave their company, act this way: Do not let anyone talk, always talk about yourself, and when a thought comes to your mind as you listen to someone, do not let him finish, interrupt him and say what you think....",^ʔ

Based on this, Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.) says, "When mind is perfect, speaking decreases." He has also said: "The more someone talks, the more mistakes makes, and anyone who makes many mistakes becomes more shameless, and anyone who is more shameless, his piety is defected, and

^ʔ - "...and say, "He is (all) ears." Say, "He listens to what is best for you...", Chapter 9 (Repentance, Dispensation), Verse: ٦١.

^ʔ - Dale Carnegie, Rules of Making Friends, translated by Muhammad Reza Akbari Beiraqi, P. ١١٠.

such a person's heart dies soon and he enters Hell.”^١

٢. Tolerating a Friend's Criticisms

Taking advantage of facilities is easy and anyone can do it. But the art of the ingenious is that they take advantage of losses, and this requires real shrewdness and tolerance. This elixir, the tolerance of which is not easy but which can turn the copper of behavior into pure gold, is nothing but criticism. Someone who is criticized has been worthy enough to be considered, so he has the capability to improve. An intimate and fair friend's criticism is guidance. Imam Sadeq (P.b.u.h.) considers as his best friend the one who presents his faults, if any to him,^٢ for the signs of a successful person are acceptance, benevolence, and receptivity to criticism.

^١ - Nahj al-Balaghah, edited by Shaikh Muhammad Abdoh, Hekmat ٢٤٨, V. ٤, P. ٨١.

^٢ - Muhammad Ibn Yaqob Kolaini, Osul al-Kafi, edited by Ali Akbar

A person should criticize his own thoughts, feelings, and illogical behavior in his privacy and in this self-investigation, or as referred to in traditions, self-reckoning, he will find out his flaws, for by doing this he will gradually learn how to tolerate logical and constructive criticisms of others. The holy Prophet (P.b.u.h. & h.f.) says:

“When you want to point out someone else’s faults, first reveal your own faults.”¹

However, if the criticisms are unfair, a result of pre-judgment and light-mindedness, it should be noted that a real friend is a valuable gem which has not been gained easily and thus shouldn’t be easily lost. A valuable friend is one of the assets of one’s life and a shrewd person tries to keep his assets as far as possible and he should even add to them. Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.) says: “The weakest of people is the one who can’t get a friend, and even weaker

¹ - Mullah Mahdi Naraq, Jamea al-Saadat, V.2, P. 306.

than him is someone who loses the friends he has got.”¹

Therefore with the policy of compromise and the method of “goodness for badness” one should guide one’s friend to the right path and prevent him from going astray and oneself from being left alone.

Imam Ali (P.b.u.h.) in this regard says:

“Reproach your friend by doing good to him and avert his wrongdoing by being kind to him.”²

He also says: “Obey your brother in religion though he disobeys you, and join him though he mistreats you.”³

It has been said that once a man from “the People of the Book” called Imam Baqer (P.b.u.h.), “You are a cow.” The Imam answered, “I am Baqer.” He said: “You are the son of a woman

¹ - Nahj al-Balaghah, edited by Shaikh Muhammad Abdoh, Kalam ١٢, V.. ٤, P. ٥.

² - Abd al-Wahed Amodi, Ghorar al-Hikam and Dorar al-Kalem, V.٢, P. ٥.

³ - Abd al-Wahed Amodi, Ghorar al-Hikam and Dorar al-Kalem, V.٢, P. ٥.

cook” The Imam answered,” It was her job.” The man said, “You are the son of that insulting black woman from Zanzibar” The Imam replied,” If you are right, God forgive her, and if you are wrong, God forgive you.”After showing such tolerance and such peaceful behavior by the Imam, the man became ashamed and converted to Islam.’¹

¹ - Muhammad Baqer Majiesi, Bihar al-Anwar, V. ٤٦, P. ٢٨٩

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