

Answer to those who ask "Once people embrace faith, can they still befriend the people with whom they used to associate?"

A person cannot hold two opposing views simultaneously. Given that faith and unbelief are two distinct concepts, it is unlikely that a person can share the views, thoughts, and feelings of both believers and unbelievers.

The basic element underlying relations between people, such as friendship and fellowship, is love. The believers' most important attribute is their strong love for Allah, which the Qur'an relates in the following verse:

Some people set up equals to Allah, loving them as they should love Allah. But those who believe have greater love for Allah. If only you could see those who do wrong at the time when they see the punishment, and that truly all strength belongs to Allah, and that Allah is severe in punishment. (Qur'an, 2:165)

Believers direct the love they feel for Allah to His servants, who seek to earn His good pleasure. For this reason, those who have faith in Allah and the Qur'an and have grasped Islam's essence cannot possibly feel any attachment to those who have no love for Allah. If someone does not acknowledge or appreciate Allah—Whom believers love more than their own selves; for Whose cause they spend whatever they have; Who shows them the right path, gives them abundant blessings and the good news of Paradise, as well as infinite rewards in the afterlife; and in Whom they have profound faith—a bond of love cannot form between that person and a believer. As a result, there can be no true friendship between them. One verse states that:

You will not find people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having love for anyone who opposes Allah and His Messenger, though they be their fathers, their sons, their brothers, or their kindred. (Qur'an, 58:22)

Despite this, however, some people, especially those who are in the process of learning the Qur'an's values, may still feel close to their former friends or their acquaintances before they embraced Islam. But as the Qur'an makes clear, a believer's sole friends are Allah and other believers:

Your friend is only Allah, His Messenger, and those who believe: those who establish prayers, pay alms, and bow. As for those who make Allah their friend, and His Messenger and those who believe: it is the party of Allah who is victorious! (Qur'an, 5:55-56)

In these verses, Allah indicates that making friends only with believers is also the key to the success of the good deeds performed only to gain Allah's good pleasure. Likewise, many verses relate that associating with true believers and supporting one another is essential for success. To the contrary, however, the Qur'an also expounds that non-compliance with Allah's commands and recommendations will result in difficulty and hardship for believers, for:

Those who are unbelievers are the friends and protectors of one another. If you do not act in this way [protect each other], there will be turmoil in the land and great corruption. (Qur'an, 8:73)

Obey Allah and His Messenger and do not quarrel among yourselves, lest you lose heart and your momentum disappears. And be steadfast. Allah is with the steadfast. (Qur'an, 8:46)

Despite all of this clear evidence and information, the hypocrisy of those who try to be on good terms with both sides and approach the faithful under the guise of being true Muslims to draw personal benefits will be disclosed:

Or did you suppose that you would be left without Allah knowing those of you who have struggled and who have not taken anyone as their intimate friends besides Allah and His Messenger and the believers? Allah is aware of what you do. (Qur'an, 9:16)

But as long as the limits established by Allah are observed, there is not a drawback for Muslims to maintain their social, economic, and cultural relations with other people. The Qur'an sets the following criterion about this issue:

Allah does not forbid you from being good to those who have not fought you in the religion, or driven you from your homes, or from being just toward them. Allah loves those who are just. (Qur'an, 60:8)