

# Friends; Invaluable Presents

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Every one of sound mind and intellect admits that Divine teachings are the best gifts we can and indeed should give each other, in particular the youth, because that is what they need more for their well-being and happiness. Unfortunately, in today's world, some people seem to imagine that just material welfare, including rich foods, fashionable clothing, and a university degree are all they should be provided with. Based on such a wrong view, they ignore their duty of providing the youth with what they need for their spiritual and moral upliftment.

Friends are people, who seek the company of one another; who like and wish to do well for the other, believing that the other party reciprocates these feelings with good intentions.

In Islamic literature, the root meaning of the terms used for friend indicates some of the essential qualities necessary for friendship...

*Sadeeq* (truthfulness/honesty), *khaleel* (associate/link), *Wali* • (protector/overseer), *Rafeeq* (kind/caring)

A true friend, warms you with his/her presence, trusts you • with his/her secrets, remembers you in his/her prayers, is

there before you know it, lends a hand before you ask for it, gives you love when you need it most; doubles your joy and shares your grief. That is why, true friends are hard to find, difficult to leave, and impossible to forget.

Here we would like to present some gifts of morality and spiritual guidance to not only the Muslim youth, but to the world youth whom we regard as the builders of the human world:

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): “The one who feeds a Muslim (in a proper manner) and to the needed amount will have (as a reward) the fire of hell pushed away from him.”

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): “The best of you are the best-tempered among you.”

“The one who selects a virtuous person as his friend and brother-in-faith in the way of Allah will be granted by Allah a position in Paradise granted for no other good action of his.”

In this regard, it should be mentioned that great care must be taken in selecting one’s friend(s) and that one should try to select good-tempered, wise, and pious ones as friends and should also avoid making friends with silly or wrong-doing persons. Imam as-Sadiq (AS) has been quoted thus: “Avoid befriending the liar, the silly, the stingy, the coward, and the wrong-doers; for the liar

entangles you in lies and falsehood, the silly harms you even when he means to benefit you, the stingy leaves you helpless when you need his help, the coward avoids standing by your side when he should defend and support you and the wrong-doer is capable of betraying you even for a paltry price.”

Thus our Divine leaders teach us to avoid the companionship of persons who are lacking in piety and virtues, because making friends with foolish and/or evil-doing people is not only of no use, but can obviously be very harmful, since those who are lacking in wisdom, and nobility of character have no regard for the rights of others, including for the rights of the unfortunate ones who befriend them.

Regarding the rights of friends there are also certain illuminating narrations from the Infallible. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) of Islam has said: “A faithful person is the mirror of another faithful person.” This Hadith clearly tells us that we should try to teach whatever we know of Divine learnings and moral values to our friends and also to help them remove their faults and give up their undesirable habits in order to be helpful for them in getting closer to Allah. We know a mirror is honest to us in letting us know how we look; good, bad, clean, dirty and.... .

So, as true friends, we should do the same and inform our friends whether there is anything they should do in order to look their best in so far as moral and spiritual matters are concerned, and in order to be able to fulfil their duties towards their fellow-human beings. For example, a good friend is the one who, upon learning that you are unkind or impolite towards your parents, reminds you of the fact that you are sinning by being careless about your duties towards your parents and that God has commanded all of us to be respectful and helping to our parents. Meanwhile, a good friend will try to correct you in a suitable manner whenever he or she hears you backbite the others or use foul language. To this list many other examples can of course be added. One should try to find good friends for him/herself and for the benefit of the others. And remember that Imam Ali (AS) has advised us: "Try to find faithful honest friends for yourselves, for otherwise you will have to make friends with dishonest impious people."