

240236 - How Should a Muslim Survive Living with Toxic Roommates?

the question

At present I am living in Turkey for the purpose of study, and I live with four friends in the same house. I would like you to give me some advice about how to deal with them, because they watch bad movies, and they listen to music. Most of the time, when the time for prayer comes, they ignore it even if I pray in front of them, or tell them that I am going to the mosque, so that they cannot pretend that they do not know. Sometimes I encourage them to watch lectures and Islamic videos, but they watch cartoons so that I will not bother them or object to them watching television. How can I help them, because I feel guilty about them and I want to help them?

Summary of answer

If a Muslim student cannot find any place to live except the place where there are toxic roommates, there is no blame on him for living with them. However, he should not sit with them when they do objectionable things, and if he sees them do anything of that nature, he should tell them not to do it and remind them.

Detailed answer

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Keeping good company is a virtue in Islam

[Sincere friendship](#) is something that is required according to Islamic teachings. The Muslim should be very keen to have [good friends](#) , because that is one of the means of being safe from troubles and temptations.

It was narrated from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Do not keep company with anyone but a believer and do not let anyone eat your food but one who is pious." (Narrated by at-Tirmidhi (2395) and Abu Dawud (4832); classed as hasan by al-Albani.)

Al-Khatibi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"This refers to inviting people to a meal, not when you feed people because they are needy, because Allah, may He be glorified, says (interpretation of the meaning): {And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive.} [al-Insan 76:8] It is well known that their captives were disbelievers, and were neither believers nor pious people.

Rather we are warned against keeping company with anyone who is not pious, and we are discouraged from mixing with them and eating with them, because eating together instills affection and fondness in the heart. What we may understand from the hadith is: Do not befriend anyone who is not pious, and do not take him as a companion with whom you eat and converse." (*Ma'alim as-Sunan*, 4/115)

It was narrated from Abu Musa al-Ash'ari that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "The likeness of a good companion and a bad companion is that of one who carries musk and one who works the bellows. With the carrier of musk, either he will give you some or you will buy some from him, or you will notice a good smell from him; as for the one who works the bellows, either he will burn your clothes or you will notice a bad smell from him." (Narrated by al-Bukhari (5534) and Muslim (2628))

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

"This highlights the virtue of sitting with the righteous and good and decent people, those who have good manners and good attitudes, who are pious, knowledgeable and polite. And it indicates that it is not allowed to sit with evil people, those who follow innovation, and those who backbite people or who are foul-mouthed and timewasters, and other blameworthy types." (*Sharh Sahih Muslim*, 16/178)

Hence you should try hard to find righteous company to live with, whenever you are able to do that.

How to deal with toxic roommates

If you cannot find any place to live except the place where you are now, there is no blame on you for living with them, if you fear Allah, may He be exalted. That means not sitting with them when they do objectionable things, and if you see them do anything of that nature, you should tell them not to do it and remind them.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And when you see those who engage in [offensive] discourse concerning Our verses, then turn away from them until they enter into another conversation. And if Satan should cause you to forget, then do not remain after the reminder with the wrongdoing people.

And those who fear Allah are not held accountable for the disbelievers at all, but [only for] a reminder – that perhaps they will fear Him.} [al-An'am 6:68-69]

Shaykh as-Sa 'di (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“This prohibition applies to the one who sits with them and does not act in accordance with Islamic teachings, such as if he joins them in their unlawful actions and deeds, or he keeps quiet and does not denounce the evildoing. But if he does adhere to Islamic teachings by enjoining them to do good and forbidding them to do evil or to say the evil words that they utter, and that results in putting an end to the evil or reducing it, then there is no blame or sin on him in that case. Hence Allah says: {Those who fear Allah are in no way accountable for them. However, it is (their duty) to admonish them, so that they may desist from their mockery} that is, rather let him remind them and admonish them, so that they may fear Allah and desist.” (*Tafsir as-Sa'di*, p. 260)

But what is the ruling if they do not respond to your advice?

In that case, you should continue to remind them every time you see a suitable opportunity to do so, but do not do that too often, so that they will not get fed up with you and dislike speaking to you.

You should also offer a [great deal of supplication](#) , asking that they be guided.

If you do that, you will have done what is required of you, and there will be no sin on you.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And when a community among them said, “Why do you advise [or warn] a people whom Allah is [about] to destroy or to punish with a severe punishment?” they [the advisors] said, “To be absolved before your Lord and perhaps they may fear Him.”

And when they forgot that by which they had been reminded, We saved those who had forbidden evil and seized those who wronged, with a wretched punishment, because they were defiantly disobeying.} [al-A'raf 7:164-165]

But if they continue as they are, then do not sit with them for very long, only as much as is needed, then spend the rest of your day doing beneficial things such as studying and revising in your university and its library, because this is the purpose for which you have travelled there, then you can go home to rest only.

We suggest that you should also look at the advice given in the answers to questions no. [47425](#) , [46876](#) and [50745](#) .

And Allah knows best.