

257654 - Is It Prohibited to Love a Non-Muslim?

the question

I have a number of questions about a specific topic, namely: interacting with non-Muslims and loving them. Firstly, if the following things are haram: 1. making friends with non-Muslims, 2. loving non-Muslims 3. and similar issues having to do with the way we relate to non-Muslims – then 1. how can a Muslim help non-Muslims to enter Islam? Do not tell me the argument which says that if helping non-Muslims is for the purpose of softening their hearts and calling them to Islam, then that is fine, because I wonder how you can call them to Islam when you are just pretending to befriend them, and you are not sincere in this friendship? I hope that you will not mention this matter as part of the answer. 2. Marriage of a Muslim man to a non-Muslim woman. The question in this case is: isn't Islam a religion of love and peace? Then how can it be prohibited to love non-Muslims and to deal with non-Muslims as we deal with Muslims? I have many questions, but I feel that the type of questions I want to ask is haram, so I will keep my mouth shut and not ask them. But I hope that you can answer me in a very precise and comprehensive manner. I may sound foolish for asking these questions, but I am trying to learn more and more about my religion.

Summary of answer

Allah has commanded Muslims to disavow disbelief and its people. But this does not mean that there cannot be some kind of love or affection for some reason between a Muslim and an individual disbeliever, either because of ties through kinship or marriage, or because of some kindness or favour, and the like, while still disavowing his religion and being opposed to him in that regard. Disavowing and resenting the disbeliever is not because of his lineage, homeland, colour or image; rather it is because of the disbelief that he follows and his opposition to the religion of Allah. There is no contradiction between that and loving for him to be guided; rather this is how all the messengers and believing slaves of Allah were with their people.

Detailed answer

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Importance of seeking knowledge to dispel doubts

The Muslim should take measures to increase and strengthen his faith and make him steadfast, because if someone has doubts, that makes it difficult to understand the wisdom behind the shar`i commands that cannot be dispelled except through questioning. In this case, he must ask, because the shar`i principle says: that without which an obligatory duty cannot be done is also obligatory. And Allah, may He be exalted, has instructed us to ask people of knowledge, as He, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{So ask those who have knowledge if you do not know.} [An-Nahl 16:43]

For the Muslim to ask people of knowledge in order to dispel doubts and intrusive thoughts is something praiseworthy. Asking is only blameworthy if it is done for the purpose of showing stubbornness, stirring up doubts or impressing people.

Ibn `Abd Al-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

If someone asks for the purpose of understanding, seeking to acquire knowledge and eliminate ignorance, and seeking to understand something he is required by Islam to

understand, there is nothing wrong with that, for the remedy for the one who does not know is asking.

But if someone asks in order to cause trouble, and he is not seeking to find out and learn, that is not permissible, whether he asks a few questions or many." (*At-Tamhid* 21/292)

Hence we encourage you not to hesitate to ask questions in order to understand what you do not understand of religious matters.

May Allah help us and you to learn the truth and adhere steadfastly to it.

The command to disavow disbelief and its people

Allah, may He be exalted, has commanded us to disavow disbelief and its people, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

{There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, "Indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allah . We have denied you, and there has appeared between us and you animosity and hatred forever until you believe in Allah Alone."} [Al-Mumtahanah 60:4]

{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. Those – He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him. And We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him – those are the party of Allah. Unquestionably, the party of Allah – they are the successful.} [Al-Mujadilah 58:22]

{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-Ma'idah 5:51].

And He has enjoined us to love faith and take people of faith as allies, as He, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you – when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may be guided.} [Al `Imran 3:103]

The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The strongest bond of faith is loving for the sake of Allah and hating for the sake of Allah.” (Narrated by Ahmad (18524); classed as hasan by the commentators on al-Musnad. It was also classed as hasan by Al-Albani in *Sahih At-Targhib* (3030)

Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “There are three characteristics, whoever attains them has found the sweetness of faith: when Allah and His Messenger are dearer to him than all else, when he loves a man and does not love him except for the sake of Allah, and when he would hate to return to disbelief as he would hate to be thrown into the fire.” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari (16) and Muslim (43)

Can there be any kind of love and affection between Muslims and non-Muslims?

What is stated above does not mean that [there cannot be some kind of love or affection for some reason between a Muslim and an individual disbeliever](#) , either because of [ties through kinship](#) or marriage, or because of some kindness or favour, and the like, whilst still disavowing his religion and being opposed to him in that regard.

Allah, may He be exalted, affirmed the love of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) for his paternal uncle Abu Talib, even though he was a disbeliever. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Indeed, [O Muhammad], you do not guide whomever you love.} [Al-Qasas 28:56]

That love was something natural that stemmed from ties of kinship.

Allah has permitted marriage to Kitabi [Jewish or Christian] women , even though marriage leads to love between the spouses, as He, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy.} [Ar-Rum 30:21]

This love is something natural and instinctive, like love of food, drink, clothing and the like; it does not rule out religious enmity in the presence of a natural type of love, because these two things stem from different causes.

The analogy for that is medicine: the patient may both love and hate the medicine, which he loves in one way [because it alleviates his symptoms] and hates in another way [because it is bitter and unpleasant].

Warning against giving precedence to natural kind of love over love based on faith

Once we understand that it is possible to love a specific person because of ties of kinship, or because of his kindness and the like, and at the same time disavow his disbelief or oppose him because of that, the real test comes when there seems to be a contradiction between these two types of love.

Hence Allah warned His believing slaves against giving precedence to this natural kind of love and inclination over love that is based on faith and Islamic teachings.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{O you who have believed, do not take your fathers or your brothers as allies if they have preferred disbelief over belief. And whoever does so among you – then it is those who are

the wrongdoers.

Say, [O Muhammad], “If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your clan, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and jihad in His cause, then wait until Allah brings about His decree (of punishment). And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people”.} [At-Tawbah 9:23-24].

Shaykh as-Sa`di (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“{O you who have believed} , act in accordance with the requirements of your faith, by taking as allies those who adhere to it and regarding as enemies those who do not do so

{do not take your fathers or your brothers as allies} they are the closest of people to you, so it is even more appropriate that you should not take as allies other people {if they have preferred disbelief over belief} that is, they willingly choose disbelief over faith.

{And whoever does so among you – then it is those who are the wrongdoers} because they have transgressed and disobeyed Allah, by taking His enemies as allies. The basis of alliance is love and support; by taking them as allies, this implies giving precedence to obeying them over obedience to Allah and giving precedence to loving them over loving Allah and His Messenger.

The reason why they are wrongdoers is that love of Allah and His Messenger should be given precedence over love of all others, and everything else should be secondary to them. Hence Allah says:

{Say, [O Muhammad], “If your fathers} and, by the same token, mothers

{your sons, your brothers} in lineage and kinship

{your wives, your clan} that is, your relatives in general

{wealth which you have obtained} that is, that you have earned and toiled for. This is singled out for mention because people are more attached to it and more careful with it

than wealth that comes to them without effort or striving.

{commerce wherein you fear decline} that is, you fear that the prices of goods will drop or that they will be lost. This includes all kinds of trade and earnings, such as trade goods, vessels, weapons, furniture, grains, farmland, livestock and so on.

{dwellings with which you are pleased} because of their beauty and adornment, and because they suit your desires

If these things {are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and jihad in His cause}, then you are transgressors and wrongdoers.

{then wait} and watch out for that which will befall you of punishment

{until Allah brings about His decree (of punishment)} which cannot be put back

{And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people} that is, those who fail to obey Him and give precedence to any of the things mentioned above over love of Allah.

This verse provides the greatest evidence for the obligation to love Allah and His Messenger, and to give them precedence over love of anything else. It also provides evidence for the stern warning and certain wrath for the one to whom any of these things is dearer than Allah and His Messenger, and jihad in His cause.

The sign of that is that if a person is presented with two options, one of which is loved by Allah and His Messenger, but he has no inclination towards it, and the other option is something that he loves and desires, but it will cause him to miss out on or will detract from the thing that is loved by Allah and His Messenger, if he gives precedence to that which he himself desires over that which Allah loves, this indicates that he is a wrongdoer who is not doing what he should do." (*Taysir Al-Karim Al-Mannan* 332)

Why disavowing and resenting the disbelievers?

Disavowing and resenting the disbeliever is not because of his lineage, homeland, colour or image; rather it is because of the disbelief that he follows and his opposition to the religion

of Allah.

There is no contradiction between that and [loving for him to be guided](#) ; rather this is how all the Messengers and believing slaves of Allah were with their people. They disavowed what their people believed in of associating others with Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and for their being far away from His religion and rejecting His messengers. At the same time, they loved for them to be guided and enter the religion of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.

Ibn `Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "O Allah, support Islam with the dearer of these two men to You: Abu Jahl or `Umar ibn Al-Khattab." And the dearer of them to Him was `Umar. This is a hasan sahih gharib hadith narrated from Ibn `Umar. It was narrated by At-Tirmidhi (3681) and classed as sahih by Al-Albani.

`Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: It is as if I can see the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), telling the story of one of the prophets who was beaten by his people, causing him to bleed, and he wiped the blood from his face, saying: "O Allah forgive my people, for they do not know." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari (3477) and Muslim (1792))

Think about the following story; you will see how enmity on the basis of religion, even on the part of a disbeliever, may turn into love on the basis of faith when the disbeliever enters the religion of Allah and gives up the disbelief that he has been following:

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sent some cavalry towards Najd, and they captured a man of Banu Hanifah who was called Thumamah ibn Uthal, the leader of the people of Yamamah. They tied him to one of the pillars of the mosque, then the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) came out to him and said: "What do you have to say, O Thumamah?"

He said: I shall say something good, O Muhammad. If you kill me, you will kill one who has shed blood, and if you show me kindness, you will be showing kindness to one who is grateful, and if you want money, then ask, and you will be given whatever you want.

He was left alone until the next day, then he said: "What do you have to say, O Thumamah?"

He said: What I said to you: if you show me kindness, you will be showing kindness to one who is grateful. [The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)] left him alone until the next day, then he said: "What do you have to say, O Thumamah?"

He said: I say what I already said to you.

[The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)] said: "Let Thumamah go."

So he went to some date palms that were near the mosque, and washed himself (ghusl), then he entered the mosque and said: I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

O Muhammad, by Allah, there was no face on earth that was more hateful to me than your face, but now your face has become the dearest of all faces to me.

By Allah, there was no religion that was more hateful to me than your religion, but now your religion has become the dearest of all religions to me.

By Allah, there was no city on earth that was more hateful to me than your city, but now your city has become the dearest of all cities to me.

Your cavalry seized me when I was intending to do `umrah. What do you think? The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) gave him glad tidings and told him to do `umrah... (Narrated by Al-Bukhari (4372) and Muslim (1764))

Combining between disavowal of shirk and its people, and showing compassion towards people for the sake of Allah

It should be noted and affirmed that combining these two matters – namely disavowal of shirk and its people, and showing compassion towards people for the sake of Allah, [loving for them to believe](#) and striving to bring them all to the religion of Allah – is one of the main reasons why this ummah is described as being the best, for which Allah praises them.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said regarding the verse {You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind.} [Al `Imran 3:110]:

The best of mankind for mankind; you bring them with chains on their necks, then they enter Islam. (Narrated by Al-Bukhari (4557))

Think about the story of this believing slave, and what happened to him with his disbelieving people, who rejected and denied the truth, and how he strove to guide them, but they rejected him and what he called them to, until they killed him. Yet despite that, he hoped that the outcome for them would be good and that they would ultimately be guided, even after he died:

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And there came from the farthest end of the city a man, running. He said, “O my people, follow the messengers.

Follow those who do not ask of you [any] payment, and they are [rightly] guided.

And why should I not worship Him Who created me and to Whom you will be returned?

Should I take other than Him [false] deities [while], if the Most Merciful intends for me some adversity, their intercession will not avail me at all, nor can they save me?

Indeed, I would then be in manifest error.

Indeed, I have believed in your Lord, so listen to me.”

It was said, “Enter Paradise.” He said, “I wish my people could know

Of how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honored”} [Ya-Sin 36:20-27]

Qatadah said: They started stoning him whilst he was saying: O Allah, guide my people, for they do not know. But they kept stoning him until they caused him to fall to the ground whilst he was saying that, then they killed him; may Allah have mercy on him. (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (6/571))

Think about what Allah tells us about the believer among the family of Pharaoh, and how he disavowed his people and called them to salvation, despite their disbelief, rejection and denial. His story is told at length in Surat Ghafir, which is also known as Surat al-Mu'min (the Believer).

In *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (3231) and *Sahih Muslim* (1795) it is narrated from `Urwah that `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her), the wife of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), told him that she said to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him):

O Messenger of Allah, was there ever a day that was worse for you than the day of Uhud?

He said: "I suffered a great deal at the hands of your people, and the worst that I suffered from them was on the day of Al-`Aqabah, when I presented myself to Ibn `Abd Ya Lil ibn `Abd Kulal, and he did not respond to what I wanted. So I left, so distressed that I did not know in which direction I was heading, and I did not realise where I was until I was in Qarn ath-Tha`alib, where I lifted my head and saw that a cloud was shading me. I looked and saw therein Jibril, who called me and said: Allah has heard what your people said to you, and how they have responded to you. Allah has sent to you the angel of the mountains, so that you can tell him to do whatever you want to them. Then the angel of the mountains called out to me; he greeted me with salam, then said: O Muhammad! Then he said: Tell me what you want; if you wish, I will crush them between the two mountains.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Rather I hope that Allah will bring forth from their loins people who will worship Allah Alone, not associating anything with Him."

And Allah, may He be exalted, said, addressing His Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him):

{And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds.} [Al-Anbiya' 21:107].

Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“This verse tells us that Allah, may He be exalted, has made Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) a mercy to the worlds. In other words, He sent him as a mercy to them all, so whoever accepts this mercy and gives thanks for this blessing will be blessed in this world and the Hereafter, and whoever rejects it and denies it will be a loser in this world and the Hereafter...

Muslim said in his *Sahih*: ... It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: It was said: O Messenger of Allah, pray against the polytheists. He said: “I was not sent as one who curses; rather I was sent as a mercy.” (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir* 5/385).

Affirmation of the principle of disavowing shirk and its people, and the believers not despairing of the disbelievers being guided and entering the religion of Allah

We hope that the answer we have given above is sufficient, as a fair and objective examination of people's lives, psychology and history indicates that very clearly.

But we invite you to reflect on this combination of the two issues that appears at the beginning of Surat al-Mumtahinah: affirmation of the principle of disavowing shirk and its people, and the believers not despairing of the disbelievers being guided and entering the religion of Allah, turning this enmity into love that is based on faith. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection while they have disbelieved in what came to you of the truth, having

driven out the Prophet and yourselves [only] because you believe in Allah, your Lord. If you have come out for jihad in My cause and seeking means to My approval, [take them not as friends]. You confide to them affection, but I am most knowing of what you have concealed and what you have declared. And whoever does it among you has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way.

If they gain dominance over you, they would be to you as enemies and extend against you their hands and their tongues with evil, and they wish you would disbelieve.

Never will your relatives or your children benefit you; on the Day of Resurrection He will judge between you. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing.

There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, "Indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allah. We have denied you, and there has appeared between us and you animosity and hatred forever until you believe in Allah Alone" – except for the saying of Abraham to his father, "I will surely ask forgiveness for you, but I have not [power to do] for you anything against Allah. Our Lord, upon You we have relied, and to You we have returned, and to You is the destination.

Our Lord, make us not [objects of] torment for the disbelievers and forgive us, our Lord. Indeed, it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise."

There has certainly been for you in them an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day. And whoever turns away – then indeed, Allah is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy.

Perhaps Allah will put, between you and those to whom you have been enemies among them, affection. And Allah is competent, and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

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.

Allah only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion – [forbids] that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.} [Al-Mumtahinah 60:1-9]

We hope that we have been able to answer the issue that has been bothering you. If you have any other questions, or there is anything on your mind that we have not answered here, then please feel free to contact us again and learn more about what we need to know about our religion.

And Allah knows best.