

## Text-Study

### Friendship Across Religions

#### Muslim sources:

##### Source (s) 1:

“None of you is a true believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.”

*the Prophet Muhammad, on the authority of Anas*

“You shall not enter Paradise until you believe; and you shall not believe until you love one another.”<sup>4</sup>

##### Source 2:

“You will know the [true] believers in the way they [exhibit] mutual kindness, love and sympathy; it is just like [being] one body, when one limb complains, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever.”<sup>5</sup>

##### Source 3:

Those familiar with Rumi’s biography know that his mystical awakening came through an unexpected friendship with a wandering mystic: Shams al-Tabriz, whose first question to Rumi in the fall of 1244 reportedly caused Rumi to swoon. As their friendship unfolded, so did Rumi’s spiritual awakening. Friendship, then, became for him nothing less than the theatre of Divine disclosure or “revelation” in a non-technical sense. In a poem he later wrote about two friends – a mouse and a frog – he echoed the gospel of Matthew (18:20) when he wrote,

To watch and listen to these two

Is to understand how, as it’s written,

Sometimes when two beings come together,

Christ becomes visible.

A bit further into the poem, he added,

Friend sits by Friend, and the tablets appear.

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<sup>4</sup> Found in the *S’ah’ih* collection of Muslim.

<sup>5</sup> Found in the *S’ah’ih* collections of both al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

They read the mysteries

Off each other's foreheads.<sup>6</sup>

***Questions for Muslim sources:***

*Source(s) 1:*

1. *These two verses instruct Muslims to form friendships and to love one another and say that true believers are loving towards each other. Does sharing a religion make you more likely to feel friendly towards each other?*
2. *Does 'love' refer to feelings or is it a call to particular behaviours?*
3. *Who is one's 'brother'? Can the commandment to love one's brother be extended to everyone or will it be limited in some way? Discuss the possibilities of understanding who a 'brother' is.*

*Source 2:*

*Is a truly religious person more sensitive and more likely to feel the emotions of another person? Does religion, generally, encourage human friendship and provide a strong basis for it? Why might that be?*

*Source 3:*

*The Muslim poet, Rumi, uses images from the Christian and Jewish Bible to illustrate the power of friendship.*

*What is Rumi saying happens in a true friendship? Is this something for which we can all strive or is it something only an elite few can achieve?*

Prepared by Peta Jones Pellach, March 2012

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<sup>6</sup> From *The essential Rumi*, Coleman Barks, trans. (Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 1977), pp. 79-80.