



Mukhawwal narrates the following incident:

One day, Buhaim came to me and asked, “Do you know of anyone, from your neighbours and friends planning to go for hajj, who would like to be my companion on the journey?” I replied in the affirmative, and then took him to a man of the locality who was pious and committed to Deen. I introduced them to one another, and they agreed to be companions on the journey of hajj. Thereafter, Buhaim departed, returning to his family.

Some time later, the man came to me and said, “I prefer that you find your friend another companion!” Hearing this, I exclaimed, “Why is it? By Allah, I do not know of anyone in Kufah who can compare to him in good character and tolerance. I have journeyed on a sea voyage with him and I did not see anything but good in him.” The man replied, “I was told that he continues to weep for lengthy periods, without cease. His continuous weeping will make our life difficult for the entire journey!” I replied, “He only weeps occasionally when he has a thought that softens the heart. Do you not also weep from time to time?” The man replied, “I do, but what I heard regarding this person and his weeping was quite extreme!” I replied, “Be his companion, and perhaps you will benefit from him.” The man (relented and) said, “I will make istikhaarah.”

When the day of their departure arrived, the camels were brought and made to kneel for them (to mount). Buhaim sat in the shade of a wall and placed his hand below his beard. He then began to weep until his tears flowed on his cheeks, and then on his beard, and then on his chest. By Allah, his tears flowed to such an extent that I even saw them flowing onto the ground!”

As soon as this happened, the man said to me, “O Mukhawwal! Your friend has commenced! This man is not a suitable companion for me!” I replied, “Calm down! Perhaps he thought of his

family and his separation from them, and this has caused his heart to soften.” Buhaim heard this, and said, “My brother! By Allah! That is not the reason for my weeping! The reason for my weeping is that this journey has reminded me of the final journey to the Hereafter.” Saying this, he began to weep even louder.

The man now said to me, “By Allah! This is not the first time that you have displayed enmity and hatred for me! I am not supposed to be (travelling) with Buhaim? He should rather be made the companion of people like Dawood Tai and Sallaam Abil Akhwas so that they can all cry together. Then, they will either be cured, or they will all die!” I continued to comfort him and said to him, “Perhaps this will be the best journey of your life!”

This man had performed many hajj previously and was also a pious man. However, he was a wealthy trader who was occupied with his business and was not a person who would grieve and weep. Hence, he said to me, “This time, I have no choice (as it was already time to depart). Perhaps the journey will be good.”

As for Buhaim, he was unaware of this entire conversation, and had he known anything of what we had spoken, he would not have accompanied the man. Nevertheless, they departed together, performed hajj and thereafter returned.

On their return, (they had such a bond between them that) each of them viewed the other as being his closest and dearest friend. When I went to greet the man from my locality, he said to me, “O my brother! May Allah Ta‘ala bestow you with the best of rewards on my behalf! By Allah! Buhaim spent on me, whereas he is a poor man and I am wealthy! He served me, whereas I am young and strong while he is old and weak! He would prepare food for me, whereas I was not fasting and he was fasting!”

(Hearing his positive report,) I enquired, “So how was your experience with him regarding his lengthy weeping, of which you were apprehensive?” He replied, “By Allah! I developed a fondness for his weeping, until it soothed my heart and I also began to weep with him. As a result, our other companions were inconvenienced by our weeping. However, by Allah, they also gradually developed a fondness for weeping, until they also began to weep whenever they heard us weeping. They would say to one another, ‘Why are these people crying more than us, whereas our eventual end and theirs is one and the same.’ Hence, they would weep and we too would weep.”

Then (after hearing the man's report,) I left him and went to Buhaim. I greeted him with salaam and asked, "How did you find your companion?" he replied, "He was like the best of companions. He remembers Allah Ta'ala in abundance and recites the Quraan Majeed for lengthy periods. He is quick to tear and weep and tolerates the shortcomings of his companions. May Allah Ta'ala reward you well on my behalf (for pairing me with such a companion)."

(Uyoonul Hikaayaat pg. 81)

Lessons:

1. "You are the company that you keep" is a popular, well known adage, and from this incident, the reason is obvious. When one person spends time in the company of another person, his ways, habits, mindset, values, etc. all begin to rub off onto him. Hence, we should ensure that we always keep the company of pious, righteous people, and avoid the company of sinful people who have evil habits and ways.

2. Sometimes, due to our evil environment, our taste buds become spoilt. Thereafter, we only find happiness, pleasure and enjoyment in sin and evil. On the contrary, if we have to listen to some talk of Deen, or we are asked to recite the Quraan Majeed, then we feel little or no enthusiasm (Allah Ta'ala save!). The remedy is to change our company (which is a major element in our environment) and begin to associate with the pious. Initially, we may find the change in company difficult. But if we persevere, our taste buds will undergo a gradual rehabilitation and insha-Allah, we will rediscover the enjoyment in righteousness.

3. It should be borne in mind that company does not only refer to sitting in a person's presence. Rather, another form of company, which greatly influences us, is company on social media e.g. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc. In other words, the mindset and ways of the people whom we follow on these platforms will most definitely, to some degree, rub off onto us and influence us. Hence, we should exercise extreme caution in utilizing these platforms.