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The Friendship: A Study on Relationship for Happy Life with Special reference to Cicero

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Abstract:

The relation of friendship is a relation which embraces everything. It is an activity that all social beings are doing for the betterment of their personality. And they must do this activity if they want joy and happiness in life, said Aristotle. Cicero also following Aristotle remarks that it is a décor of life and finest relation of the world. And this relation flourishes when two good men meet. Friendship is based on good and it brings good and happiness for those who are in friendship. And for knowing friends or someone, it is necessary to be together for a long time, it's not possible in one day. Moreover oneness, openness, trust and acceptance are the factors which bind friendship. Furthermore, if there is friendship among the colleagues in the social establishment, many works are easily performed whereas the absence of friendship may create disharmony, conflict, clash and controversy between the two and also in the social establishment. Friendship is a good in itself and self worth; it is a finest relation that supplies the joy and happiness in our life.

The chief objective of this paper is to study the concept of friendship with special reference to Marcus Tullius Cicero.

Keywords: Friendship, Good, Knowledge, Values, Acceptance, Pleasure etc.

Introduction:

Marcus Tullius Cicero born on 3 January 106 BC and died on 7 December 43 BC was a Roman statesman, lawyer and philosopher. He was the introducer of Greek Philosophy to Romans and also the great translator of Greek Philosophy. He created the Latin philosophical vocabulary so that Romans could study Greek Philosophy in their own language.¹ Not only had he influenced many enlightened thinkers like John Locke, David Hume and Edmund Burke. Still his writings are most influential in European culture and primary materials for writing and knowing Roman history.² Cicero was greatly influenced by Philo of Larissa, the last head of the Academy. In the field of

¹ Anthony Kenny, Ancient Philosophy, Oxford University Press, p. 103 & see also <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cicero> retrieved on 28-10-2019

² see also <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cicero> retrieved on 28-10-2019

Ethics, his favor is based on the Stoic school of thought rather than Epicurean tradition.³ As we know that he was a political man so his philosophy is totally for the purpose of politics. He thought that only philosophy can save and improve the political system and since he was greatly influenced by Greek philosophy so he translated it into Romans, and sometimes invent new words in Latin where none seemed suitable for Greek concepts so that the Romans audience can understand easily and can use the Greek philosophy effectively.⁴

In this paper it is discusses that:

- Why a similar mind is necessary in the relationship of friendship.
- Why knowledge is required for establishing and maintaining friendship.
- Why is it called that friendship is more potent than any other relation?
- Why should not be friends with someone quickly?
- The duties towards friends.

It is also discussed that why friendship is the finest décor of life? Finally, why this relation is so important in our moral life, an attempt was made to find the answer to these questions.

Similarity is Necessary in Friendship:

Friendship means mutual service. It is a kind of relation and relation is a moral thing. The similarity of tastes, aims, views etc. are some necessary elements for forming friendship. If views, tastes etc. are not match between the two then it is very difficult to maintain the relationship of friendship. The relationship may continue on the basis of compromise, but it will not stay long. If the relation survives yet it will not be a relation of friendship, because the compromised relation will never be a relation of friendship.

Like Aristotle, Cicero also thinks that Friendship is a noble thing and it is based on good and it brings good for both, who are in relation to friendship. According to Zeno, the founder of Stoicism had indicated that the aim of living is harmony.⁵ This harmony of living can come by friendly relations among the people.

Friendship and Knowledge about Good:

There are people who always try to take advantage of their fellow men. Even in the matter of unethical and illegal things they want help or support from friends or others; as a result sometimes their friendship does not stay long. That is why it is said that it is necessary to be wise to keep a friendship. And it is possible between good men. They both need to know which things are good for his friend. That's why it is remarked by Cicero that 'Friendship is only possible between good men.'

³ Anthony Kenny, *Ancient Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, p. 103

⁴ <https://www.iep.utm.edu/cicero/#H2> retrieved on 28-10-2019

⁵ Cicero on the Good Life, trans. by Michael Grant, Penguin Classics, p. 185

And the criterion of good men is knowledge, wisdom. No one can be good unless he is wise.⁶ To know good things and to understand the friend are the two chief elements to sustain friendship.

Friendship is more potent than kinship:

Moreover friendship is more potent than kinship, because friendship is based on goodwill and in kinship goodwill may not exist. It is the good will and feeling of affection which strengthen the relationship of friendship. The relation of friendship is something which is voluntary, based on choice and the relation which is selected by us, that's why this relation is higher than the kinship relation. And this relationship builds with few people. However the kinship relation is established by birth and by racial relation. We have many relationships in our social life like family relation, kinship relation, official relation etc. but the relation of true friendship is such a type of relation which is above all relationships and best in all relationships. It is a relation where one can speak freely without any hesitation regarding any subject matter upon earth. It is a relation which we can use for different purposes; it is a prime necessity for social life which reduces the burden of problems by dividing and sharing. That is why it is said, 'when a man thinks of a true friend, he is looking himself in the mirror.'⁷

True Friendship is not Made Based on Profit:

There may be some people who make friendship for acquiring something. Sometimes people make friends for weakness and deficiency, thinking that they will get help from the friends. Friendship is one kind of giving and receiving relation where man receives without hesitation and also gives without hesitation. But the relation of friendship is not limited only in giving and taking; it is just one side of this relation. True friendship is established by love, where goodwill is a prime driving force and it is quite free from the calculation of profit. True friendship is not a means for getting some materials returned, it is itself an end and something which is profitable in itself.⁸ Everyone wants good things and everyone admires the good. That means the similarity of thinking, feelings, emotions and nature brings people closer. And good men are more attracted and influenced by the other good men, all good men want to annex the other good men. Good is something which attracts all, even people admire the good things of the enemies.

That is why we have to be very careful while choosing friends. We have to be sure that this person deserves the association before attaching ourselves to that person. We have to avoid quick formation of attachment with any person. These things we have to keep in mind if we want to avoid the faults and troubles which we may receive from our friends and also to prevent a friend from becoming an enemy.

⁶ Cicero on the Good Life, trans. by Michael Grant, Penguin Classics, p. 186

⁷ Cicero on the Good Life, trans. by Michael Grant, Penguin Classics, p. 189

⁸ Cicero on the Good Life, trans. by Michael Grant, Penguin Classics, p. 191&93

For Cicero the utility based friendship i.e. the friendship which is cultivated not for the affectionate feeling but for some materials utilities and mutual utility. Those who believe that friendship is like this are doing nothing less than ‘tearing the very sun out of the heavens.’ The friendship of rich and poor, weaker and stronger people etc. are some unequal relations of friendship which are purely based on mutual utility. Cicero thinks that true friendship is a noble thing, what we receive in true friendship is not only material profit but the affection and it is the delightful gift of mankind given by the god.⁹

Duties towards Friends:

To maintain the friendship we have to follow some rules and regulations, we should not demand from our friends those things which are not right. Never expect those things which you also cannot give to others. If our friends are facing problems and falling into depression then it is our duty to stimulate him. We ought to do something so that he can regain his self confidence. Not only that, the good friend’s duty is to help in knowing the capabilities of the friend and drive his friend towards the hopefulness and optimistic opinions.

Every person’s nature and character is different and we have to accept this. The only thing we have to look at is whether he is following any ideal or not. All ideals are good in their own way. We have to respect the feelings, emotions and ideals of every person. Moreover if we remove emotions from man then he or she will become like a stone or trunk of the tree. That is why we have to keep in mind that the removal of friendship only because of holding different emotions is a possible mistake. All kinds of friendships are needed in our life.

Finest Decor of life:

Where fear resides, friendship cannot exist there. Without affection, without mutual trust, loyalty and assurance of good will to survive friendship is impossible. It is the finest décor of life. Although you possess many things, if you lack friends then your life will be empty and will remain unhappy. The material asset will cease one day, but friendship is a kind of asset which is firm, durable and the source of happiness.

Findings & Conclusion:

- The relationship of friendship is made if two people’s views, ideas, opinions, tastes, aims etc. are the same. However sometimes dissimilarity of tastes, ideas etc. makes no obstruction. If their activity is useful to each other, they stay together.
- The absence of friendship may create disharmony, conflict, clash and controversy between the two and also in the social establishment.
- The things which are supposed to be easy, may not be easy due to lack of friendship. Again, which are supposed to be difficult, it may be easy with the help of friendship. So friendship is

⁹ Cicero on the Good Life, trans. by Michael Grant, Penguin Classics, p.201

for the purpose.

- Knowledge about friends is necessary for maintaining the relationship of friendship. Without knowing the nature of friends, the relationship of friendship cannot be sound. So knowledge is required for understanding friendship and this understanding will come after spending many times together with goodwill.
- The relation of friendship is more potent and important than the relation of kinship.
- It is more important than any other relation because this relation is a chosen relation, built by mutual consent and it is a voluntary action.
- In this relation the responsibility is higher than any other relations that are formed by born or made merely by circumstances.
- True Friendship is an end itself; it is not the means for getting some benefits.
- It is based on love and this relation is not confined within giving and taking materials.
- To know who is the truer friend time is required, and it is possible to know after staying many days.
- Trust is one of the most essential things that must be present in the relationship of friendship. A true friend is always ready to help his friends whenever necessity arises, that is why it is said that a friend in need is a friend indeed.
- There is no place for hiding or pretending in the relation of friendship, it is an open and clear relation. And this relation helps to develop the character of the individual towards the right direction.
- Acceptance is one of the most important features. A friend accepts all the activities of his friend and tries to improve whenever he feels the need.
- Friendship is good in itself; the value of friendship is intrinsic. It is the finest relation of the world; it gives us the joy and happiness in our life.

Finally we can say that friendship is a moral activity of the good man, because to perform moral action goodness is prerequisite. The good is something which originates from the reason. People can perform good actions when directed by reason. It is the good that makes people a rational moral being.

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