

Rulings on Congratulating the Christians on their Holidays

A Calm Dialogue with the Rationale behind the Justifications Made for Partaking in and Congratulating the Christians on their Holidays.

By: Khabbab Ibn Marwan Al-Hamad

In this article, I narrate a real life conversation that occurred between me and a youthful man in a location that required us both to be in each other's company for a long time. In this sitting, we found ourselves engaged in a back and forth conversation for more than an hour.

Also included in this article, is a separate written exchange with another youth that involved the same topic. I've combined both dialogues together with added commentary in the hope that this would enrich the subject matter and help those seeking the truth in the aforementioned topic.

From Allah سبحانه وتعالى I acquire ability, strength and transition from all states. It is He (Allah) سبحانه I seek.

Translation of Common Arabic Terms Used:

سبحانه وتعالى	Subhanahu wa ta'aala	Glory be to Him (Allah).
صلى الله عليه وسلم	Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam	Peace and blessings be upon him.
رضي الله عنه	RadiyAllahu anhu	May Allah be pleased with him.
رضي الله عنها	RadiyaAllahu anha	May Allah be pleased with her.
رحمه الله	Rahimahullah	May Allah have mercy on him.

How did the dialogue start?

While I was sitting in a waiting room trying to get some private matters done, along entered a young vibrant youth who was complaining of the cold...He mentioned the possibility that it could rain later in the day...

I smiled and asked Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - that He would make the rain merciful upon us.....

The Youth: In a couple of days the weather will be cold in Bethlehem. There is also a possibility of rain.

A third person –whom I was sitting next to-: Will you be heading out to Bethlehem?

The youth responded in the affirmative. He added that the Christian holidays are just around the corner and asked rhetorically...

The Youth: “What’s the big deal in participating in their holidays and congratulating them?

The youth continued with an innocent smile...

The Youth: “They are our brethren in humanity and nation. We ought to be happy for their happiness.”

I interjected...

Khabbab: It seems that you would like to go to the place where they will be celebrating. However, are you serious or joking around?

Hearing his previous statements, I was only left with the impression that he was serious, so I asked...

Khabbab: “How do you intend going to this place knowing full well that the Christians have special festivities associated with their holidays, which include and are not limited to blasphemous rituals involving the association of partners to Allah -*shirk*-; in addition to other prohibitions that only Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - is aware of!?”

The Youth: Are you telling me that going to and participating in their celebrations is prohibited!?

Khabbab: The scholars have prohibited going to these places in order to partake in and celebrate on their holidays. Whoever does so is sinful. Furthermore, whoever goes believing in the validity of their [the Christian religious] beliefs, affirming their worship to be correct and is pleased with their rituals then verily this is disbelief in Allah -*kufr*-; and he who does this exits the fold of Islam.

The Youth: I don't get the big deal. What's the problem with them establishing their holidays? It's only natural that they have their own holidays and as the saying goes...God help those who are steadfast in their belief!

Khabbab: You say that lightly even though this is the exact statement the people of old who went astray used to say "He -Who is worshiped- is one regardless of the different ways He is worshiped."¹

We say this because Islam -the true religion- is one and that all other religions and walks of life in all of their manifestations are falsehood. We consider those who adopt and follow these false religions to be non-believers -*kuffar*- . This, in fact, is no different to how they look at us Muslims according to their beliefs.

Responding to the First Justification:

"We join the peaceful Christians of our lands in their celebrations out of righteousness and kindness"

After hearing what I had to say, the youth was quick to respond saying ...

The Youth:But the Christians we're talking about are from our lands [Palestine] ² , so what's the objection to celebrating with them? What's the objection to taking part in their lives by sharing their stress, happiness and sorrow?

After hearing the first justification he used, I replied with the following...

Khabbab: The Christians of our lands are indeed our partners and neighbors in this country. They have a historic existence in our lands and we have coexisted for centuries side by side. Some of them have even shed blood which has mixed into the soil we live on as a result of the dreadful occupation of Palestine.

We absolutely refuse the oppression of the occupying forces towards them in every form. As long as they do not express animosity towards us, we treat them with righteousness- "*birr*" and deal with them justly. We also try to soften their hearts towards us with good behavior as Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - has instructed:

"Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes -from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly." (Al-Mumtahana, 8)

¹ For more check Majmoo' Fatawa/Fatawee Ibn Taymiyyah Volume 25, page 323.

² This argument is used by many people who live in environments with Christian minorities and/or majorities (May Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - guide them). The discussion at hand may be used in either scenario.

Because of this, we are not to oppress them and won't accept any oppression to be inflicted against them either. We also refuse any transgressions against their churches and places of worship as long as they remain as such – solely places of worship-. If any plans of transgression against their places of worship come to our attention, it is our duty to stand firm and defend any actions against them. We say, acknowledge and affirm these duties, but not at the expense of compromising our religion and principals by participating in their holidays in the name of pastime; and by entering their churches giving the impression that this behavior is totally acceptable and normal in our religion!

On the other hand, when it comes to public celebrations of their holidays in Muslim neighborhoods and streets, Islamic government mustn't allow this; as the public display of their holidays and crosses in Muslim areas isn't permissible.

One of the stipulations of the agreement signed between Umar Ibn Al-Khattab رضي الله عنه and the Christians during the acquisition of Jerusalem was not to make public displays of their holidays in the lands of the Muslims. This was stipulated in the famous truce made with the Christians of the Levant -*Shaam*- “and we are not to publicize our Palm Sunday holiday -*Sha'aneen*³- or the Resurrection -*Ba'uthaa*-⁴.

This is something natural. For as long as the Christians are ruled by Islamic law, they are not to be prevented from their right to worship and celebrate their holidays as long as this is done without any public displays amongst the Muslims. This regulation is similar in light to the prohibition of public displays of eating and drinking during the fasting hours of the month of Ramadan when amongst Muslims.

When discussing the conditions of making a truce with the protected peoples “*ahl ath-thimma*”, and what should be written in such an agreement, Imam Ash-Shafi'ee states:

“You are not to publically display your crosses in any of the Muslim lands. Also prohibited are any declarations of associating partners to Allah -*shirk*-. You are not to build [new] churches and places of worship. You are not allowed to ring bells in the Muslim regions nor make public to any

³ Iqtidaa' As-Siraat Al-Mustaqeem (Adhering to the Straight Path), Volume 1, page 537, by Ibn Taymiyyah. Also Al-Mu'jam Al-Waseet, Volume 1, page 488.

“Ibn Sireen says: Forgery -*Azzoor*- is Sha'aneen and Sha'aneen is a Christian celebration on the Sunday preceding Easter -*Eid Al-Fisih*-. It is celebrated by carrying palm-tree branches in commemoration -as they claim- of the entrance of Jesus عليه السلام - to Jerusalem.”

⁴ Narrated by Al-Bayhaqee in As-Sunan Al-Kubra, Kitab Al-Jizyah, Baab Al-Imam Yaktubu Kitab As-Sulh ala Al-Jizyah #19186. Ibn Taymiyyah rendered the chain of this hadeeth to be of good status -*jayyid*-.

Muslim your polytheistic *-shirk-* beliefs regarding the nature of Jesus, son of Mary or anyone else.”⁵

Abu Bakr Al-Kasaanee Al-Hanafee states:

“They are not to be enabled to publically display their crosses during their holidays because this is a display of the rituals of non-belief. Therefore, they are not to be enabled to do so in Muslim territories. However, displays of these things inside their churches shouldn’t be prevented. Similar In light, the ringing of their bells inside [internally] their old churches shouldn’t be prevented because these matters aren’t deemed public displays. However, if these matters are conducted outside of their churches and places of worship, they are not to be enabled [of this] for this renders their actions as public.”⁶

Ibn Al-Mawwaq Al-Malikee quoted Ibn Habeeb -also a Malikee jurist-:

“Ibn Habeeb says: The protected peoples (*ath-thimmiyoon*) who live amongst the Muslims are to be prevented from publically displaying intoxicants and swine. In the event that these things are confiscated, they should be spoiled. Anyone found intoxicated is to be disciplined. If crosses are made public on their holidays and during prayers for rain, they should be broken and those involved disciplined.”⁷

After stating the above, the youth responded...

The Youth: These rulings ... nobody applies them anymore! What benefit do we get out of mentioning them!?”

Khabbab: You’re right!...The majority of countries in the Muslim world today are ruled by secular, man- made laws that have rampaged our communities. That being said, we are discussing Islamic rulings that we must always be conscious of. These rulings must never be forgotten regardless of the pressures of today’s sad reality!!

Responding to the Second Justification:

Participating in Christian holidays doesn’t necessitate agreeing and being pleased with their religious doctrine.

The Youth: What’s the problem with attending their holiday celebrations given that we are not pleased with, nor are we confirming their religious doctrine?

Khabbab: A Muslim derives proof to justify his actions based on revelation (The Quran and authentic narrations of the prophet *-Sunnah-*). He is guided [in his understanding] by the reports

⁵ Al-Umm, volume 4, page 210, by Ash-Shafi’ee.

⁶ Bada’i As-Sana’i’, volume 7, page 114, by Al-Kasaanee.

⁷ At-Taaj wal-Ikleel, volume 4, page 602 by Ibn Al-Mawwaq Al-Malikee.

of the companions, those that followed them “*at-tabi'een*” and the consensus of Muslim scholars.

I continued...

Khabbab: We are not better off in this regard than our beloved messenger Muhammad, the son of Abdullah, -صلى الله عليه وسلم- who Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - addressed:

“And do not follow the paths of those who spread corruption [who are corrupt].”

(Al-A'raaf, 142)

Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - also said to him:

“Then We have placed you, [O Muhammad], on an ordained way concerning the matter [of religion]; so follow it and do not follow the inclinations of those who do not know. Verily, they will never avail you against Allah at all.”

(Al-Jaathiyah, 18-19)

Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - says:

“... and do not follow the inclinations of a people who had gone astray before and misled many and have strayed from the soundness of the way.”

(Al-Maa'idah, 77)

Verily Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - has forbidden His messenger from following in the footsteps of the nonbelievers. Forbidden also, is adopting the methodologies and following the whims of the non-believers -*kuffar*-. With this in mind, it becomes more incumbent upon us to follow Allah's commandments and adhere to the prohibitions legislated by Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - and His messenger.

It is important to note that one of the objectives of Islamic legislation is drawing a clear doctrinal demarcation and religious distinction between Islam and falsehood. It is therefore impermissible for Muslims to partake the nonbelievers, Christian, Jew or other in their holidays. Participating in such events has a decaying effect on your own creed with respect to other religions. Laxity in this regard starts with one attempting to get closer to them, going out of his/her way seeking their acceptance and admiration. This then leads you to act like them and take on their behaviors and mannerisms manifested in exchanging gifts on their holidays, taking residence in the areas where they publically engage in rituals displaying their disbelief in Allah - سبحانه وتعالى -; in addition to the other fraudulent speech and falsehood attributed to Allah that they utter.

Therefore, whoever participates in their holidays, affirming their false modes of worship, verily he has ceased to be a Muslim because these holidays are based on numerous false Christian doctrines, such as attributing offspring to Allah –Exalted is Allah from this falsehood-.

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما reported that the prophet -صلى الله عليه وسلم- has said:

ALLAH -تعالى- HAS SAID: THE SON OF ADAM ACCUSED ME OF DISHONESTY, AND HE HAD NO RIGHT TO DO SO. HE ALSO REVILED ME, AND HE HAD NO RIGHT TO DO SO. AS FOR HIS ACCUSATION OF DISHONESTY, HE CLAIMED THAT I AM INCAPABLE OF RECREATING HIM AS HE ONCE WAS. AS FOR HIS REVILEMENT OF ME, IT IS HIS SAYING THAT I HAVE A SON. GLORY BE TO ME. I AM FAR FROM TAKING A PARTNER OR OFFSPRING.”⁸

I mention all of this without even addressing the sins, corruption and apparent mischief present in these gatherings: drinking intoxicants, the improper dress of their women etc. The participant in these gatherings is affected psychologically and in his/her heart by what he/she sees. Exposure to these matters, therefore, affects the Muslim’s creed and leads to his faith -*eman*-weakening, which makes him susceptible to an end we fear: imitating their rituals and actions.

The youth then interjected...

The Youth: Attending their holidays isn’t the same as attending [observing] their prayer services and worship!?

Khabbab: This is incorrect. Their holidays are a form of worship which -in their doctrine- brings them closer to whom they worship. In addition to this, their holidays also represent an established custom and cultural norm practiced for hundreds of years. In this regard,

Ibn Taymiyyah says:

There is no difference between participating in their holidays and participating in the rest of their [religious] practices. Verily the wholesale acceptance of their holidays constitutes acceptance of disbelief -*kufr*- whereas partial acceptance of some of the branches of their holidays constitutes partial acceptance of some of the branches of disbelief -*kufr*- [not resulting in exiting the fold of Islam]. Rather, [religious] holidays are one of the most specific means in which religions distinguish themselves [from amongst each other]. They function as one of religion’s most apparent rituals. Therefore, acceptance of these holidays is in fact acceptance of the most specific elements of a nonbelieving religion, let alone acceptance of its most apparent ritual...”^{9 10}

⁸ Saheeh Al-Bukharee, #4482.

⁹ Iqtidaa’ As-Siraat Al-Mustaqeem fe Mukhalafat As-haab Al-Jaheem (Adhering to the Straight Path by Contrasting the People of the Hellfire), Volume 1, page 528, by Ibn Taymiyyah.

I also told the youth...

Khabbab: Don't forget that they have developed convictions and notions associated with their holidays as a result of false doctrine and worship. Take for example, the food they eat on the nights of their holidays, which they call "The Lord's Supper." Let's examine the doctrinal falsehood they hold behind this belief. They eat small pieces of bread followed by a glass of wine. While eating this bread, they have the belief that it transforms –!miraculously!- into the flesh of the Messiah even if it tastes like plain bread. They also believe that the glass of wine also transforms into the blood of the Messiah in spite of its wine taste. [This is the transubstantiation doctrine that the Catholics and the majority of Christians hold regarding this transformation ritual while the Protestant Christians have an alternative explanation to this transformation.] They [the Protestants] don't believe in a literal transformation. Rather, they say that the transformation of the bread and wine to flesh and blood respectively is a symbolic transformation commemorating Jesus's crucifixion and suffering -according to their false

¹⁰ Declaring an individual or act as being outside of the fold of Islam -*takfeer*- is a serious matter and shouldn't be taken lightly. The Prophet -صلى الله عليه وسلم- said: "Whoever calls his brother [in Islam] a disbeliever -*kafir*-, verily this [statement] will return to one of them. If the addressee is so as he has asserted, [the disbelief of the man is confirmed.] If it [the claim of disbelief on one's brother] is untrue, then it [this sin resulting from the person's action] will revert back to him. (Saheeh Al-Bukharee and Muslim) With this in mind, students of knowledge must be very careful before passing rulings of disbelief especially with it refers to individuals. This should only be done by highly qualified scholars who examine the state and circumstances surrounding the action performed and the individual committing the action.

Rulings of -*takfeer*- are never performed arbitrarily. Scholars practice extreme caution, especially when dealing with individualized -*takfeer*-. Generally speaking, in the event that a specific theoretical action, which has unanimously been classified as disbelief, is performed by an individual, scholars then go through a process before declaring any such ruling. They examine whether the conditions -*shuroot*- of declaring the individual a -*kafir*-, are present [such as sanity], in addition, to the absence of any preventive factors -*mawani'*- [such as coercion]. Only after this process may a scholar pass a theoretical ruling and apply it to the individual. Thus, If an insane person utters speech which is considered disbelief, it has no effect on his status as a Muslim.

An example of the preventive factor -*mani'*- of coercion -*ikraah*- is manifest in the famous story of the companion Ammar Ibn Yasir -رضي الله عنه- He was forced to utter speech which constitutes disbelief as a result of being tortured. However, when he ran to the Prophet fearful and regretful of what he had done, the Prophet -صلى الله عليه وسلم- asked him about the state of his heart where he replied "Secure and at ease with belief."...Therefore the existence of this -*mani'*- prevented the theoretical ruling from being applied individually.

As a final note, in a case where all the -*shuroot*- are present and there is a total absence of -*mawani'*-, scholars ask the individual to repent by attempting to answer any suspicions or clarifications the person may have been susceptible to -*istitaaba*-. Finally, the repercussions of -*takfeer*- [not being able to inherit, separation between spouses etc...] aren't matters to be taken in the hands of individuals. Rather, they are judicial matters dealt with by Islamic courts in the presence of Islamic government. ****This comment functions as an attempt to acquire a minimalistic level of literacy on the topic at hand. We ask Allah to protect us from this and all forms of *kufr* (major and minor). ****

beliefs.¹¹ There is also a common belief amongst them that whoever gets the last glass of wine from the bottle after midnight will be of good fortune!

As for the Christmas tree, it also has religious symbolism. At sunrise, families wake up to find presents underneath this tree. When elders asked by their children about the origin of these presents, the father replies that these are gifts from our Lord Jesus delivered by Saint Nicholas! What I find really perplexing is to find some extremely naïve Muslims, actually gift the Christians these trees. Some even go a step further with their ignorance and desires to even harvest them for sale.

Searching further into origins of this tree will lead you to discover that it was customary for the ancient Egyptians, Chinese and Hebrews to use evergreen trees, wreaths, and garlands to symbolize eternal life. Tree worship was also a common practice amongst pagan Europeans. Traces of this religious symbolism and veneration even survived their conversion to Christianity manifest in the presence and decoration of these trees in almost every household during their Christmas holidays in the hopes that this turns away devils and evil spirits...¹² Although there is disagreement amongst the Christians as to the exact origins of the Christmas tree, there seems to be an agreement that its usage really developed internationally in the late 1800s. Most Christian academics don't shy away from also pointing to its pagan roots as well.¹³

So, if our Muslim youth attend and go to the places of their holidays; by Allah!! What in the world do they expect to find there!? What in the world do they seek to accomplish by attending such events which are full of doubts, desires and suspicion!? What will they benefit except that they expose themselves to matters that would upset the Messiah –son of Mary-, himself let alone infuriate the Most Gracious Most Merciful - سبحانه وتعالى - Aren't these youth afraid of

¹¹ <https://st-takla.org/books/iris-habib-elmasry/paul-the-apostle/bread-wine.html>.

Shaykh Rahmatullah Al-Hindee refuted them in his famous debate with Karl Gottlieb Pfander (Church Missionary Society polemicist to the North-Western Provinces of Northern India) in 1837. He addressed the Catholics who adopt this doctrine "If what you claim was correct [the claim of eating the flesh of Jesus and drinking his blood at the Lord's Supper], then, you are worse for wear than the Jews [of old] because they tortured and punished Jesus once without eating his flesh or drinking his blood and breaking his bones... You, on the other hand, slaughter him every single day in multiple places across the world breaking his bones on every occasion piece by piece. Also, if this is what Jesus -as you claim- has truthfully requested and asked for, then why don't the Protestants share your belief since your claim is that this has been literally stipulated in the Bible on the tongue of Jesus himself?!!

¹² Encyclopedia of Britannica, volume 3, page 284.

¹³ For more on the origins and religious symbolism of the Christmas tree, see the following articles/links:

The Christmas Tree: From Pagan Origins and Christian Symbolism to Secular Status, by Penny Travers, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-12-19/the-history-of-the-christmas-tree/8106078>. Last updated on the 19th of Dec. 2016 3:49am.

<http://www.marnarsay.com/Christmas/christmas%20tree.htm>

https://st-takla.org/Feastes-&-Special-Events/Coptic-Nativity-of-Jesus-Christ-Milad-El-Masih/Coptic-Jesus-Incarnation-Christmas-04-Christmas-Tree_.html

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas_tree

exposing themselves to the fury of Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - ? Doesn't this dawn to them while they are casually just hanging out in those streets and places performing actions that will bring no praise!?

The youth responded...

The Youth: Indeed, This is true. I personally have some friends who went and joined them in their celebrations. They would spend the whole night getting drunk and flirting with girls. Some have even fallen to the worst and most heinous of sins!

Khabbab: I pointed out that the matter at hand is much graver than just letting loose one's desires and embracing immoral activities, rather attending these celebrations and participating in such gatherings will gradually plant the seed of admiration and love for their false beliefs and doctrines. This is especially the case given that most Muslim youth aren't aware and exposed in their normal day lives to the blasphemous -*kufr*- beliefs of the Christians except marginally at best. Therefore joining the Christians in their actions on these holidays on the one hand and answering the evil call of one's inner-self's "*nafs*" misguided desires on the other, will eventually lead to their emulation and imitation.

Because of this,

Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - says:

“O you, who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people.*

(Al-Maa'idah, 51)

Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - also says:

“And never will the Jews or the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion. Say, "Indeed, the guidance of Allah is the [only] guidance." If you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you would have against Allah no protector or helper.”

(Al-Baqarah, 120)

Imam Ath-Thahabee said: “The scholars have said that one of the manifestations of this allegiance is the imitation of them in their ways and publicly displaying their holidays (by the Muslims) when they (the Christians) are ordered not to do so in the lands of the Muslims. So, if a Muslim joins them in this, he is therefore assisting and aiding them in publically displaying their

holidays. Verily this is a heinous vice and innovation in Islam. It is inconceivable for a person to do such actions except that he is of weak belief and religious practice.¹⁴

It is therefore impermissible for you to go to such places because you will eventually –one way or another- fall into imitating and emulating them in many of their actions. This is a very grave and serious matter that concerns one’s religious creed and doctrine for the Prophet Muhammad -صلى الله عليه وسلم- has said

“VERILY YOU WILL FOLLOW THE WRONG WAYS, OF YOUR PREDECESSORS SO COMPLETELY AND LITERALLY THAT IF THEY SHOULD GO INTO THE HOLE OF A DABB-LIZARD, YOU TOO WILL GO THERE.” WE SAID, "O MESSENGER OF ALLAH"! DO YOU MEAN THE JEWS AND THE CHRISTIANS?" HE -صلى الله عليه وسلم- CONCURRED, "WHOM ELSE!?"¹⁵

I went on...

Khabbab: Notice how the Prophet -صلى الله عليه وسلم- says “ways of your predecessors” which refers to the ways and norms of those who were before you. When the companions asked the prophet

-صلى الله عليه وسلم- whether he was referring to the Jews and the Christians? The prophet -صلى الله عليه وسلم- replied confirming that indeed it’s whom you’ve specifically asked about! Also, in another narration with a strong chain the prophet -صلى الله عليه وسلم- says “Whoever imitates a people verily they are from them.”¹⁶

Ibn Taymiyyah states: “Imam Ahmed and other scholars have used this *hadeeth* as evidence to establish different rulings. The least effect this *hadeeth* could have on the matter at hand is prohibiting their emulation in similar light to the Quranic verse “And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is [one] of them.” (Al-Maa’idah, 51) The *hadeeth* is also similar to what Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr said: “Whoever builds in the lands of the polytheists and partakes in their Coptic new year -*Nayrouz*- celebrations and festivals imitating them until his death, then on the day of judgment he will be resurrected and thrust into their gathering”¹⁷ [build here refers to the act of taking permanent residence].

¹⁴ Tashabbuh Al-Khasees be Ahl Al-Khamees (The Imitation [Done by] Scoundrels of the People of Maundy Thursday [The Christians]), page 34, by Ath-Thahabee.

¹⁵ Saheeh Al-Bukharee and Saheeh Muslim.

¹⁶ Narrated by Ahmed, Volume 2, page 50. Abu Dawood #4031. Authenticated by Ibn Hibban. Ibn Taymiyyah said its chain is *jayid* in *Iqtida’ As-Siraat Al-Mustaqeem*. Ibn Hajr graded its chain as *hasan* in *Al-Fat’h Al-Baree*, volume 10, page 271. Al-Albanee authenticated it in *Irwa’ Al-Ghaleel*, volume 5, page 109.

¹⁷ *Iqtidaa’*, volume 1, page 270-271, by Ibn Taymiyyah. The *hadeeth* mentioned was narrated by Al-Bayhaqeei *Kitab Al-Jizyah*, Baab *Karahiyat Ad-Dukhool ala Ahl Al-Thimma fe kana’sihim wat-tashabbuh bihem yawm nayroozihim wa*

I continued with what I was saying...

Khabbab: The prophet -صلى الله عليه وسلم- said:

“COUNTER THE POLYTHEISTS. LENGTHEN YOUR BEARDS AND CLIP YOUR MUSTACHES.”¹⁸

He -صلى الله عليه وسلم- also said:

“THE JEWS AND THE CHRISTIANS DO NOT DYE [THEIR GRAY HAIR] VERILY YOU ARE TO COUNTER THEM [OPPOSE THEM IN ACTION.]”¹⁹

If our legal tradition -*Shariah*- commands us to counter the polytheists and forbids us to conform with their modes of worship, specific norms and rituals even in matters such as lengthening the beard or dying our beards so that we don't emulate them by shaving and not dying; then by default it renders countering and not conforming to their holidays more of an obligation. Not joining them on their holidays therefore, functions as the clearest manifestation of opposing and countering the non-believers.

A point to really pay attention to is that the prophet -صلى الله عليه وسلم- used to counter the nonbelievers of the Jews and Christians in everything... This could even be felt by the Jews who would say “this man doesn't want to leave anything which we do, except that he opposes and counters us.”²⁰

Furthermore, the attendance youthful Muslims who suffer from inferiority complexes will result in them being happy with what they see [because of their ignorance and/or inability to resist worldly temptations]. You will not see from these types of Muslims but laughter, amiability and smiles. All this will encourage the nonbelievers to hold on to their falsehood if not exceed in it by inviting those not from their faith using every form of attraction possible. This eventually has an effect on those weak hearted Muslims.

Also we believe that what is observed by those attending these holiday celebrations constitutes -*azzoor*-. Allah -سبحانه وتعالى- says in the Quran:

"and those who do not observe forgery-*azzoor*-, and if they pass by futility they pass in dignity"

(Al-Furqaan, 32)

Scholars of Quranic exegesis have explained -*azzoor*- here as referring to the holidays of the nonbelievers -*kuffar*-. Ibn Taymiyyah says: "The holidays of the nonbelievers has gathered

mahrajanihim.# 18642 & 18643. The chain is of good stature -*jayid*-. Ibn Taymiya authenticated the hadeeth in *Iqtidaa'*, volume 1, page 754.

¹⁸ Saheeh Al-Bukharee and Saheeh Muslim

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Saheeh Muslim.

suspicion, desire and falsehood all in one place. There is no benefit religiously in attending them. Whatever immediate pleasure one experiences in the beginning is destined to end in pain. Attendance [of these holidays] is [constitutes] observance.²¹

Ibn Al-Qayyim says: "Imam Ahmed Ibn Hanbal used this verse as evidence for prohibiting the observance of the holidays of the Christians and Jews. Imam Ahmad said: "Forgery -Azzoor- is Palm Sunday -Ash Sha'aneen- as well as their other holidays. Ad-Dahhak said: -Azzoor- refers to the holidays of the polytheists. Sa'eed Ibn Jubayr said: It's Ash-Shaneen. Ibn Abbas said: Azzoor refers to the holiday of the polytheists."²²

In interpreting the Quranic verse {so avoid the filth of idols and avoid speaking in forgery -azzoor-} (Al-Hajj, 30.) Al-'Izz Ibn Abd As-Salam, also known as the Sultan of Scholars said: "{filth of idols} "of" here refers to the genus of filth [the idols being a type of filth] or avoid of the idols its filth which is its worship, {speaking in forgery -azzoor-} associating partners with Allah -shirk-, lying, false testimony, the holidays of the polytheists."²³

Therefore, it is impermissible to observe these holidays. Furthermore, whoever is forced to pass by these areas [where these holidays are being observed], he/she should do so quickly without actively trying to make out what they are doing; for their actions are considered futile and Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - says:

"...and if they pass by futility they pass in dignity" (Al-Furqaan, 72.)

Khabbab: Let us reflect on an established narration by Anas ibn Malik - رضي الله عنه -. He said:

"THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ ARRIVED TO MEDINA WHILE THE PEOPLE THERE HAD BEEN ACCUSTOMED TO CELEBRATING ON TWO DAYS. THE PROPHET ﷺ THEN INQUIRED: "WHAT ARE THESE TWO DAYS?" THEY RESPONDED: "WE USED TO CELEBRATE ON THESE TWO DAYS IN THE DAYS OF IGNORANCE -JAHILIYAH- [BEFORE THEIR ISLAM] IN THE DAYS OF IGNORANCE. THE PROPHET ﷺ SAID: VERILY ALLAH - سبحانه وتعالى - HAS SUBSTITUTED THESE TWO DAYS WITH WHAT IS BETTER: THE CELEBRATION OF ADHA AND THE CELEBRATION OF FITR."²⁴

²¹ Iqtidaa', volume 1, page 183, by Ibn Taymiyyah.

²² Ahkaam Ahl Ath-Thimma (The Rulings [Associated with the] Protected Peoples) by Ibn Al-Qayyim, Volume 3, page 1244.

²³ Tafseer Al-'Izz Ibn Abd As-Salaam, Volume 2, page 353.

²⁴ Narrated by Ahmed # 12025, An-Nasa'ee # 1556. Ibn Taymiyyah graded this hadeeth to be authentic according to Imam Muslim's criteria for authentication.

The messenger of Allah -صلى الله عليه وسلم- forbade the people of Medina from celebrating the holidays of the polytheists that they've previously observed. He made clear that it was impermissible to do and that Allah -سبحانه وتعالى- substituted these former days with the Muslim holidays of Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha. How can we now substitute our holidays and celebrate the holidays of the nonbelievers -*kuffar*-?! Are we going to substitute what is superior with what is inferior?!

Don't forget the hadeeth narrated by Aisha -رضي الله عنها- in which she said:

"ABU BAKR ENTERED WHILST TWO YOUNG GIRLS FROM THE ANSAR TRIBE WERE SINGING THE SONGS OF THE ANSAR ON THE DAY OF BU'ATH. THESE TWO YOUNG GIRLS WEREN'T PROFESSIONAL SINGERS. UPON HEARING THEM, ABU BAKR ASKED RHETORICALLY: DO I FIND THE INSTRUMENT OF THE DEVIL IN THE HOUSE OF THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH -PEACE BE UPON HIM-?" THIS WAS ON THE DAY OF EID. THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH -صلى الله عليه وسلم- SAID" O ABU BAKR, EVERY PEOPLE HAS A HOLIDAY AND THIS IS OUR HOLIDAY." IN ONE NARRATION THE GIRLS WERE PLAYING WITH A DAFF INSTRUMENT."²⁵

Al Hafith -Imam Ath-Thahabee- -رحمه الله- said:

"This statement from him -صلى الله عليه وسلم- ordains the specialization of every people with their own holidays as Allah -سبحانه وتعالى- says: "to each among you, we have prescribed a law and method [clear path]. (Al-Maai'dah, 48)"²⁶

Ibn Katheer -رحمه الله- said:

"Therefore, a Muslim mustn't emulate them, whether it be in their holidays, seasonal festivities or modes of worship because Allah -سبحانه وتعالى- has honored this Ummah with the seal of the prophets whom He has legislated [to him] this great, upright, encompassing and perfect way of life -*deen*-. This *deen* has been honored to such an extent that if Musa, son of Aaron, who was given the Torah and Esa, son of Mary, who was given the Bible عليهم السلام were alive, it wouldn't be permissible to follow their religious legislations. Rather if they or all the other prophets existed in our time, it wouldn't have been permissible for any of them to be a follower of any other legislation but our great pure and honorable -Shariah-Therefore if Allah -سبحانه وتعالى- has bestowed upon us the honor of being from the followers of Muhammad -صلى الله عليه وسلم-, how can we then find it appropriate to emulate a people who have gone astray from before and caused others to go astray from the straight path? How can we follow a people who have changed, forged and misinterpreted their religion to the point where it barely resembles what

²⁵ Saheeh Muslim.

²⁶ Tashabbuh Al-Khasees be Ahl Al-Khamees, by Ath-Thahabee, page 164.

was initially legislated to them in the first place? In addition to what has been mentioned, all these other legislations have been abrogated. To adopt and/or hold onto what has been abrogated is prohibited. Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - does not accept anything abrogated be it a little or a lot. There is no difference between it and what has not been legislated to begin with. Verily Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - guides whom He wills to the straight path.”²⁷

Responding to the Third Justification:

“The Existence of “Scholars” Participating in these Holiday Celebrations.”

The Youth: But there are some “shuyookh” that enter their churches and participate in their celebrations and holiday gatherings!?

Khabbab: Isn’t the main source of tribulation in the Ummah only but from the like of these scholars of sin and mischief!?! Verily they are main source of confusion that the masses face today in respect to understanding their religion properly. History has recorded shameful things done by such people who attribute themselves to scholarship. It’s been recorded that one such individual visited a church taking off his Islamic turban-‘imama- placing it on the head of the priest, only then to place the priest’s head dress on his own. To add insult to injury, he then recited the poetic verse:

“Ash-shaykhu wal-qiseesu qesseesani///wa in tasha’ fa qul huma shaykhani”

“The shaykh and the priest are two priests ///and if it suits you, then say they are both shaykhs.”

This is intellectual weakness at its worst accompanied with an obvious dire lack of obligatory jealousy for the true religion of Islam. These traits lead the internally-inferiorized and colonized Muslim’s belief to disintegrate when confronted with the doctrines of the Christians and others. The like of these “scholars” attempts to justify their actions with an expired claim of how interfaith dialogue and achieving mutual ground between the religions is of importance. Verily this doctrinal closeness will not lead except down a slippery slope resulting in disbelief-*kufr*- and associating partners with Allah -*shirk*-.

Because of this, the scholars of Islam have historically scolded the like of these individuals [who take part in such events.] Among such scholars [who have scolded participants of such events] was Imam As-Suyootee -رحمه الله-:

“Allah - سبحانه وتعالى -addressed His Messenger -صلى الله عليه وسلم- “And if you were to follow their whims and desires after the knowledge which has been bestowed upon you, verily you are then of the oppressors” (Al-Baqarah, 145.) If this is how Allah - سبحانه وتعالى -addressed His Prophet - صلى الله عليه وسلم - how do others, who find themselves conforming and following the baseless actions of ignorant or nonbelievers, expect to be addressed? What address do they expect when they

²⁷ Al-Bidayah Wan-Nihayah (The Beginning & the End) Volume 2 page 142, by Ibn Katheer.

are following them in their baseless actions which haven't been legislated by Allah -سبحانه وتعالى- or his messenger-صلى الله عليه وسلم-? [What do they expect when] they are following them in the most intimate of religious matters or matters which accompany their religions?

[It is unfortunate that] Numerous Muslim scholars nowadays, who possess apparent knowledge yet are void of this knowledge internally, could be seen engaged in emulation of the nonbelievers by performing these actions alongside the ignorant during the holiday seasons of the nonbelievers.”²⁸

Also, we should keep in mind that the holidays of the Christians are based on what I've previously mentioned by publically showing their disbelief in Allah. How can the individual then participate in their speech and actions knowing that Allah -سبحانه وتعالى- said:

“And it has already come down to you in the Book that when you hear the verses of Allah [recited], they are denied [by them] and ridiculed; so do not sit with them until they enter into another conversation. Indeed, you would then be like them. Indeed Allah will gather the hypocrites and disbelievers in Hell all together—“

(An-Nisaa', 140)

I continued with what I was saying...

Khabbab: I'll add further clarity to the point I'm trying to make by quoting the Faaruq of this Ummah, the famous companion Umar Ibn Al-Khattab رضي الله عنه. He said: “Do not enter upon the Christians in their churches on their holidays. Verily, Allah's wrath befalls them [during this time.]”²⁹ رضي الله عنه Ali even disliked sharing the name of the holidays that were

²⁸ Al-Amr bil Ittibaa' wan-Nahy 'an Al-Ibtidaa' (The Commandment to Follow and Forbiddance to Innovate), page 146, by the polymath As-Suyootee.

** Participation in these events is done by these individuals in the name of interfaith dialogue and achieving mutual ground –as they claim-. While there is nothing inherently wrong with discussing each other's doctrines in an academic setting by qualified individuals with the intention of clearing their doubts and spreading Islam, what is feared is that this mutual ground slogan –as is used by those who advocate this- functions as a platform to expose Muslims to falsehood thus attempting to weaken their beliefs. That being said, collaboration to achieve common ground in worldly matters or enjoining good and forbidding the evil of such matters as intoxicants, homosexuality and the destruction of the institution of marriage is something local Muslim leaders should join together, study, discuss and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of. If agreed to do so, this should be done while maintaining firm ground on one's doctrinal positions and with the hope that acting in righteousness -birr- towards them– will lead to their Islam or return a holistic benefit to the community at large.**

²⁹ Narrated by Abdur-Razzak in Al-Musannaf #1609, also by Al-Bayhaqee in As-Sunan Al-Kubra with an authentic chain, #18640 and by Ibn Abee Shaybah, Volume 6, page 208. Ibn Taymiyyah authenticated the hadeeth's chain in “Mas'ala fe Tham Khamees An-Nasara.” In Iqtidaa', (Vol. 1, pg. 511) Ibn Taymiyyah also referenced this hadeeth back to Abee Ash-Shaykh Al-Asfahanee in Shuroot Ahl Ath-Thimma. From him, he obtained the chain. He [Ibn Taymiyyah] then said: “Narrated with an authentic chain.”

specifically associated with them. [His dislike was with the mere name] ...Imagine conforming to their actions!

Imam Al-Bayhaqee mentioned that Ali Ibn Abi Talib رضي الله عنه was given a gift on the day of Nayrouz. He asked the giver: "What is this?" They said: Oh Commander of the Faithful, it's the day of Nayrouz. He then replied saying: "You should make a Fayrouz [replacing the "N" with an "F"] every day. Abu Usamah -one of the narrators- said: He disliked saying (Nayrouz)." "Ash-Shaykh [Al-Bayhaqee] said: This is similar in light to disliking the specialization of a day as a holiday when Islamic legislation hasn't done so.³⁰

Ibn Habeeb said that Ibn Al-Qasim, -a famous Malikee scholar- was asked about riding the ships taken by the Christians specifically to attend their holidays. He [Ibn Qasim] disliked *-kariha*³¹ that [action] in fear that Allah's -سيحانه وتعالى- wrath would befall them because of the disbelief that they have gathered upon. Ibn Qasim also disliked *-karih-* the Muslim giving a Christian person a reward on occasion of his holiday. He viewed this as a form of glorifying his holiday and a means of assisting him to benefit his disbelief." [Ibn Habeeb continues] Don't you see that is impermissible for the Muslims to sell the Christians anything that benefits them in establishing their holidays whether it be meat, broth, clothes or to lend animals for transportation or anything for that matter which assists them in their religion. It is such because this is a form of glorifying their *-shirk-* and assisting them in their disbelief. It is an obligation on the sultans to command the Muslims not to do this. This is the opinion of [Imam] Malik and others. I am unaware of any disagreement on this matter.³²

Abu Al-Qasim Hibat Allah Ibn Al-Hussain At-Tabaree, a famous Shafi'ee jurist, said:

It is impermissible for the Muslims to observe their holidays because they [the nonbelievers] are on vice and forgery. Furthermore, if the people of good custom [and moral character] are to mingle with the people of vice without denouncing their vice, then it is as if they are pleased with their vice and show preference to it. In this event, we fear that Allah's wrath would befall this gathering and encompass them all. We seek refuge with Allah from His wrath.³³

Imam Ath-Thahabee said:

"Whoever observes and attends these gatherings is blameworthy and abhorred because he is [voluntarily] witnessing mischief [knowing full well] that he is unable to denounce it. Verily the

³⁰ Narrated by Al-Bayhaqee in As-Sunan Al-Kubra, Kitab Al-Jizya, Baab Karahiyat Al-Dukhool ala Ahl Ath-Thimma fe Kana'isihim wat-Tashabbuh bihim Yawma Nayruzihim wa Mahrajanihim, #18644.

³¹ *-Kariha-* here isn't referring to the terminology used by later-day and contemporary scholars as being simply frowned upon (rewarded if avoided yet not held accountable if you do it). Rather the word *-kariha/akrah-* was commonly used by earlier scholars to refer to multiple meanings including prohibition. In this context the intended ruling is of prohibition as the exposure to wrath of Allah would not be feared of falling on those performing actions that are merely frowned upon [*-karaha tanzeehiya-* the contemporary use of the word].

³² Al-Madkhal by the polymath Ibn Al-Haaj Al Malikee, Volume 2, pages 46-48.

³³ Ahkaam Ahl Ath-Thimma, by Ibn Al-Qayyim, Volume 2, page 722.

prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم -said: "Whoever of you sees mischief -*munkar*-, he is to change it by hand. If he is unable [to do so], then [he is to change it] with his tongue. If he is unable [to do so], then with his heart. Indeed this is the weakest of faith." [Imam Ath-Thahabee continues] What greater mischief is there than participating in the holidays and seasonal celebrations of the Christians and Jews by doing what they do: be it baking bread, buying incense, coloring eggs, dyeing the hair and skin of the women and children, in addition to heading out to the apparent areas, beaches and rivers showing off one's brand new clothing. Verily in these actions manifest a means of resurrecting the religion of the cross and innovating new holidays. In addition, they also constitute a form of participation in their holidays and an emulation of those who are astray.³⁴

The famous Islamic polymath, As-Suyootee says "The holidays of the Jews or other non-believers, be they non Arabs or nonbelieving Arabs [who conform to pre-Islamic traditions and holidays]...it is unbecoming of a Muslim to emulate them in any of that or conform to such matters."³⁵

Responding to the Fourth Justification:

"OK... We won't participate in their holidays, but what's wrong with buying and selling them what they use in these holidays? Business is business...isn't it?!"

The Youth: A lot of people participate in these activities. They buy and sell products and goods associated with these holidays. This action has nothing to do with establishing doctrinal allegiance or aiding them in their beliefs. Rather, this falls under the premise of work and trade.

Khabbab: This is absolutely impermissible.

Allah سبحانه وتعالى -says:

"And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty." (Al-Maa'idah, 2)

The legal maxim used amongst jurists in this regard states "every type of clothing predominantly conjectured to help in sin and oppression, is thereby impermissible to sell or sew in respect to those who will use it in such fashion."³⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah says: "It is impermissible to sell anything which aids them in establishing their religious rituals."³⁷ He also said: "Muslims aren't to engage

³⁴ Tashabbuh Al-Khasees be Ahl Al-Khamees, page 35, by Ath-Thahabee.

³⁵ Al-Amr bil Ittibaa' wan-Nahy 'an Al-Ibtidaa', page 145, by As-Suyootee

³⁶ Sharh Umdat Al-Fiqh, Volume 4, Page 386, by Ibn Taymiyyah.

³⁷ Iqtidaa' As-Siraat Al- Mustaqeem, Volume 2, page 526, by Ibn Taymiyyah.

in trading products with other Muslims which enable them [the Muslims] to emulate the nonbelievers in their holidays be it food, clothing and the like because doing so enables vice.”³⁸

In light of this, it is impermissible for Muslims to sell religious-holiday gift cards, trees, lights, specific foods or cakes known to be used for these occasions, or Santa Claus figures etc. because they use these things in sin.

Ibn Al-Qayyim transmitted the agreement *-ittifaaq-* amongst scholars on the prohibition of assisting the Christians by any means which serve their holidays:

“In addition to the impermissibility of publically displaying [their holidays], it is also impermissible for Muslims to waver in leniency in this regard, or help and attend such occasions. This is based on the agreement *-ittifaaq-* of the people of knowledge who are qualified to speak on such matters.”³⁹

For this Ibn Habeeb Al-Malikee said: “Don’t you see that it is not permissible for the Muslims to sell the Christians anything that benefits their holidays whether it be it meat, broth, clothing or to lend animals for transportation or anything for that matter which assists them on their holidays. It is an obligation on the sultans to command the Muslims not to do this. This is the opinion of [Imam] Malik and others. I am unaware of any disagreement on this matter.”⁴⁰

In Al-Mi’yaar Al-Mu’arrab, Al-Winsheeree quotes a fatwa by Abu Al-Asbagh, Esa Ibn Muhammad At-Tameeli: “[he was asked] about the night of January that people refer to as Christmas [Perhaps the questioner was asking about Orthodox Christianity] where the Christians put a lot of effort in preparation. They treat it as one of their holidays exchanging gifts of different types of food, artifacts, and banter to bring families together. On this night the men and women abandon their work in the morning in veneration of this day and consider it the New Year [Perhaps an assumption by the questioner]... Do you consider this -may Allah bestow His generosity upon you- in addition to accepting the invitations of one’s relatives and in-laws to attend the feasts prepared for this occasion a forbidden innovation that is impermissible for a Muslim to do, or do you feel that this is merely disliked *-makrooh-* and not blatantly prohibited?”

[Abu Esa answered] “I’ve read what you’ve written to me and understood your question. Everything you’ve mentioned in your address is prohibited to do according to the people of knowledge. I’ve narrated numerous *hadeeths* which emphasize the prohibition of such matters. I’ve also narrated that Yahya ibn Yahya Al-Laythee said that gifts given on Christmas by

³⁸ Majmoo’ Fatawa Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, Volume 25, Page 319.

³⁹ Ahkaam Ahl Ath-Thimmah, volume 2, Page 722 by Ibn Al-Qayyim

⁴⁰ Iqtidaa’ As-Siraat Al-Mustaqeem, volume 2, page 526, by Ibn Taymiyyah.

Christians or by Muslims are not permissible. It is also impermissible to accept invitations on this occasion or to prepare for it. These days should be treated as all other normal days.”⁴¹

Ibn Hajr Al-Haytamee, the famous Shafi’ee scholar -رحمه الله- transmitted that Ibn Al-Haaj Al-Maliikee, a famous Maliikee scholar, said: “It is not permissible for a Muslim to sell anything that benefits a Christian in establishing his holidays whether it be meat, broth or clothing. They are not to be lent anything even if it is an animal [for transportation], because this constitutes a form of assistance in their disbelief -*kufr*-. It is incumbent upon those in authority to prevent the Muslims from these things.”⁴²

Ibn At-Turkumanees says: “The Muslim therefore is sinful in the event he sits with them in these gatherings or if he assists them in slaughtering their animals, cooking [for these holiday occasions], or lending them animals for transportation to the areas of their seasonal celebrations and holidays.”⁴³

The scholars have also mentioned that to specify this time in purchasing something from them that one wasn’t previously accustomed in doing so is also impermissible.

The Hanafee scholars have mentioned that on the day of Nayrouz :

(A business owner purchased goods on the day of Nayrouz [to sell] that normally only the nonbelievers would buy from him. He is unaccustomed to purchasing this good beforehand.)....If he makes this purchase to glorify this day as the polytheist glorify it, then he has committed disbelief -*kufr*- and if he intends merely eating, drinking and indulgence he doesn’t commit disbelief.⁴⁴

Responding to the Fifth Justification:

“What’s wrong with exchanging gifts with them on the days of their holidays?”

Upon finishing the previous point, the individual I was having the dialogue with then said...

The Youth: “Ok I won’t go, but I will give them a gift!”

Khabbab: Permissibility is the status quo ruling (the default ruling amongst jurists) regarding giving gifts to the Christians and other non-believers. In fact, Imam Al-Bukharee has a chapter in his famous hadeeth collection titled “The Chapter of Accepting Gifts from the Polytheists” - *Baabu Qabool Al-Hadiyah min Al-Mushrikeen*-. In this chapter he transmitted a hadeeth on the authority of Abu Hurayrah:

⁴¹ Al-Mi’yaar Al-Mu’arrab, volume 11, pages 150-151 by Ahmed Al-Winsheeree.

⁴² Fatawee Ibn Hajr Al-Haytamee, volume 4, page 238.

⁴³ Al-Lumaa’ fil Hawadith wal Bida’, volume 2, page 519 by Idrees Ibn Bidkeen At-Turkumanees.

⁴⁴ Al-Bahr Ar-Ra’iq Sharh Kanz Ad-Daqaa’iq, volume 8, page 555 by Ibn Nujaym Al-Hanafee.

**”ABU HURAYRAH -رحمه الله- SAID THAT THE PROPHET -صلى الله عليه وسلم- SAID:
 “PROPHET IBRAHEEM -عليه السلام- HAD MIGRATED WITH SARAH. HE ENTERED A
 VILLAGE WHICH HAD AN [OPPRESSIVE] KING OR TYRANT..., THE KING THEN SAID:
 “GIVE HER [SARAH] HAJAR -AJAR-” THE PROPHET -صلى الله عليه وسلم- WAS ALSO
 GIFTED A POISONOUS SHEEP....[AL-BUKHAREE CONTINUES] ABU HUMAYD SAID:
 “THE KING OF AYLAH GIFTED THE PROPHET -صلى الله عليه وسلم- A WHITE MULE
 DRESSED IN A WHITE CLOAK AND WROTE TO HIM WHILST IN HIS LAND.*** HE
 [ABU HUMAYD**] ALSO MENTIONED THE STORY OF THE JEWISH WOMAN WHO
 GIFTED THE PROPHET -صلى الله عليه وسلم- THE POISONOUS SHEEP.” (SAHEEH AL-
 BUKHAREE,”**

**(THE CHAPTER OF ACCEPTING GIFTS FROM THE NON-BELIEVERS” -BAABU
 QABOOL AL-HADIYAH MIN AL-MUSHRIKEEN-)**

However, to specifically give them a gift on that particular day..., verily this is prohibited because this is considered a form of cooperating with them in sin and transgression.

Al-Hafith Az-Zayla’ee Al-Hanafee explains:

“(To give in the name of Nayrouz or the Festival is impermissible.) He is referring here to gifts specified for these occasions. [This is] prohibited, rather [it constitutes] disbelief -*kufr*-. Abu Hafs Al-Kabeer -رحمه الله- said: “If a man worshipped Allah -سبحانه وتعالى- for fifty years then on the day of Nayrouz gave some of the non-believers an egg with the intention of glorifying that day, verily he has committed disbelief -*kufr*- and his previous good deeds nullified. The author of Al-Jami’ Al-Asghar said: If he gives another Muslim a gift on this day without the intention of glorifying this day; but as a custom for some of the people [then] he doesn’t commit disbelief -*kufr*-. [That being said], he shouldn’t do this [action] on this specific day. Instead, he can do this before or after in order for his actions not to be considered imitation and emulation of those people for the Prophet -صلى الله عليه وسلم- has said:” Whoever emulates a people, verily he is from them.” Also in al-Jami’ Al-Asghar: A man purchased something on the day of Al Nayrouz he normally isn’t accustomed to purchasing..., [the response to the scenario follows] if by his purchase he intends to glorify that day in the same manner that the non-believers do, then he has committed disbelief -*kufr*-. On the other hand, if he intends by his purchase to merely eat, drink and indulge, then he hasn’t committed disbelief -*kufr*-”⁴⁵

Sahnoun -رحمه الله-, the famous Malikee scholar said: [Giving] gifts on the day of Christmas from Christians [to Muslims i.e. accepting it from them] or Muslims [to Christians] is impermissible. It is also impermissible to accept invitations on that day or make preparations for it.”⁴⁶ “Ibn Qasim

⁴⁵ Tabyeen Al-Haqaa’iq, Volume 6, Page 228, by Al-Hafith Az-Zayla’ee Al-Hanafee.

⁴⁶ Al-Mi’yaar Al-Mu’arrab, Volume 11, page 154 by Ahmed Al-Winsheeree.

Al-Malikee disliked *-karih-* giving a Christian a reward on his holiday etc. in a similar manner to giving a Jew palm branches on his holiday.”⁴⁷

Ibn Hajr Al-Haytamee Ash-Shafiee said: “Amongst the most egregious of innovations is for the Muslims to acknowledge the holidays of the Christians by emulating and imitating them in the way they eat, and the exchanging of gifts with them on this day. The people who indulge in this the most are the Egyptians.”⁴⁸

In the Hanbalee tradition we find. “It is prohibited to witness the holidays of the Jews and Christians in addition to buying and selling them as well as exchanging gifts during this period.”⁴⁹

Ibn Taymiyyah adds: “With regards to the Muslims selling or gifting them [the non-believers] what they use in their preparations for their holidays such as food, clothing and basil etc., verily [in this action] is a form of assistance in establishing their prohibited holidays.”⁵⁰

With regards to gifts specifically given to you on their holidays:

This is a matter that the scholars of Islam have differed upon. Some scholars are of the opinion that it is permissible to accept these gifts, yet emphasizing the impermissibility of accepting them if they contain prohibited substances, such as intoxicants, swine or meat slaughtered with mentioning a name other than Allah’s - سبحانه وتعالى -.

To justify their position, the scholars quoted an instance in which a woman asked Aisha رضي الله عنها: “Verily we have wet-nurses from the Zoroastrians. On the occasion of their holidays, they give us gifts [Is it permissible to accept them]?” Aisha رضي الله عنها replied: “With regards to what was slaughtered for the sake of that day, do not eat [from it]. Rather eat from their trees”⁵¹

Also, Abu Burza had Zoroastrian tenants who would give him gifts on the day of Nayrouz and Festival. Abu Burza would instruct his family: “Eat from whatever’s [source] is of fruit, but whatever isn’t then return it.”⁵²

It’s well-known that the meat slaughtered by these people isn’t permissible to consume for Allah’s - سبحانه وتعالى - name wasn’t mentioned upon its slaughtering, and they aren’t from the People of the Book –*Ahl Al-Kitab*- However, consuming gifts derived from the fruits and vegetables of their trees is harmless. Because of this, Ibn Taymiyyah - رحمه الله - said: “As for accepting their gifts on their holidays, we have prefaced this matter mentioning the incident

⁴⁷ At-Taaj wal Ikleel, Volume 4, page 319, by .Abu Abdullah Al-Mawwaq Al-Malikee.

⁴⁸ Fatawee/Fatawa Ibn Hajr Al-Haytamee, Volume 4, page 238.

⁴⁹ Kashf Al-Qinaa’ ‘an Matn Al-Iqnaa’, Volume 3, Page 131 by Al-Bahutee.

⁵⁰ Iqtidaa’ As-Siraat Al-Mustaqeem, Volume 1, page 229, by Ibn Taymiyyah

⁵¹ Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, volume 8, Page 88.

⁵² Ibid.

that occurred with Ali Ibn Abi Talib *رضي الله عنه*. He was presented with a Nayrouz gift that he accepted..." "... All of this indicates that the holiday has no effect [on the ruling] in preventing one from accepting their gifts. Rather, the ruling on accepting their gifts is the same regardless of it being on their holidays or not. This is because in doing so [accepting a gift on their holidays], there is no assistance in establishing their disbelief rituals."⁵³

On the other hand, there are scholars who hold the opposing position: that accepting their gifts on their holidays is forbidden and prohibited. Ibn An-Nahhas *رحمه الله* said:

"And know that the most egregious and heinous of innovations is when Muslims acknowledge the holidays of the Christians by emulating them in the way they eat, in their actions and in exchanging gifts of food on their holidays. The people of Egypt have suffered from this innovation. This innovation shows weakness in religiousness. It also increases the perception that the Christians are of larger numbers and constitutes emulation *-tashabbuh-* of them which cannot be denied. Also, the exchanging of gifts on these days could be a means of establishing doctrinal harmony between them and those they gift from amongst the Muslims which may then nurture love and affection.

Verily Allah *سبحانه وتعالى* -says:

"You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred"(Al-Mujaadilah, 22.)

It is thus an obligation on every able-individual to forbid the evil of the public display of the holidays and seasons of the protected peoples (*ahl al-thimmah*). In addition, it is an obligation to prevent those of the Muslims who seek to intermingle and emulate the protected peoples (*ahl al-thimmah*) in any of their actions, food and clothing on these occasions."⁵⁴

The Mufti of Cordova, Muhammad Ibn 'Attab Al-Andalusee would forbid eating meat slaughtered for the sake of Nayrouz day and would say: "This meat is from that which other than Allah's *سبحانه وتعالى* -name was mentioned [upon slaughtering it]". He strongly hated such actions and disliked it, or he said: "he didn't permit it."⁵⁵

I've previously mentioned that Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah has an opinion which permits accepting their gifts on their holidays. However, we find another position on the matter where he tilts to the prohibition of accepting such gifts:

⁵³ Iqtidaa' As-Siraat Al-Mustaqeem, volume 2, Page 50 by Ibn Taymiyyah.

⁵⁴ Tanbeeh Al-Ghafileen, page 307-310 by Ibn An-Nahhas.

⁵⁵ Al-Mumtī' page 38 by As-Soosi. As-Soosi was hesitant in transmitting the last words between didn't like *-la yuhibuhu-* and didn't permit *-la yubeehuhu-*

“Whoever presents [the Muslims] with a gift on these holidays and isn’t accustomed [the giver of the gift] to doing so previously outside of these holidays, it [the gift] isn’t to be accepted. [This is to be done] especially if this gift [is of nature where it] assists in their imitation, such as gifting candles and the like on Christmas, or gifting eggs, milk, and sheep on Minor Thursday which coincides with the end of their fast. Also, they aren’t to give any Muslims a general gift on and for the sake of their holidays, particularly if it is something of nature where it assists in emulating them as we’ve mentioned.”⁵⁶ It was also reported that Ali رضي الله عنه wouldn’t accept Nayrouz gifts⁵⁷

What becomes apparent after surveying the previous opinions mentioned and establishing the existence of disagreement amongst the scholars with respect to permissibility and prohibition is the following:

- 1) The impermissibility of accepting gifts of meat from the polytheists which was slaughtered on days of their holidays.
- 2) The impermissibility of accepting gifts of slaughtered meat from the People of the Book “Ahl Al-Kitab” in the event that we are certain that this meat wasn’t slaughtered, instead it died of suffocation or shock.
- 3) The permissibility of accepting gifts from the non-believers including the Zoroastrians as long as these gifts do not require slaughtering, and as long as they do not contain any prohibitive substances in Islam, e.g., intoxicants, swine, and other forbidden substances which are forbidden regardless of the presence of a holiday or not.
- 4) The prohibition of accepting their gifts if: a) Their intention is clearly to lure a Muslim in joining and taking part in their festivities and/or b) If the Muslim himself/herself intends by his/her acceptance to join and partake in their festivities. Examples of this are, the Christians giving the Muslim a Santa Claus hat or anything else in similar light which specifically pertains to their holidays such as a Christmas tree.
- 5) [In the case that an inherently permissible gift is given, this should be accepted only if] it doesn’t generate affection and love towards them where the heart becomes lenient to them and their beliefs.
- 6) The Muslim mustn’t accept this gift with the spirit of glorifying or venerating their holidays because this would constitute disbelief -*kufr*- in Allah - سبحانه وتعالى -.

Responding to the Sixth Justification:

“I will attend with good intentions making sure not to adopt any of their objectives and intentions!”

The Youth: Being that Islam encourages the concept of being a good neighbor regardless of our neighbor’s religion, what’s wrong with attending with those intentions? What’s wrong with

⁵⁶ Iqtidaa’ As-Siraat Al-Mustaqeem, volume 2, Page 12 by Ibn Taymiyyah.

⁵⁷ At-Tareekh Al-Kabeer, volume 1, Page 414, by Al-Bukharee.

attending with the intention of just being a good neighbor to our Christian neighbors and partners in homeland? As long as Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - knows that I am a Muslim and that I do not support the Christians in their disbelief -*kufur*-, what's the problem with my attendance for the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم says: "verily actions are based on intentions"?

I responded by saying...

Khabbab: It's incredible how much oppression and injustice the *hadeeth* you just mentioned has faced over the years (verily actions are based on intentions)!

Furthermore, any deed that an individual performs seeking it to be considered a pious action must meet two main criteria:

1) It has to be done in sincerity, only for the sake of Allah. 2) The deed must have validation by being in general compliance with the guidance - of the Prophet - صلى الله عليه وسلم -.

With this in mind my brother; let us examine the previous statement you've made against these requirements: First of all, the concept of sincerity we're talking about contrasts with what you have in mind. This is because you plan on participating with the Christians in their holiday festivities which are bound to include the mention of some of their disbelief in addition to witnessing their forgery and hearing their superstitions and falsehood... How in the world can one find sincerity in such action?!! Rather if you were to indeed find sincerity while being cognizant of these matters, you'd be sinful and fall astray because you'd be considered to have sincere intentions to observe and listen to the speech of those nonbelievers. [So, when you attend and hear their speech, are you going to stand idle] and agree with them?

The Youth: Oh Allah! Of course not!!!

Khabbab: Then your attempt to justify this action with the *hadeeth*. (Verily, actions are based on intentions) is meaningless. Imam Ath-Thahabee actually responded to similar justifications in the past:

"If one was to say: we don't intend to emulate them" Then he should be told: The coinciding nature of your mutual actions and your partaking in their celebrations and seasons is prohibited [irrespective of your intention]. Evidence for this has been established in the authentic narration that the Prophet - صلى الله عليه وسلم - "forbade prayer at the times of sunrise and sunset"⁵⁸

The Prophet - صلى الله عليه وسلم - also said: "It [the sun] rises between the two horns of the devil and this is when the nonbelievers prostrate to it."⁵⁹ Verily the one in prayer is void of this intention. Had he intended this, he would verily exit the fold of Islam. So, it is the coinciding

⁵⁸ Saheeh Al-Bukharee on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas رضي الله عنهما

⁵⁹ Saheeh Muslim on the authority of 'Amr Ibn 'Absa رضي الله عنه

nature of the Muslims actions to that of the nonbelievers which renders the action prohibited [not the intention].”⁶⁰

I further elaborated...

Khabbab: I do understand that one may [impulsively] start with noble intentions. However, this impulse won't help its holder when the area he seeks to attend contains that which infuriates the All-Merciful. It may be beneficial to mention in this regard what Thabit Ibn Ad-Dhahhak رضي الله عنه narrated:

“IN THE TIME OF THE PROPHET -صلى الله عليه وسلم- A MAN TOOK A VOW TO SLAUGHTER A CAMEL AT BUWANAH. SO HE CAME TO THE PROPHET -صلى الله عليه وسلم- AND SAID: I HAVE TAKEN A VOW TO SACRIFICE A CAMEL AT BUWANAH. THE PROPHET -صلى الله عليه وسلم- ASKED: DID THE PLACE CONTAIN ANY IDOLS WORSHIPPED IN PRE-ISLAMIC TIMES? THEY [THE PEOPLE] SAID: NO. HE ASKED: WAS ANY PRE-ISLAMIC HOLIDAY OBSERVED THERE? THEY REPLIED: NO. THE PROPHET -صلى الله عليه وسلم- SAID: FULFILL YOUR VOW, FOR A VOW TO DO AN ACT OF DISOBEDIENCE TO ALLAH MUST NOT BE FULFILLED, NEITHER MUST ONE FULFILL A VOW OVER WHICH A HUMAN BEING HAS NO CONTROL.”⁶¹

If the Messenger of Allah -صلى الله عليه وسلم- forbade the individual from fulfilling his vows and oaths [when their fulfillment is an obligation] in a place where the holidays of the polytheists were celebrated, a fortiori [it is with greater reason] the existence of the Muslim in areas frequented by the holiday celebrations of the Christians is prohibited.

It is thus prohibited on the Muslim to partake in their holidays and inhabit the areas where their celebrations take place.

I continued with what I was saying...

Khabbab: The second requirement for validating our deeds in Islam is having the deeds be in general compliance with Islamic Law –*Shariah*- by following the guidance - of the Prophet Muhammad -صلى الله عليه وسلم-

Has it ever been recorded that the Messenger of Allah -صلى الله عليه وسلم- or one of his companions or one of the figures of the pious generations that succeeded them or their followers ever celebrated the holidays of the nonbelievers!!?

⁶⁰ Tashabbuh Al-Khasees be Ahl Al-Khamees, page 37 by Ath-Thahabee.,

⁶¹ Sunan Abi Dawood, #3313. Ibn Taymiyyah said “this hadeeth is in accordance with the criteria of Bukharee and Muslim. The chain is of well-known and reliable narrators. The hadeeth’s chain is unbroken...” Ibn Hajr authenticated its chain in At-Talkhees Al-Habeer, Volume 4, Page 180, #2070.

The answer is clear....a resounding never! This has never happened. It is impossible to conceive such an action occurring from those that Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - commanded us to follow in their footsteps.

Therefore, every deed or speech that has been innovated in the religion of Allah which has no Islamic basis is to be rejected and sent back to its innovator regardless of who that may be or what position he may have, even if his jubah was so large that it covered his head resembling a chandelier!! We are unconcerned with the appearance of an individual or how knowledgeable he may be. Rather, what concerns us is the level of adherence he has to authentic, explicit and Islamically-valid evidence.

Thus, whoever seeks to allow such practice [participation in their holidays] will verily open the gates of innovation and is encompassed by the general statement of the Prophet - صلى الله عليه وسلم -:

"WHOEVER INTRODUCES IN OUR MATTER [RELIGION] SOMETHING WHICH DOES NOT BELONG TO IT, IT IS REJECTED."⁶²

The Youth: You know...the youth who go to these places and participate in these holiday celebrations only do so to be happy, have fun and let loose. None of the objectives that you've mentioned even crosses their minds!

Khabbab: They have multiple objectives and reasons. What you've mentioned is only true of some. Others have deliberate intentions of sinning by seeing displays of nudity and scantily clad women.

Furthermore, any type of joy and happiness must be sought after in the realm of the permissible. Because of this, Islam has legislated for us two holidays. In addition to everyday happiness, we were given two holidays to express our joy in. This is from the bounty Allah - سبحانه - has bestowed upon us. Because of this, we ought to be expressive with our joy on our holidays as Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - says:

"Say, "In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy - in that let them rejoice; it is better than what they accumulate." (Yunus, 58)

What I find perplexing is to find a segment of Muslim youth today who disassociate themselves from feeling joy on their beautifully Islamically-legislated holidays. I find it perplexing how they prevent themselves on the day of *Eid* from finding the happiness they claim to seek..... You find them staying up to the wee hours of the night of *Eid* only to end up in deep slumber an hour or two before *fajr* prayer. They don't pray *fajr* in congregation; some don't even pray *fajr* at all. They then forget..... Rather claim to forget and avoid going to *Eid* prayers with the congregation.

⁶² Saheeh Al-Bukharee and Saheeh Muslim.

They miss out on Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha prayers only to wake up right when the sun tilts in the horizon to signal the time of *salat ath-thuhr*.

They wake up in a depressed state with bad attitudes. The men have failed to visit their relatives and maintain their kinship *-silatul rahm-*. Some have even abandoned ties of kinship. After all this...these same individuals find themselves eager to congratulate their Christian neighbors or colleagues at work!

Those around these individuals wish they could pull a smile out of them and when they are asked...What's wrong with you? Today is Eid, why aren't you happy? They brazenly say: "there is no joy or flavor on our Eid!"

Glory be to Allah! They can't find any taste, scent, flavor and joy; yet on the holidays of the nonbelievers, which are infested with disbelief *-kufr-* and spews of the smell of intoxicants; where displays of nudity and scantily clad women are widespread.... Eureka!! Here they have found their lost exuberance!?

Responding to the Seventh Justification:

"Some of them congratulate us on their holidays. Shouldn't we reciprocate kindness with kindness?"

Interjecting, the youth questioned...

The Youth: But some of them congratulate us and wish us season's greetings on their holidays, so in kindness, why not return the favor?

Khabbab: Congratulating them on their holidays is also impermissible because "[the base form of the verb "to congratulate" in Arabic is "*hanna'a*". [So to say] He congratulated the person on the occasion and bid the person congratulations, means he addressed him in the hope that this occasion is a source of joy for him. [This is as if he said] I hope this occasion brings you joy."⁶³

In light of this, how do we dare congratulate them on matters -we know that their beliefs in- are invalid, and constitute disbelief *-kufr-!*?

If you were to take it upon yourself to research the classical books of Islamic jurists, you'd find their explicit condemnation of these matters. Rather than quoting them at length, I'll suffice with what Imam Ad-Dameeree Ash-Shafi'ee said: "Whoever acknowledges the holidays of the nonbelievers [by emulation], holds a snake, enters fires or addresses one of the protected

⁶³ For more on the meaning associated with the Arabic word "*hanna'a*" see: Al-Mu'jam Al-Waseet, Volume 2, pg. 915

people *-thimmee-* with the title of "*Haaj*" as well as anyone who congratulates them on their holidays... is to be reprimanded *-yu'azzar-*."⁶⁴

When Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim researched the books of Islamic jurists and surveyed their opinions on the ruling of congratulating [nonbelievers on their holidays] he concluded with assertion the scholarly consensus on the prohibition of congratulating the nonbelievers on their holidays. He said:

"With regards to bidding congratulations [to the nonbelievers] on the occasion of [completing] their rituals of disbelief associated with their holidays, it is indeed prohibited by agreement - *ittifaaq-*. Examples on this are: to congratulate them on their holidays or [completion of their] fast by saying "have a blessed holiday *-Eid Mubarak-*" or I hope you find bliss on this holiday"...etc. The utterer of such things -if we were to assume that he has managed to steer clear of disbelief -*kufr-*, his actions are in the least] of a forbidden nature. They are in similitude to congratulating them on their prostration to the cross. Rather, this is a much greater offense to Allah and a more severe detestation than congratulating one drinking intoxicants or committing murder or fornicating and the like.

[Unfortunately] Many people who do not recognize the esteemed nature of our "*deen*" in their consciousness commit these actions and fail to realize the heinous reality of what they've done. Therefore, whoever congratulates a slave of Allah on [occasion of him committing] a sin, innovation or disbelief, verily he has exposed himself to the detestation and contempt of Allah. The people of asceticism from amongst the scholars would avoid congratulating oppressive governmental officials when they are put in office and avoid congratulating the ignorant when appointed as judges, teachers or in positions of [giving] religious fatwas in avoidance [and fear] that they would be exposed to the detestation of Allah and lose their stature from His eye."⁶⁵

In light of this, no consideration should be given to anyone who contrasts this position, which has achieved scholarly consensus *-ijmaa'-* unanimously in both periods where the "*Ummah*" has witnessed strength and weakness.

Therefore, whoever says that congratulating the nonbelievers on their holidays is allowed, verily his position is null. Also, in the event that the Christians congratulate us on our holidays, this doesn't necessitate us congratulating them in kind because they must understand that this is a matter of doctrine which is merited on establishing loyalty *-walaah'-* to the Muslims and renunciation *-baraa'-* to the nonbelievers. They are of the latter [nonbelievers] which is explicit in the Glorious Quran:

"They have certainly disbelieved [those] who say, "Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary"

(Al-Maa'idah, 72)

⁶⁴ An-Najm Al-Wahhaj fe Sharh Al-Minhaaj, volume 9, Page 244, by Ad-Dameeree.

⁶⁵ Ahkaam Ahl Ath-Thimmah, Volume 1, page, 144 by Ibn Al-Qayyim.

“They have certainly disbelieved who say, "Allah is the third of three."

(Al-Maa'idah, 73)

Therefore, congratulations should never be offered to those whose doctrine we aren't pleased with nor affirm; for what it contains of disbelief and polytheism. Also, [a sincere offer of] congratulations can only be initiated from a genuine affection of the heart. For all intents and purposes and in perfect transparency, real and genuine affection doesn't exist from the Muslims towards the Christians or from the Christians towards the Muslims. This, of course is in isolation of the common pleasantries that take place on both ends. This is because affection and love are internal actions of the heart; and those who said about Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - that He is a third of three...How in the world can we affirm to them a spirit of love and affection!??

It is compulsory on us to revere and cherish our religion, principles and values. We aren't to retreat under the pressure of the world's current reality. We must remain steadfast in the face of the ongoing media onslaught which describes those who refrain from participating in and congratulating the Christians on their holidays as convulsive, fanatic and rigid savages!

And if they continue [the media onslaught by calling us names then....] let it be! We are the followers of the beloved Muhammad Ibn Abdullah - صلى الله عليه وسلم -! By Allah, let... it... be! Why should we even concern ourselves with what they say if the reward for our steadfastness is winning the pleasure of Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - and renouncing those who disbelieve in Him and attribute matters that any rational person wouldn't hesitate to reject if attributed to his father and mother let alone The Transcendent "Al-Muta'aa", exalted is He from what the oppressors and nonbelievers say. We cannot exalt Him enough...!!!⁶⁶

The youthful brother then told me...

The Youth: But there are some scholars who find congratulating the Christians on their holidays as permissible. Why do you reject their positions?

Khabbab: Because their positions infringe on the established consensus of the companions, the righteous predecessors and those that followed. It is impossible for any of them to register one

⁶⁶ Isn't it time brothers and sisters to make peace with ourselves....We are Muslims...We are not ahyocrites! We show kindness -*birr*- to the protected people and those similar at times of strength and weakness because our deen commands us to do so, not out of pragmatism. That very deen's most important statement -la ilaha illah Allah- also obligates us to wash our hands from all false gods and modes of worship (La ilaha). The rest of that statement orders us to align ourselves to the One and True God...Allah and the only deen that He accepts...Islam...(illah Allah) then follow our leader (Muhammad Rasool Allah) on this worldly journey to the straight path (Sirat Al-latheena an'amta alayhim) avoiding the paths of those who Allah is infuriated with (Ghayril Magdoodbi alayhim) and those who have gone astray (wala Ddaaaaaaleeeen) I ask Allah سبحانه وتعالى to guide us all to the straight path and bless us with steadfastness in this life and the hereafter...Ameen.

quote from a companion or righteous predecessor *-tabi'ee-* who finds congratulating the Christians or the nonbelievers on their holidays as permissible.

Let me transmit some of what the scholars have said on the prohibition of congratulating the nonbelievers on their holidays.

The Youth: But we congratulate them because they are stronger than us and to be safe from their deception and evil.

Khabbab: How do you bid congratulations to the one you anticipate connivance from and may exert evil against you?! Let's assume that the reality is exactly the way you mentioned. [This doesn't negate the fact that] throughout some historical periods the Muslims experienced stretches of dire weakness. This was evident when the Mongols and Tartars invaded Baghdad in 656 Hijri. The weakness of the Muslims of the Levant *-Shaam-* during the pinnacle of the Fatimid dynasty's reign isn't a stranger to history, neither was the crusader campaign to the lands of the Muslims a secret. Who can forget the weakness the Muslims of Andalusia lived through during the infestation of the Taifa Kingdoms *-Mulook At-Tawaa'if-*. It is in this environment where you'd expect such fatwas to be everywhere, yet they failed to appear. Nobody ever said it was permissible to congratulate them because they are stronger than us.⁶⁷

I added an important point...

Khabbab: The nonbelievers do not respect those who are shaky in their doctrine. They respect transparency. It is unfortunate to see how some Muslims volunteer statements of congratulations left and right on the occasion of their holidays, some even volunteering to do so without any implicit or explicit coercion. This can be seen everywhere on most types of modern communication: emails, SMS, personal messages, social media etc...It has spread to the point that one cannot but feel dumbfounded by the extent in which these congratulatory exchanges have now rivaled the congratulatory exchanges the Muslims themselves send each other on their valid holidays!!

The Youth: But what I mentioned was a contemporary ruling "*ijtihad*" by many scholars who have assessed our reality and found it obligatory to change previous religious edicts [on this topic] -fatwas- as a result of the changing times we live in?

I couldn't help but think that this wasn't any different from what I already addressed...

⁶⁷ The type of fatwas that we are infested with in our time didn't exist then for two reasons: 1) the caliber of scholars at the time was higher and purer. 2) The enemies of our *deen* were focused more on the explicit physical domination of the Muslims as a means of colonization as opposed to the contemporary modes of colonization [which are based on highly academic and thoroughly researched studies], which manifest themselves in imposing subconscious, collective, community colonization. This second form of colonization infuses a level individualized and collective compound ignorance in the Ummah which hasn't left a segment of Muslim society except that it has touched.

Khabbab: This is very similar to what you've already posed. Our current times are very similar to that of old with respect to the weakness of the Muslims and their lack of stature in the eyes of others primarily the Christians; who have historically waged consecutive wars on the Muslims throughout history...

In light of this, all inferences made in support of this aberrant and later-day position by these individuals are meritless and out of context. Whoever attempts to justify the permissibility of congratulating the Christians because the Prophet -صلى الله عليه وسلم- visited a sick Jew and called him to Islam which led him to becoming a Muslim [has erred]. This *hadeeth* directs us that the intention of the prophet behind visiting the sick non-Muslims was his eagerness for their salvation by accepting Islam. The difference between the inferences made by those who adopt this weird position and the objectives of the Prophet are self-evident!

Some try to justify the opinion you mentioned using this verse:

“Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes –from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them.

Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.” (Al-Mumtahana, 8)

However, this verse isn't referring to congratulating the Christians or participating in their holidays. Rather it's directing the Muslims to establishing justice and kindness in our dealings with them, e.g. visiting their sick, paying condolences to the family of their deceased, responding to their [general] greetings, congratulating them for their marriages, success in their studies... etc.

...BUT to congratulate them on occasion of their holidays which have nothing to offer but disbelief in Allah -*kufr*-, associating partners to Him -*shirk*-, and the consumption of intoxicants...It is inconceivable to allow this! Congratulating in Arabic "*tahni'a*" linguistically isn't considered a type of mere kindness in dealings -*birr*-, rather it falls in the category of affection -*wudd*- and love -*mahabba*-. Verily, the bonds of affection and love have been severed between the Muslims and others for their disbelief in Allah!

The Youth: What is the objection to congratulating them on their holidays when they congratulate us on ours in the name of mutual pleasantry only?

Khabbab: This is simple. We plain and simply deserve to be congratulated on our holidays which are established and based on the glorification of Allah -سبحانه وتعالى- Their holidays, on the other hand, are based on disbelief -*kufr*- in Allah and polytheism -*shirk*-. There is a massive difference between our holidays and theirs.

At this moment an idea dawned to me so I asked...

Khabbab: Is it permissible to congratulate a fornicator on occasion of his fornication?

The Youth: Of course not! This isn't permissible.

I then responded...

Khabbab: Then how in the world do you allow congratulating the Christians on the holiday representing the birthdate of Jesus, son of Mary whom they consider the son of God –as they falsely claim-? How can you do such a thing when Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - detested this blasphemous claim...?

Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - says:

“You have done an atrocious thing. (90) The heavens almost rupture therefrom and the earth splits open and the mountains collapse in devastation. (91)That they attribute to the Most Merciful a son.” (Maryam 89-91.)

“They have certainly disbelieved who say, "Allah is the third of three."

(Al-Maa'idah, 73)

“Say, "He is Allah, [who is] One.....He neither begets nor is born” (Al-Ikhlāas 1 & 3)

If it is obvious that Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - doesn't allow attributing a son to Him and whoever does this indeed exits the fold of Islam...With this knowledge...how can I then congratulate those who celebrate the birthday of Jesus and attribute him to Allah as a son? –Infinitely exalted is Allah of the speech of the nonbelievers.-

Furthermore, if offering congratulations is merely done because of the birth of Jesus -عليه السلام- then we are more deserving of this offer than the Christians as we believe in Jesus -عليه السلام- as a prophet. We have not disbelieved in any of the prophets while they have disbelieved in Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. We believe in the prophecy of the Messiah Jesus -Esa-. Our doctrine is clear, we believe he wasn't killed and wasn't crucified. Rather, he was uplifted to Allah - سبحانه وتعالى -This is in direct contrast to the doctrine of the Christians who deified him. Because of this, Jesus will come down in the end of days and break the cross.

In an authentic *hadeeth* narrated in the Saheehayn (Bukharee and Muslim) on the authority of Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه the prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:-

“BY HE, WHO MY SOUL IS IN HIS HAND, IT IS GETTING CLOSE THAT THE SON OF MARY WILL DESCEND AMONGST YOU A JUST RULER. HE WILL BREAK THE CROSS, SLAUGHTER THE SWINE AND CANCEL TRIBUTE. WEALTH WILL BECOME WIDESPREAD TO THE POINT THAT NO ONE WILL ACCEPT IT.”⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Saheeh Al-Bukharee and Saheeh Muslim.

Khabbab: Do you know that some Christians don't even congratulate each other on their holidays?

The Youth: How!?

Khabbab: Throughout most of their history, the Orthodox and Catholic Church wouldn't congratulate each other on Christmas. Each denomination excommunicated the other. Till this day, different Christian denominations consider the others not following the true religion of Christ -as they claim-.⁶⁹ It is therefore impossible to blame a Muslim for avoiding such matters. It is noteworthy to mention that when one of the former Popes of the Vatican visited Egypt, the Coptic Pope Shenoudah refused to meet him. This is understood as a difference in doctrinal creed.

I then told my friend...

Khabbab: With that being said, I have yet to see the Christian youth flock near our mosques or prayer areas to congratulate us and participate in our holidays in the same fashion that the Muslim youth swarm to them as if they were butterflies travelling long distances to attend these holidays which infuriate the Most Merciful -سبحانه وتعالى-!?

This is a result of nothing but an inferiority complex joined with a mislaid moral compass (lack of sense of direction), an anemic education in proper Islamic creed, a lack of observance to the directions of scholars and callers to Islam -*du'aat*-, a low sense of dignity in their Islamic identity and an emotional and intellectual emptiness in the hearts and minds of many Muslim youth. Unfortunately, all of these matters play a large role in pushing the youth to go to these places. Verily Allah -سبحانه وتعالى- always says the truth:

“Satan has overcome them and made them forget the remembrance of Allah.”

(Al-Mujaadilah, 19)

Searching underneath Papa Noel/Santa's Hat:

I addressed my friend with a question...

Khabbab: What do you know about Santa Claus/Papa Noel?

With a grinning smile, he responded....

The Youth: He's an imaginative, symbolic Christian personality who calls on people to be compassionate towards children and present them with sweets accompanied with a spirit of joy and banter! I also heard that he's a figure the Christians invented 250 years ago who, for all

⁶⁹ The Orthodox Church's Position Regarding the Protestants
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBla6q_g31Y

intents and purposes, has no real basis in Christianity from the religious perspective. In fact, this figure is merely used as a marketing tool for the holiday season.

Khabbab: This is what you know about Santa Claus!? From your early years all until you've grown up, you've never, even in the least, bothered yourself to really research and discover that the Papa Noel you think you know represents something different to Christians!?

The Youth: Come on! Are you being serious?

Khabbab: Papa Noel/Santa Claus was never an imaginative or legendary figure as you've come to assume, rather a real person. Granted, the Christians do indeed use him as a figure to bring joy to children with his smiles gifts, lengthy beard, and red hat, but they also have other known motives behind his mention. This Santa Claus personality has a special place in the Christian celebrations of the birth of Jesus, son of Mary, عليه السلام (Christmas). This place is well known by their popes and bishops.

Although normally celebrated earlier than Christmas, gifts associated with the remembrance of Saint Nicholas have now come to be synonymous with those given on Christmas. In essence, the celebration of the Santa Claus figure is actually a commemoration of one of their monks and bishops, who happens to be of Turkish origins. He lived before the Islamic conquest of Constantinople -*Istanbul*-.⁷⁰ This figure was referred to as Saint Nicholas whose name later came to be known as merely Santa Claus or in Arabic "*Baba Noel*."

What I mean here is that although he is a popular symbolic figure representing the celebrations of Christmas and the New Year, he is also one of their saints, acknowledged in the First Church (The Church of the 4th century). A mere search of the website of St. Takla Haymanout Coptic Orthodox Church will confirm what I'm telling you.

Therefore, "Papa Noel/Santa Claus" isn't the imaginary figure many Muslims and layman Christians assume. On the contrary, he was a respected bishop who later became a saint that is prayed to in front of images they call icons. They also believe in his incarnation in these icons, and that he hears their prayers and intercedes on their behalf!

Notice how the Orthodox Christians of Palestine refer to "Baba Noel" using different titles which are all indicative of their belief in him as a real person in addition to the polytheistic, dogmatic nature in which he is revered: "The Intercessor of the City of Beit Jala -*Shafee' Madeenat Bayt Jala*-", "the Intercessor of the Sick, Poor, Children, Oppressed and Travellers of the Sea -*Shafee' Al-Marda wal Fuqaraa' wal Atfaal wal Mathloomeen wal Musafireen ila Al-Bahr*-!!!"

What results out of this is that the Christians direct some of their worship to Santa Claus -*Baba Noel*- and sanctify him. What is tearfully catastrophic in this regard is to see some of our

⁷⁰ Constantinople is a Roman/Christian name. IslamBul= the city of Islam. The Islamic conquerors/liberators called it this. Later on it was called Istanbul.

youthful Muslim brothers wearing the hats and clothes associated with this person and smiling in ignorance without the slightest clue of who this figure really is.⁷¹

Do We Even Know when Christmas Really Is?

I started seeing signs of contentment and acceptance on the face of my friend, so I surprised him with a question...

Khabbab: Do you know anything about the origins of Christmas?

The Youth: I hear that it's the holiday commemorating of the birth of Christ, Prophet Jesus, son of Mary -عليه السلام- on the 25th of December.

Khabbab: If only that were true... There is actually a dispute amongst major Christian historians regarding the exact year of his birth. ..If they can't get that right, imagine the disagreement that exists with regards to the day and month in which he was born!!

Furthermore, the position adopted by most Christian investigative historical researchers acknowledges the pagan roots of Christmas: "It was innovated by the sun worshipers in celebration of what they considered the birth of the sun who couldn't be conquered. When the Romans converted to Christianity, in the fourth century, Christian priests then transformed the holiday from a holiday commemorating the birth of the sun to one commemorating the birth of the Messiah -عليه السلام- as a way of appeasing the pagan Romans who had converted to Christianity, which was distorted.

I've also previously mentioned the symbolism behind the Christmas tree as. It also has pagan roots. The Pharaohs of Egypt and the Chinese believed that the tree symbolized eternal life. The pagan Romans also adopted this symbolism which then found itself a place in Christianity. When the Romans converted to Christianity, their priests created a Christian basis for it as is customary with their forgery in bending religious legislation to appease the whims and desires of their followers.

With regards to the New Year, it coincides with other holidays associated with the pagan gods "Janus" and "Saturn", which were worshipped by the Romans. These holidays are often referred to in Arabic as "Pastrina". To the Romans, these pagan gods symbolized strength. After the Romans converted to Christianity, their priests affirmed many of the rituals and holidays associated with these dates. They later created justifications for these holidays to coincide with their new beliefs. They renamed this pagan holiday "The Feast of the Circumcision [Eastern Orthodox]" / "The Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus [Roman Catholic]" claiming that

⁷¹ I've benefitted from "The Reality of Santa Claus and Christmas", by Isam Mudeer who was one of Sh. Ahmad Deedat's students. رحمه الله.: <http://saaid.net/book/19/12513.pdf>

Jesus - عليه السلام - had been circumcised on this day...⁷² Christian New Year's holiday falls on the night of the 31st of December according to most Christians whereas the 7th of January is the date of the New Year's holiday for others. On this occasion, spreads invalid doctrines along with silly fairytales in a way only Allah - سبحانه وتعالى - knows.

I followed up what I had said to the brother with an emotional appeal...

Khabbab: My brother... Which deen, legislation and methodology are we then using to justify following them in their deen!!?

After a prolonged silence mixed with reflection, my friend sighed and said...

The Youth: You're right...

Khabbab: Alhamdulillah!! All praises due to Allah who has guided us to Islam. Verily we wouldn't have been guided had he not guided us. Oh Allah! {Guide us to the straight path. The path of those you have blessed, not the path of those your wrath has befallen, nor the path of those who are astray.} All praises are due to Allah, Lord of the worlds. Our Lord's messengers have come with truth and we have believed in all of our Lord's messengers. We do not distinguish between any of His messengers. We hear and adhere to the commandments of our Lord. Your forgiveness Oh Allah is sought. Verily, Oh Allah! To you we are all destined.

⁷² Holidays of the Nonbelievers (A'ayaad Al-Kuffar), by Sh. Ibraheem Al-Haqeel, page 42.

Also see: <https://www.ucb.org/bible-study-tools-questions-and-answers-/are-new-year-celebrations-pagan-in-origin> The New Catholic Encyclopedia states: "According to the hypothesis...accepted by most scholars today, the birth of Christ was assigned the date of the winter solstice (December 25 in the Julian [Roman] Calendar, January 6 in the Egyptian), because on this day, as the sun began to return to the northern skies, the pagan devotees of *Mithra* celebrated *dies natalis Solis bivicti* (birthday of the invincible sun." (1967, Volume, 3 p.656) These customs carried over in observance of Christmas (with its many traditions and practices steeped in paganism), and the "birth" of the "new year" of the sun...