

Responding to Merry Christmas

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

Question: What is the ruling on congratulating the disbelievers on their Christmas celebration? And how do we respond to them if they greet us with it. And is it permissible to go to the places where they are having celebrations for that purpose. And does the person (Muslim) take a sin if he does the aforementioned without any intent? Rather he only does it being courteous, or due to shyness or due to being put in an awkward situation, or due to some other reasons. And is it permissible to resemble them in this?

Shaykh al-Uthaymeen (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ)¹: Congratulating the disbelievers on their Christmas celebration or other than that from their religious holidays is not permissible according to the consensus. As was related by Ibn al-Qayyim, (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ), in his book *“The ruling on the people beneath the Muslim protection”*, when he said:

‘As for congratulating the disbelievers for their religious ceremonies that have kufr (disbelief) attached to it, then it is not permissible according to the consensus. For example congratulating them for their holidays or their fasts, so the person says, “May you have a bless holiday”, or he wishes them well for their holiday or something like that. So this, if the one who says it escapes from falling into kufr (disbelief), is (still) from the impermissible things. And it is on the same level as congratulating them for prostrating to the cross. Rather it is a greater sin with Allaah. And it is a more severe abomination than to congratulate them for drinking alcohol and killing someone, committing illegal sexual intercourse and things of this nature. And many of the people who don’t have any religion (or respect for the religion) fall into this. And he doesn’t know the ugliness (evil) of what he has done. So whoever congratulates a person for committing sins, or innovations, or disbelief, then he has exposed himself to the hate, wrath (anger) of Allaah.’ End of Shaykh Ibn al-Qayyim’s (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) speech.

Shaykh al-Uthaymeen (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) continues: So congratulating the disbelievers on the religious holidays is not permissible, as shown by the proof brought by Ibn al-Qayyim. Because in it, (congratulating the kuffaar on their religious holidays) is an approval for what they are upon from their kufr ceremonies, and showing them that you are pleased with it. Even if the person is not pleased with the actual kufr itself, it is also not permissible for the Muslim to

¹ (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him

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be pleased with kufr ceremonies, or to congratulate them for it. Because Allaah (سبحانه)² is not pleased with that, as Allaah (سبحانه) says, **["If you disbelieve, then verily, Allaah is not in need of you, He likes not disbelief for His slaves. And if you are grateful (by being believers), He is pleased therewith for you."]**³ And He (سبحانه) says, **["This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islaam as your religion."]**⁴ So congratulating them with this is not permissible whether this person is your co-worker or not. So if they greet us with their holiday greeting we don't respond to them with it, because it's not our holiday, and they are holidays that Allaah is not pleased with, and because it is something that is either innovated in their religion, or it was legislated but has since been abrogated by the Deen of Islaam that which Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)⁵, was sent with to all of the creation. And He (Allaah) says about it (Islaam) **["And whoever seeks a religion other than Islaam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers"]**⁶

And for the Muslim to accept their invitations to these occasions (holiday celebrations) is haraam (Impermissible) because this is worst than congratulating them with it, because this would entail participating with them in this. Also it is haraam for the Muslim to imitate the disbelievers by establishing celebrations for these occasions, or to exchanges gifts, or to distribute sweets, or trays of food, or to stop work or anything like this. Due to the statement of the Prophet, (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), **"Whoever imitates a people is from them"**.⁷ Shaykh of Islaam Ibn Taymeeyah said in his book, 'Follow the straight path and oppose the path to the fire, Imitating them in some of their celebration causes happiness in their hearts for what they are upon from false hood. And it is possible that this might encourage them to take advantage of this opportunity to humiliate the weak minded'. End of Shaykh Ibn Taymeeyah's (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) speech.

And whoever does anything from this is a sinner. And it is the same whether he did it being courteous, or seeking friendship, or due to shyness, or any other reason, because this is from being deceitful in the Deen of Allaah. And this is from the reasons that reinforce the psyche of the disbelievers and to make them proud of their Deen.

² (سبحانه) (Subhanahu) The Exalted

³ سورة الزمر – Soorah az-Zumar [39:7]

⁴ سورة المائدة – Soorah al-Maa'idah [5:3]

⁵ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him

⁶ سورة آل عمران – Soorah Ale-Imraan [3:85]

⁷ Narrated by Aboo Daawood, al-Libaas, 3512. Al-Albaanee said in Saheeh Abee Daawood, (it is) hasan Saheeh. No. 3401