

1. SHOULD A MUSLIM SHOW HOSPITALITY AND VISIT NON-MUSLIM?

Some Muslims are of the opinion that visitation to and hosting of people of other faiths is not acceptable in Islam. As a result, they are unwelcoming and inhospitable to non-Muslim strangers, friends and relatives and even refrain from visiting people of other faiths. This undermines peace-building and strengthening of social ties, and could actually contribute to greater stereotyping and prejudice.

Can we visit and host Christians, Jews and others?

Visiting people of other faiths is not only permissible but an encouraged act of *da'wah* and relationship-building that was part of the Prophet's tradition (*sunnah*). The Messenger of Allah (p) accepted the invitation of non-Muslims and ate at their houses.¹ Similarly, the Messenger of Allah (p) invited non-Muslims to his house where he also would be hospitable towards them.

Abu Huraira narrates that, the Messenger of Allah (p) invited a non-Muslim to his house for a meal. The Messenger of Allah (p) asked that a goat be milked for him. It was milked and he drank its milk. Then the second one was milked and he drank its milk, and then another goat was milked and he drank its milk until he drank the milk of seven goats. On the next morning, he embraced Islam..."²

Muslims are therefore encouraged to host people of other faiths in their homes. Another frequently cited example is the report of Asmā', the daughter of Abubakr, whose mother was a polytheist came to visit and stay with her. The Prophet (p)

¹ See: Ibn Qudama, *al-Mughni*, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 1405AH, vol.1, p.97-244.

² *Sahih Muslim*, hadith no. 2063; *Musnad Ahmad*, hadith no. 9874; *Ibn Majah*, hadith no. 3256

encouraged her to be hospitable and establish good relations with her. She said, "My mother has come to me and she desires to receive something from me, shall I keep good relations with her?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "Yes, keep good relation with her."³

Sa'id bin al-Musayyib narrated that the Prophet (p) also visited his Polytheist uncle Abu Talib when he was ill.⁴ This narration was recorded by Imam Bukhari under a chapter entitled, "*Iyadatul-Mushrik*" (i.e. "Visiting polytheists who are unwell").

Also, Anas narrated that, "A Jewish boy who used to serve the Prophet (p) fell ill and the Prophet (p) visited him..."⁵

Muslims are also permitted to accept invitations from people of other faiths just as the Prophet demonstrated (p), if it does not involve doing anything unacceptable in Islam, or cause any harm to anyone. For instance, Anas ibn Malik narrated that:

"Allah's Messenger (p) had a neighbour who was Persian [a Zoroastrian], and he was an expert in the preparation of soup. He prepared (soup) for Allah's Messenger (p) and then came to him to invite him (to a meal). He, the Prophet (p) said, "Here is Aisha (i.e. and you should also invite her to the meal)." He (the Persian) said, "No!" then Allah's Messenger also said,

³ Al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, vol.24, p.78; Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, hadith nos.2620, 5979 & 2477; Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, hadith no. 2372; Ahmad bn Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imam Ahmad*, edited, Shu'aib al-Arnaut and others, 2nd Ed. Mu'assa sah al-Risalah, 1999, hadith no.26915; Abu Bakr Abd al-Razzaq bn Hammam al-San'ani, *Musannaf Abd al-Razzaq*, edited, Habib al-Rahman al-A'zami, 2nd Ed., Al-Maktab al-Islami, Beirut, 1403 AH, hadith no.9932; Sayyid Sabiq, *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, vol.3, no.103a, in *Alim 6.0*

⁴ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol.7, hadith no. 561; Sayyid Sabiq, *Fiqh-us-Sunnah*, vol.4, no.5 in *Alim 6.0*

⁵ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol.2, hadith no. 438, and vol.7, hadith no. 5610 in *Alim 6.0*; Ibn Hajr, *Fath al-Bari*, vol.10, p.119, cited in Salim Al-Bahnasawy, *Non-Muslims in the Shari'ah of Islam*, Dar al-Nashr lil-Jami'at, Egypt, 2004, p.57

“No!” (I.e. then I cannot join the feast).” He (the Persian) later returned to invite him, and Allah’s Messenger again said, “She (Aisha) is also here.” He (the Persian) said, “No” whereupon Allah’s Messenger also said, “No” (and declined his offer). He (the Persian) returned another time to invite him and Allah’s Messenger (p) again said, “She is also here.” He (the Persian) then said, “Yes!” on the third occasion. Then he accepted his invitation, and both of them (the Prophet (p) and Aisha) set out and went to his house.”⁶

In *Al-Fatawa Al-Hindiyya*, it is mentioned that Muhammad Ibn Al-Hassan said, "There is no harm in visiting and hosting non-Muslims citizens (*Ahl Al-Dhimma*) even if they are merely acquaintances. Likewise, there is no harm in a Muslim visiting a non-Muslim whether or not they are close or coexist in peace."⁷

⁶ *Sahih Muslim*, hadith no. 958 in *Alim 6.0*

⁷ Al-Shaikh Nisam and a group of Indian Scholars, *Al-Fatawa Al-Hindiyya*, vol. 5, p. 347