



Halloween, birthdays, and Christmas

Is it permissible for Muslims to celebrate or participate in holidays such as Halloween, birthdays, and Christmas functions?

The Prophet (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) made it very clear that in Islam there are two festivals or holidays. These are the Eid festivals. The celebrations and holidays of a people are from among the actions that most distinguish one people from another. In a Hadith in Sunan Abu Dawud, the Messenger of Allah (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said, "Whoever imitates (or resembles) a people is one of them." Therefore, it is not allowed for Muslims to participate in the holidays or celebrations of the non-Muslims.

Shaikh al-Islam ibn Taimiya wrote in *Iqtidha al-Sirat al-Mustaqeem* (vol.1, p.470), "There are a 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 Allah (Subhaanu wa ta'ala) describes in the verse, "For every nation We have established rites that 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. In fact, the holidays and festivals are one of the major items that distinguishes their customs and laws, and are one of the most obvious of their rites. Agreeing to it is agreeing to one of the most specific of the acts of infidelity and one of the most blazon of their rituals. There is no doubt that agreeing to or being in accord with something of that nature can only lead to apostasy, in general, given its conditions"

Indeed, beyond that, the scholars have even stated that it is not allowed for Muslims to congratulate the non-Muslims on their holidays or festivals. Ibn al-Qayyim in *Ahkam Ahl al-Dhimma* (vol. 1, p. 205) writes, "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. Even if the one who states it is free from any aspect of apostasy, it is still a forbidden act and it is the same as congratulating them upon their prostrations to the crucifix. In fact, that is one of the greatest sins in Allah's (Subhaanu wa ta'ala) sight. That is a greater sin than congratulating them for drinking wine, having illegal sexual intercourse and so on. Many of them who are not very religious do such things and they do not know how evil what they are doing really is. Whoever congratulates another human for any sin, heresy, or act of apostasy has exposed himself to the punishment and anger of Allah (Subhaanu wa ta'ala). The pious people from the early scholars would avoid congratulating the oppressors when they received positions of authority or the ignorant when they were given judicial or teaching positions in order to avoid the punishment of Allah (Subhaanu wa ta'ala) and falling from His Grace. If a person would be compelled to go to such people to repel any evil that he expected from him, only to speak well to him and to ask Allah (Subhaanu wa ta'ala) to guide him, there is nothing wrong with that."

Ibn al-Qayyim has included a beneficial section mentioning the opinions of the scholars concerning this matter (*Ahkam Ahl al-Dhikmma*, vol. 2, p. 722). It shall be

reproduced here with some abridgment: "In the same way that is not allowed for them to publicly (celebrate their holidays), it is not allowed for the Muslims to assist them for the holidays or to help them or to attend (their ceremonies) with them according to the agreement of the people of knowledge. In fact, the jurists who follow the four legal schools have made this clear in their books. Abu al-Qasim al-Tabari wrote, "It is not allowed for Muslims to attend their (the disbelievers') holidays and festivals because they are a type of evil falsehood. If the people of good mix with the people of evil without putting an end to what they are doing then they become like those who are pleased and influenced by the evil. And we fear falling into Allah's (Subhaanu wa ta'ala) anger because of their gathering."

Then he stated relying on Abu Hatim's narration, that Amir ibn Murra said about the verse, "Those who do not witness falsehood," that "they do not assist the pope of idolatry in their idolatry nor do they associate with them." And al-Baihaqi recorded with a Sahih chain that Umar ibn al-Khattab said, "Do not learn the lingo of the foreigners and do not enter the polytheists' churches on the days of their holidays for (Allah's) anger descends upon them." And he also recorded with a Sahih chain that Abdullah ibn Umar stated, "Whoever stays in the lands of the foreigners and celebrates their New Year's Days (of the festivals of the disbelievers) and behaves like them until he dies, he shall be resurrected with them on the Day of Resurrection." And ibn al-Qayyim said, "Ibn al-Qasim disliked for a Muslim to give a Christian a present during his (the Christian's) holiday; he considered this action as honoring his (the Christian's) holiday and assisting him in disbelief. In the same way, it is forbidden for Muslims to sell Christians anything they may use in their holidays of meat, blood, or clothing, nor should he loan him an animal to ride on, nor help him with anything concerning his festival because all of that would be a way of dignifying their idolatry and helping them in their Kufr. It is a must for the rulers to prevent Muslims from doing such deeds. This is the opinion of Malik and others. And I do not know of any difference of opinion concerning this matter." These are his words from al-Wadhiha. And in the books of the students of Abu Hanifa it states, "Whoever gives them a present, during their holidays, of a watermelon, meaning by that to honor their holiday has committed act of Kufr (apostasy)."