



PEN ABDUL

I begin with the Name of Allaah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.

“For every nation We have ordained religious ceremonies (rites) which they follow...” Qur’an 22: 67
“For each nation there is a direction to which they face.” Qur’an 2:148

The Muslims have not been wired to live in isolation, Allaah may He be Exalted, has destined it that they often a times find themselves living in the midst of those who do not profess the religion of Islam. Hence, the Laws of Allaah are wisely laid down to accommodate those non-Muslims living amongst the Muslims in such a way that the justice and equity that Islam prides itself with, is upheld. In fact, the Islamic perception of humanity is unequalled in the history of the world because it is characterized with mercy and compassion.

Interestingly, when it comes to the non-Muslims living in the midst of Muslims, highest level of moral conduct and justice are emphasized especially, when there is no element of hostility against Islam and the Muslims. To buttress this salient principle, Allaah may He be Exalted, says: “Allaah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion nor drove you out of your homes. Verily, Allaah loves those who deal with equity.” Qur’an 60:8

Furthermore, it is an open secret that the Prophet (peace be upon him) lived with non-Muslims especially the Jews, in Madinah. And that they were accorded the highest level of security and kindness until they betrayed their own side of the bargain. Undoubtedly, Allaah does not forbid the Muslims to be kind, fair, return favors, interact peacefully with non-Muslims, be they relatives or otherwise as long as they live peacefully with the Muslims.

Again, Allaah, may He be Exalted, says: “and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety.” Qur’an 5:8. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated in an unequivocal terms that, “Whoever kills a mu’aahid (a non-Muslim living under Muslim rule) will not smell the fragrance of Paradise, although its fragrance may be detected from a distance of forty years.” Narrated by al-Bukhari (2995).

The plethora of evidences available in both the Qur’an and Sunnah with regards to living peacefully with non-Muslims is a demonstration of the highest level of love, compassion and mercy which muslims are obliged to adhere to. However, there are certain principles and rulings concerning the interaction of Muslims with non-Muslims regarding which a lot of Muslims are neglectful of.

Fundamentally, Muslims are different from non-Muslims by the virtue of their belief system and concept of Allaah, and this obviously makes each of them to operate as a separate entity with respect to religious rites. Notably, this fundamental difference comes with a burden which must be bore by those who profess Islam without any compromise. A convenient alibi which Satan offers for some people to trivialize the fundamental difference between Muslims and non-Muslims is the compromising card of ‘tolerance’. Tolerance according to Satan not according to the Shari’ah.

Evidently, the Prophet (peace be upon him) reiterated in his sayings and actions that in Islam, there



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are only two festivals or holidays. These are the two Eid festivals. And from among what is known, the celebrations and holidays of a people are from among their unique elements which make them distinct from others.

Hence, Ibn Taymiyah wrote in *Iqtidah al-sirat al-Mustaqeem* (vol. 1, pg 470), "There are number of points that must be considered when discussing (the non-Muslims') festivals and holidays. First, festivals and holidays are from the wide range of laws, ways and rites that Allaah, may He be Exalted, describes in the verse, "For every nation We have ordained religious ceremonies (rites) which they follow..." such as facing the Qiblah, prayer and fasting. There is no difference between joining them in their festivals and joining them in their other rites. Agreeing to their holiday is agreeing to infidelity (kufr), and agreeing to some minor aspects (of their religion) is like agreeing to a branch of infidelity."

An equally significant aspect of this discourse, is the fact that no single non-Muslim has ever accused a Muslim of being intolerant of his religion for refusing to follow him to his Sunday session in the church, just as no single Muslim has ever done so against a non-Muslim for not praying or joining them in their unique religious festivals and holidays. If this was to happen, then the claim of being a Muslim or a Jew or a Christian will be a mere fallacy of assumption.

The religion of Islam does not require any beautification from anyone, what it does require is for the Muslims to adhere strictly to the dictates of the religion without seeking for alternative interpretation or opinion in clearly stated matters. Allaah, may He be Exalted says: "And if the truth had been in accordance with their desires, verily, the heavens and the earth, and whosoever is therein would have been corrupted! Nay, We have brought them their reminder, but they turn away from their reminder." Qur'an 23:71

By the same token, the scholars have made it clear that it is not allowed for Muslims to congratulate the non-Muslims on their holidays or festivals. One of the most celebrated scholars in Islamic history, Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) writes in *Ahkamu Ahl al-Dhimmah* (vol. 1, p. 205), "Giving congratulations on the special events that are specific to the disbelievers, such as congratulating them on their holidays by saying, "Blessed holiday for you" or other similar greetings, is considered forbidden by the agreement of the scholars."

Given, the current high profile debate regarding this issue and having some Muslim 'preachers' hiding under the pretext of tolerance and accommodating differences of opinion, promoting an ideology that is contrary to what the scholars of the past and present have had consensus on, it becomes imperative to know that not congratulating non-Muslims during their holidays and festivals is not act of intolerance but in fact, it is an act of absolute submission to the Will of Allaah and a bold statement to reinstate why a Muslim is a Muslim and non-Muslim is a non-Muslim. Otherwise, being a Muslim will be meaningless if these fundamentals that differentiate a Muslim and non-Muslim are treated with such triviality.

In conclusion, it is not part of Islam to force the non-Muslims to enter this magnificent religion, because sincerity is a requisite to accepting Islam. It is equally not part of Islam to trivialize the fundamentals of the religion just to fit in or be seen as a moderate. Would any right thinking Muslim congratulate the naturists (Known as a nudist or sun worshipper, naturists are people who go naked in designated



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areas) during their nudefest? Absolutely No.

“It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allaah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision.” Qur’an 33:36. The Messenger of Allaah (peace be upon him) said: “Whoever imitates a people is one of them.”

(Narrated by Abu Dawood, al-Libaas, 3512. Al-Albaani said in Saheeh Abi Dawood, (it is) hasan saheeh. No. 3401).

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