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**See also:** ABSTINENCE; ADULTERY AND FORNICATION; ALMSGIVING; BACKBITING; BELIEF; BELIEVERS; BLOOD MONEY; BOUNDARIES OF ALLAH; CALIPH; CALLING UNTO ALLAH; CHILDREN OF ISRĀʿĪL; CHRISTIANITY; COMMUNITY; COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET; CORRUPTION; DEEDS; DISBELIEF; ENORMITIES; ETHICS; EXCELLENCE; FALSEHOOD; FAREWELL PILGRIMAGE; FIRʿAWN; FORGIVENESS AND FORBEARANCE; GUIDANCE AND MISGUIDANCE; HEALTH AND SICKNESS; INNOVATION; INTOXICANTS; JĀHILIYYA; JIHAD; JUDGMENT; JUSTICE; KILLING; LANGUAGE; LAW; LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL; LEGAL PUNISHMENTS; LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY; LUQMĀN; MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE; MARTYRDOM; MENSTRUATION; MUḤĀJIRŪN; ORPHANS; PARENTS; PATH OF ALLAH; PERSEVERANCE, PATIENCE AND FORTITUDE; PILLARS OF ISLAM; POLYTHEISM AND POLYTHEISTS; READINGS OF THE QURʿĀN; REPENTANCE; RETALIATION; REWARD AND PUNISHMENT; RIGHTEOUSNESS AND VIRTUE; RITUAL PURITY AND IMPURITY; SATAN; SIN; TAQWĀ, TAWḤĪD; THEFT AND ROBBERY; TRUSTS; UNLETTERED; WAR; WITNESSING OF FAITH; WOMEN.

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## COMPANION

### ṢĀḤĪB(A)

This article comprises the following sections: i. Definitions and Usage; ii. The Prophet as Companion; iii. Other Individuals; iv. The “Companion by your Side;” v. The Female Companion; vi. Keeping Company with the Righteous; vii. Bibliography.

### Definitions and Usage

The Qurʿān uses derivatives of the root *ṣ-ḥ-b* to denote a companion. The basic meaning of the root is joining someone, close association, and cohabitation (*muqārana*, *muqāraba*, *muṣāḥaba*, *muʿāshara*) (Ibn Fāris; Ibn Manzūr Fayrūzābādī). The noun *ṣāḥib* can also be used to denote possession, as in the expression *ṣāḥibu māl* (lit. companion of money) for one who owns wealth (*dhū māl*) (Farāhīdī), or the leader of a group, as in the expression *ṣāḥib al-jaysh* (leader of the army) (Rāghib). Abū-l-Ḥusayn al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī (d. 502/1108) defines *al-ṣāḥib* lexically as

*al-mulāzim*, that is, one who is in attendance, whether attending humans or animals, or a place or time—and whether referring to physical presence or attending others through one’s concern and care (*bil-‘ināya wal-himma*). Al-Rāghib explains that companionship (*ishābah*) implies a relationship sustained over an extended period and so differs from a mere meeting (*ijtimā‘*) (*Mufradāt*).

Ninety-seven derivatives of *ṣ-ḥ-b* occur in seven forms:

- vii. Ten times as the masculine noun *ṣāhib* (Q 4:36; 7:184; 9:40; 18:34, 37; 34:46; 53:2; 54:29; 68:48; 81:22);
- viii. Four times as the feminine noun *ṣāhiba*—twice in the context of Allah’s transcendence over ever having a female partner (Q 6:101; 72:3); and twice in the context of a man’s willingness to sacrifice his wife for the sake of his own salvation in the Hereafter (Q 70:12; 80:36);
- ix. Twice as the dual noun *ṣāhibay[-i]* (Q 12:39, 41), both in the story of Prophet Yūsuf, upon him peace (*q.v.*), referring to his two fellow prisoners;
- x. 78 times as the plural noun *aṣḥāb* denoting specific groups:
  - *aṣḥāb al-janna* (People of Paradise), thirteen times (e.g. Q 2:82; 7:42, 44, 46, 50; 10:26) (see PARADISE);
  - *aṣḥāb al-nār* (People of the Fire), twenty times (e.g. Q 2:39, 81, 217) (see HELL);
  - *aṣḥāb al-yamīn* (five times: Q 56:27, 38, 90-91; 74:39) and *aṣḥāb al-maymana* (twice: Q 56:8; 90:18) (People of the Right Hand), referring to the denizens of Paradise;
  - *aṣḥāb al-mash‘ama* (twice: Q 56:9; 90:19) and *aṣḥāb al-shimāl* (twice: Q 56:41) (People of the Left Hand), referring to the denizens of Hell;
  - *aṣḥāb al-qubūr* (People of the Graves), once (Q 60:13) (see GRAVES);
  - *aṣḥāb al-ayka* (People of the Thicket), four times (Q 15:78; 26:176; 38:13; 50:14), a people notorious for their corruption in trade to whom the Prophet Shu‘ayb was sent (Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 15:78) (see PEOPLE OF AYKA);
  - *aṣḥāb al-kahf wa-l-raqīm* (People of the Cave and Inscription, see PEOPLE OF THE CAVE), once (Q 18:9) in the verse that begins the account of the youth who took refuge in a cave to escape persecution because of their faith (Q 18: 9-26);
  - *aṣḥāb al-fīl* (see PEOPLE OF THE ELEPHANT), once (Q 105:1), referring to the enemy host from Yemen which attempted to destroy the Ka‘ba in the year of the Prophet’s birth (*ca.*570 CE);
  - *aṣḥāb al-rass* (see PEOPLE OF RASS), twice (Q 25:38; 50:12), “people who worshipped idols, possessed wells and livestock” (Rāzī);
  - *aṣḥāb al-ukhdūd* (see PEOPLE OF THE PIT), once (Q 85:4);
  - *aṣḥāb al-sabt* (People of the Sabbath), referring to Israelite sabbath-breakers, once (Q 4:47) (see SABBATHI);
  - *aṣḥāb al-a‘rāf* (People of the Heights), once (Q 7:48, see HEIGHTS);
  - *aṣḥāb madyan* (People of Madyan), a tribe to whom Allah sent the Prophet Shu‘ayb, upon him peace, twice (Q 9:70; 22:44) (see MADYAN);
  - *aṣḥāb al-ḥijr* (People of Ḥijr), once (Q 15:80), being another name for the Thamūd (*q.v.*), who lived in a rocky plain (*ḥijr*) of western Arabia (Zamakhsharī);
  - *aṣḥāb al-ṣirāt al-sawīyy* (People of the Sound Path), once (Q 20:135);
  - *aṣḥāb Mūsā* (People of Mūsā), once (Q 26:61) (see MŪSĀ, UPON HIM PEACE);
  - *aṣḥāb al-safīna* (People of the Ark), once (Q 29:15) (see ARK);
  - *aṣḥāb al-qarya* (People of the Town), once (Q 36:13) in the tale of an unidentified town (see ANONYMOUS MENTIONS) whose inhabitants denied three messengers;
- xi. Three times in as verb in two forms (Form I and III):
- xii. As Form I verb: *yushābūn*, Q 21:43: *nor can they [disbelievers] be protected from Us*, in the sense of “protection” (Muqātil, Ṭabarī; Farrā‘)
- xiii. Twice as Form III verb: *tuṣāhib*
  - *fa-lā tuṣāhibnī* (Q 18:76: *do not keep me company*) in the story of Prophet Mūsā (*q.v.*), upon him peace, with reference to his unnamed teacher, who is identified as al-Khaḍir (*q.v.*) in exegetical literature and Prophetic traditions;
  - *wa ṣāhibhumā fī-l-dunyā ma‘rūfā* (Q 31:15: *keep company with them both [your parents] in this world with kindness*) (see PARENTS);

### The Use of Companion for the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace

In four verses, the Prophet Muḥammad, upon him blessings and peace, is called companion (*ṣāhib*) of the people among whom he lived (Q 7:184; 34:46; 53:2;