138390 - What are the characteristics of the righteous friend?

the question

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Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The righteous friend is the righteous person who is obedient to his Lord, adheres to the teachings of his religion, is keen to please Allah, hastens on the basis of faith to do all good deeds, turns away out of fear of Allah from all evil deeds, loves the Sunnah and those who follow it, takes people as friends for the sake of Allah, opposes (the enemies of Allah) for the sake of Allah, resents sin and its people, fears Allah, is pure hearted and righteous, is not boastful, and has no rancour or envy in his heart.

The righteous friend reminds you of your Lord whenever you become heedless of His remembrance; he helps you and joins you when you are remembering your Lord. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The believers (in their mutual support) are like a structure, parts of which support other parts” – and he interlaced his fingers. Agreed upon.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This report clearly refers to the great rights that the Muslims have over one another, and urges them to show compassion to one another, be kind to one another and support one another in anything that is not sinful or disliked.

The righteous friend is the one who does not look for or seek out the faults of his brothers; rather he seeks excuses for them.

Ibn Maazin said: The believer tries to find excuses for his brothers, whereas the hypocrite seeks out their faults.

Al-Fudayl ibn ‘Iyaad said: Chivalry is to overlook the errors of your brothers.

Aadaab al-‘Ishrah (p. 1-3).

The righteous friend is the one from whose words and actions the Muslims are safe, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said describing the Muslim.

Abu’l-Fayd ibn Ibraaheem al-Misri said: You should keep company with one from whose harm you are safe, seeing him encourages you to do good, and he reminds you of your Lord.

Aadaab al-‘Ishrah (p. 3).

The righteous friend praises and speaks well of those with whom he mixes, even if he is not able to help them physically.

Ahmad (12709) and Abu Daawood (4812) narrated that Anas ibn Maalik (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Muhaajiroon said: O Messenger of Allah, we have never seen anything like the people to whose land we have come; they are most generous when they have plenty and most supportive when they have little. They have spared us from work and have shared with us what was enough to maintain us. We are afraid that they will take all the reward.

The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Nay, not so long as you praise them and pray to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, for them.”

Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

The characteristics of the righteous friend include his cheerful manner, gentle speech, big-heartedness, generosity, suppression of anger, and avoiding arrogant behaviour; he shows respect and expresses joy for what he is blessed with of the friendship and brotherhood of others.

His heart is free of rancour, and he offers sincere advice to his brothers and accepts it from them.

He is easy-going with his brothers and does not go against them in matters that are right and proper; he refrains from criticizing them.

Abu Zaa’idah said: al-Ahnaf wrote to a friend of his saying: To proceed: if you have a brother (in faith) who is agreeable with you, then you should appreciate him as you appreciate your hearing and your sight, for a brother who is agreeable is better than a son who is contrary. Have you not heard what Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, said to Nuuh (peace be upon him) concerning his son (interpretation of the meaning):

“O Noah, indeed he is not of your family; indeed, he is [one whose] work was other than righteous”

[Huud 11:46].

Aadaab al-‘Ishrah (p. 7).

Righteous friends love to visit one another, meet one another and be generous to one another; they are cheerful when they meet and shake hands warmly.

Muslim (2567) narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “A man visited a brother of his in another town, and Allah sent an angel to wait for him on the road. When he came to him, he said: Where are you headed? He said: I am headed to a brother of mine in this town. He said: Have you done him any favour for which you hope to be recompensed? He said: No, but I love him for the sake of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. He said: I am a messenger from Allah to you, to tell you that Allah loves you as you love him for His sake.”

Ahmad (215525) narrated that Mu‘aadh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: “Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, said: My love is due to those who love one another for My sake, sit with one another for My sake, visit one another for My sake and help one another for My sake.”

Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh at-Targheeb.

It used to be said: Do not befriend anyone but one who, if you befriend him, will enhance you; if you are burdened with something, he will help you; if he sees a shortcoming in you, he will make it up for you; if he sees something good from you, he will keep it in mind; if you ask of him, he will

give to you; if you refrain from asking of him, he will offer you (his help); if he blames you for something, he will not desert you; and if you keep your distance from him, he will not abandon you.

Taareekh Diimashq (68/236).

Abu ‘Abd ar-Rahmaan as-Sulami said:

Maintaining a good relationship with your brothers means that you should always be cheerful with them, be kind and generous to them, speak of their good qualities, conceal their bad qualities, think much of their little acts of kindness, think little of whatever acts of kindness you do for them, always be ready to help them physically or financially, avoid grudges, envy, transgression and offenses, avoid all that they dislike in all regards, and avoid anything that could lead to you having to apologize.

End quote from Aadaab as-Suhbah (p. 120).

The righteous friend does not envy his brothers for what he sees of the signs of blessings that Allah has bestowed on them; rather he rejoices in that and praises Allah for whatever he sees of blessings that Allah has granted to them, as he would praise Him for blessings bestowed upon himself. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Or do they envy people for what Allah has given them of His bounty?”

[an-Nisaa’ 4:54].

The righteous friend deals with his brothers honourably, honestly and sincerely.

Abu Saalih said: The believer deals with you honourably, and guides you to what is best for you in religious and worldly terms, whereas the hypocrite deals with you through flattery and encourages you to do that which you desire. The fortunate one whom Allah protects is the one who differentiates between the two.

Aadaab as-Suhbah (p. 55).

The righteous friend makes excuses for his brothers and friends; he defends them and stands up for them.

The righteous friend joins his brothers at times of difficulty as he joins them at times of ease; he does not change his manner towards them in either case.

The righteous friend does not remind those to whom he shows kindness of his favours; he thinks little of his act of kindness and thinks much of any favours that his brothers do for him.

The righteous friend strives to conceal the faults of his brothers, to highlight their good qualities and conceal their bad qualities.

The righteous friend tries to endear himself to his brothers by doing acts of kindness for them, overlooking whatever offence they may cause him, and trying to find excuses for them.

It was narrated that Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir said: There is nothing left of the pleasure of this world except helping to meet the needs of my brothers.

Taareekh Dimashq (56/53).

To sum up:

The righteous friend is the one who helps you to do all that is good, who has a good character, enjoins what is right, forbids what is wrong, and observes the rights of friendship in your absence and in your presence, paying proper attention to that in word and deed, only doing that for the sake of Allah and hoping for reward from Him.