

The Ruling on Celebrating Christmas and New Years

لفضيلة الشيخ:

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The Question: We are drawing near to Christmas and New Year's Eve, and some Muslims celebrate it. So, what is the ruling on this celebration?

It is said in answer to this question: Giving a ruling on something is a branch of its conception. Therefore, anyone who wants to speak on such festivals should know what these festivals are and who are the ones who celebrate it?

These festivals, including Christmas, are celebrated by the Christians on the 25th day of the 12th Month i.e., December, in which they falsely claim that 'Īsā (Jesus), peace be upon him, was born on this day, and some of them express it by saying: “*The Rabb,*” or “*The Ilāh,*” or “*the son of the Rabb*” – I seek refuge in Allāh – was born on this day. Which is why they religiously glorify this day for their claim that 'Īsā, peace be upon him, and whom they make as a deity or the son of the Rabb, that he was born on this day.

If it is known that the Christians' celebration of this day is a religious celebration, then celebrating it is not permissible, and it is prohibited in the Sharī'ah. **So, it is not permissible for any Muslim to celebrate this day, or participate with the disbelievers in celebrating this day in any form of participation.** Among the things that indicate the prohibition of Muslims celebrating or participating in the celebration of this day are the following:

1. **The first matter:** that the occasion is a *Kufrī* occasion (i.e., an occasion of *kufr* - disbelief and blasphemy), as stated previously. So, they falsely claim that ʿĪsā, peace be upon him, was born on this day, so they say: “The *Ilāh* or the son of the *Ilāh* was born on this day.” so it is a *Kufrī* occasion. And if it is not permissible in the Sharīʿah for a Muslim to congratulate another Muslim on committing an act of disobedience, or on drinking alcohol, or on committing *Zinā*, or on the killing of a Muslim – **so if this was not permissible regarding general sins, then it is more appropriate to not be permissible regarding a *Kufrī* occasion** – in which the disbelievers claim that *the son of the Rabb*, Allāh’s refuge is sought, or *the Ilāh* was born on this day!

2. **The second matter:** If this celebration was not *Kufrī* (of he disbelief and blasphemous) – although it was previously mentioned that it is indeed *Kufrī* – but if it was not *Kufrī* for the sake of the argument, then once the disbelievers celebrate it, **it is forbidden for us to celebrate it according to the Sharīʿah, for the necessity of carrying out the ʿAqīdah (belief) of *al-Walāʾ wal Barāʾ* (loyalty and disavowal)**. The ʿAqīdah of loyalty and disavowal requires us to be hostile to the disbelievers, not to celebrate their festivals and not to participate with them in what makes them happy.

Which is why Allāh the Exalted said, “**And those who do not witness falsehood.**” [*Surah al-Furqān: 72*]. Mujāhid, Ibn Sīrīn and other than them from the *Tābiʿīn* said: That is, they do not attend their celebrations. Some of them generalised and some of them gave examples of some of the *Kufrī* festivals and celebrations.

Therefore, we are commanded not to attend their festivals and celebrations, not to witness them and not to take part in them; As one of the greatest beliefs is the '*Aqīdah* of *al-Walā' wal Barā'* (loyalty and disavowal). Imam Ḥamad bin 'Atīq, may Allāh Almighty have mercy on him, said: **“Most of what the Qur'ān spoke about after speaking about Tawḥīd and its opposite is the '*Aqīdah* of loyalty and disavowal.”** So, it is obligatory upon us to be hostile to the disbelievers and hate them because they are disbelievers, and love the believers because they are believers.

Allāh the Exalted said, **“O you who have believed! Do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection while they have disbelieved in what came to you of the truth...”** [*Surah al-Mumtaḥanah: 1*]
Meaning: do not take them as allies nor love them.

And He the Exalted said, **“O you who have believed! Take not the Jews and the Christians as *Awliyā'* (friends, protectors, helpers, etc.), they are but *Awliyā'* to one another. And if any amongst you takes them as *Awliyā'*, then surely he is one of them. Verily, Allāh guides not those people who are the Dhālimūn (polytheists, wrongdoers, unjust etc.) ”** [*Surah al-Mā'idah; 51*]

And He said, **“You (O Muḥammad ﷺ) will not find any people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger (Muḥammad ﷺ), even though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred (people). For such He has written Īmān in their hearts...”** [*Surah al-Mujādilah: 22*]

I ask Allāh to make me and you among those who love and hate for the sake of Allāh, and hate even the closest people

to them if they are not upon the religion of Islam. So we must carry out this blessed *‘Aqīdah*, and the Prophet ﷺ clarified it, as reported by Muslim from the Ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah that **the Prophet ﷺ said: “Do not initiate the *Salām* (greeting of peace) to the Jews and Christians.”** [Muslim 2167]. Even the *Salām* is not given firstly to the disbeliever, this is because he is a disbeliever.

And ‘Umar said according to what was narrated by al-Bayhaqī: **“By Allāh, I do not love them when Allāh has degraded them, nor do I honour them when Allāh has humiliated them, nor do I bring them closer when Allāh has kept them far away.”**

So how about those who participate in their festivals and celebrations and congratulate them?! To other than that of impermissible actions, and actions that decrease and oppose the *‘Aqīdah* of loyalty and disavowal.

We must be in the middle regarding this *‘Aqīdah*; **We mustn’t be like the *Takfīris* who declare Muslims to be disbelievers due to such things**, nor, on the other hand, be like those who corrupt the religion in the name of religion while ascribing themselves to the religion, those who corrupted it and were lenient. **Nor mustn’t we be like the liberals and criminal secularists who wasted this *‘Aqīdah*** that was clearly indicated by the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ as well as the narrations of the Ṣaḥābah and Tābi‘īn, may Allāh be pleased with them and please them.

So we must love the believer because he is a believer, and hate the disbeliever because he is a disbeliever, and we must do the results of hating them, such as not loving them and not honouring and praising them, and so on.

3. The third matter: The Muslim festivals for which there are no evidence from the Sharī‘ah, other than *‘Īd al-Fiṭr* and *‘Īd al-Adḥā* – there is *Shar‘ī* evidence for these two *‘Īds* – **as for other than these two for which there is no *Shar‘ī* evidence, then they are prohibited.** Even though they are festivals and celebrations of Muslims (i.e., celebrated by Muslims)! So what would be the case regarding festivals and celebrations of the disbelievers?! **That is because there are only two *‘Īds* in the Sharī‘ah: *‘Īd al-Fiṭr* and *‘Īd al-Adḥā*.**

Al-Nasā’ī and Abū Dāwūd reported from the Ḥadīth of Anas that the Prophet ﷺ came to Madinah, and he found them celebrating two days and playing in them. So, on these two days he noticed that they were playing, so he said: **“Allah has replaced you with two days that are better than them: *‘Īd al-Fiṭr* and *‘Īd al-Adḥā*.”** [al-Nasā’ī 1556, Abū Dāwūd 1134]. And the Ḥadīth has been authenticated by al-Ḥāfidh Ibn Ḥajar, Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah and others from the people of knowledge. **And it indicates that only the festivals and celebrations that were permitted by the Sharī‘ah are permissible for the Muslims, and that other than that of festivals and celebrations are prohibited even if they are for Muslims.** Therefore, the festivals and celebrations of the disbelievers are more appropriate (to be prohibited).

What saddens the believer and makes him feel regret is to see people among the Muslims participating in the festivals and celebrations of the disbelievers, either with their bodies, or by decorating their homes with what those celebrating this festival are used to doing, such as printing a picture of that old man with a smile on his face (i.e., Santa Claus), who has become a sign of celebrating this holiday. Or that they congratulate the disbelievers

on their festivals, and you may see some Muslims who do not begin the disbelievers with congratulations, but if a disbeliever sends him congratulations, he responds to him, and this is all wrong.

A Muslim must be proud of his religion, know that he was created for Allāh and for worshiping Him, know that death is near and that it suddenly attacks.

“Everyone shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception (a deceiving thing).” [Surah Āl Imrān: 185]

And Allāh the Exalted said, **“Whatsoever is on it (the earth) will perish.” [Surah al-Raḥmān: 26]**

Therefore, we must have *Taqwā* of Allāh, know that death is near and that it has no specific time. And there is nothing dearer and greater than the religion of Allāh; The religion of Allāh is dearer to us than everything. By Allāh, if a man killed your father, or rather, if he did not kill him but instead insulted and humiliated him, by Allāh you would hate him, try to humiliate and exclude him, so how is it while the matter is concerning the religion of Allāh, free is He from all imperfections, the Exalted?!

Allāh Allāh (i.e., pay attention and take heed) O Muslims that we have jealousy over Allāh’s religion! And I would like to point to something regarding Christmas at the end of this answer, which is that **attending the festivals of the disbelievers is prohibited by *Ijmā*’ (consensus) of the scholars.** The consensus was narrated by Imam Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allāh Almighty have mercy on him, in his book “*Aḥkām Ahl al-Dhimmah*”.

So, the issue is not an issue of *Ijtihād* nor is it correct for anyone to make *Ijtihād* in it and contradict it. Rather, it is an issue of *Ijmāʿ*. Whoever opposes it is absolutely wrong, and it is not correct for them to be followed in their mistake, for we have been trialed in these times with callers to falsehood and corruption of religion, and sadly in the name of religion! And this is what we were warned against in the Sharīʿah and what the *Salaf* (predecessors) of this *Ummah* warned us against.

Ibn Abī Ḥātim narrated in the introduction of the book “*Al-Jarḥ wal-Taʿdīl*” on the authority of the well-known Imam, Sufyān al-Thawrī, who is one of the previous Imams of the *Salaf*, that he said: **“It used to be said: beware of the *Fitnah* (trial) of the ignorant worshipper (who has no knowledge), and the *Fitnah* of the sinning scholar (who has knowledge but no good deeds), for they are both a *Fitnah* for every person who is (easily) intrigued and taken away by *Fitnah*.”**

Therefore, we must beware of the scholars of misguidance whom the Prophet ﷺ warned us against in the Ḥadīth of ʿAbdullāh bin ʿAmr bin al-ʿĀṣ in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* (Bukhārī and Muslim), that he said: **“...they will be asked, then they will give *Fatwā* (verdict) without knowledge. So they will go astray and lead others astray.”** [Bukhārī 100, Muslim 2673]. And Allāh’s refuge is sought.

A group of scholars of misguidance came out and confused people with their religion, and among those was Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, the head of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, so he issued a *Fatwā* permitting participating in these festivals and congratulating people on it. **And this *Fatwā* is a lie and a *Fatwā* of misguidance, it is not permissible to follow it, this is because the issue has already been decided upon by the consensus of the people of knowledge, as mentioned**

previously. So, these scholars of misguidance should not be given any attention.

Allāh Allāh (i.e., take great heed) concerning the religion, O brothers! Allāh Allāh concerning the religion, O Muslims! Be careful about your religion more than you are careful about your worldly life, and by Allāh, if one of us wanted to buy a car, or even if he wanted to buy a mobile phone, he would have asked and consulted so-and-so from the people who have knowledge concerning such things, so what would be the case regarding the religion?! This religion is not taken from everyone. Imam Muslim narrated in the introduction of his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of Imam Muḥammad bin Sīrīn, that he said: **“Indeed, this knowledge is religion, so look to whom you take your religion from.”**

This answer is regarding Christmas. As for New Year’s Eve, it is understood from what was previously mentioned that it is (also) prohibited for several reasons, including:

- 1. It is a festival/celebration, and festivals are impermissible in the Sharī‘ah (except for *‘Īd al-Fiṭr* and *‘Īd al-Adḥā*).**
- 2. It is the festival of the disbelievers, so we must be hostile to them and hate them etc.**
- 3. We are commanded to distinguish ourselves from the disbelievers, to differ from them and not to imitate them, as Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd reported from the Ḥadīth of ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb that **the Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever imitates a people, then he is one of them.”** [Abū Dāwūd 4031, Aḥmad 5114]**

So, we are supposed to be proud of the Islamic history that Muslims are famous for, and that al-Farūq Abu Ḥafṣ ‘Umar bin

al-Khattāb dated, may Allah be pleased with him, and that we do not date the history of the disbelievers except for a need.

As for what is based on this of celebrating their festivals, it is better and more appropriate not to celebrate them, because they are prohibited festivals, as mentioned above. I ask Allāh to guide me, you, all Muslims to what He loves and is pleased with, to revive us all upon Tawḥīd and the Sunnah, that we die upon that, that we meet Allāh while He is pleased with us, and may Allāh reward you with good.

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