
Duty of Muslims towards Non-Muslims

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: What are the duties of Muslims towards non-Muslims, such as the Dhimmies (protected non-Muslims living under Islaamic rule) in Islaamic countries or in their own countries when Muslims live among them? The duties I mean are the various forms of dealings such as offering Salam (Islaamic greeting of peace) and celebrating their festivals with them. Please advise, may Allaah reward you with the best.

Answer: The duties of Muslims towards non-Muslims are numerous:

First: Da`wah (calling) to Allaah (*Glorified and Exalted be He*): That is to call them to Allaah and clarify the reality of Islaam to them, whenever possible if they have the mental capacity. This is the greatest favour a Muslim can grant to fellow citizens and all those with whom he comes in contact, including the Jews, Christians, or other Mushriks (those who associate others with Allaah in His Divinity or worship). The Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) stated:

“Whoever guides to something good has a reward similar to that of its doer.”

He (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) also said to `Alee (*May Allaah be pleased with him*) when he sent him to Khaybar to invite the Jews to Islaam:

“By Allaah, if Allaah guides even one person through you that is better for you than possessing a whole lot of red camels (most valuable kind of camels).”

He (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) also stated:

“Whoever calls others to follow right guidance, his reward will be equivalent to those who follow him (in righteousness) without their reward being diminished in any respect.”

Calling non-Muslims to Allaah, conveying the message of Islaam, and providing advice to them are the most important duties and the best acts that draw one closer to Allaah.

Second: One should not wrong non-Muslims with regard to their person, property, or honour. If he is a Dhimmi, Musta'man (non-Muslim with a peace agreement permitting them to enter and stay temporarily in a Muslim country) or Mu`ahad (non-Muslim in a temporary covenant with Muslims), he should be given his rights. It should be guaranteed that his property will not be taken by theft, betrayal, or deception. One should not harm or

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kill any of them, as a Mu`ahad, Dhimmi or Musta'man falls under the protection of the country.

Third: There is no harm in conducting business of sales, purchases, hiring and so on with non-Muslims because it is authentically reported that the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) bought from the non-Muslims, idolaters and the Jews; and this is a type of transaction. The Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) died while his armour was mortgaged to a Jew in return for food for his family.

Fourth: One should not initiate Salaam but may reply, because the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) stated:

“Do not initiate offering Salaam to the Jews or the Christians.”¹

The Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) also stated:

“When the People of the Book offer you Salaam, you should say: "The same to you.”²

A Muslim should not begin greeting the non-Muslims. However, when the Jews, Christians, or others offer Salam, he should reply "Wa `Alaykum" (the same to you) as the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) ordered. These are some of the rights the non-Muslims have on Muslims. This also includes the right of being a good neighbour. You must not harm your non-Muslim neighbours. You should give them charity if they are needy, present them with gifts if they are rich, and advise them, for this may be the cause of their being guided to Islaam. The neighbour has a great right, the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) stated:

“Jibreel kept recommending treating neighbours with kindness until I thought he would assign a share of inheritance for them.”³

Allaah (*Glorified and Exalted be He*) states:

[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.]

It is reported in the Saheeh (authentic) Hadeeth on the authority of Asma' bint Aboo Bakr (*May Allaah be pleased with her*) that her non-Muslim mother came to her during the truce held between the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) and the people of Makkah, seeking help. Asma' asked the permission of the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) to maintain ties of

¹ Related by Muslim

² Reported by Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim

³ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim

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kinship with her. Thereupon, the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) said:

"Maintain ties of kinship with her."

Muslims must not take part in the celebrations of non-Muslims but there is no harm in offering condolences to them, saying "May Allaah give you patience during this calamity", or "May Allaah compensate you for your calamity", or any other consoling expressions of sympathy. However, they should not say: "May Allaah forgive him" or "May Allaah bestow mercy on him" or supplicate for the deceased if they are non-Muslims. You can only supplicate for the living to be guided and given good reward.