

## **97879 - Ruling on congratulating the pilgrim after his return and decorating the house**

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### **the question**

What is the ruling on congratulating the pilgrim after he returns and decorating the house for him, and saying to him “Hajjan mabrooran” and having a party for this occasion? Is this regarded as bid’ah (innovation)?.

### **Detailed answer**

Firstly:

There is no report in the saheeh Sunnah about decorating the house with plants and lights for the pilgrim’s arrival, and there is no report that the Sahaabah did that. Some contemporary scholars have issued fatwas stating that it is not permissible to do that, and they mentioned several reasons for not allowing it, such as:

1. That this action was not narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or his companions, so it is bid’ah (an innovation).
2. It is a kind of showing off.
3. It is a waste of money.

But upon further thought it seems to us that it is permissible, and that the details mentioned by those scholars are not strong enough to forbid decorating the house for the pilgrim’s arrival. We can respond to what they said by making several points:

1 - This action is a custom and tradition, not an act of worship, so it cannot be disallowed on the grounds that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and his companions did not do it, because it is well known that the basic principle with regard to customs and traditions is that they are permissible, and the one who forbids them has to bring evidence.

2 - Most of such decorations are simple things that do not involve any great expense. What we have seen of people is that they put a few green plants and a wooden structure that they already had in the first place. We have not seen shops that specialize in selling these things. This indicates that it is not something expensive that should be disallowed. Yes, that may be said concerning some wealthy people, but even then it may be said that they have enough money so that what they do cannot be counted as extravagance.

3 - These actions do not necessarily imply showing off. Hajj is not a hidden act of worship such that simply showing it is to be deemed showing off, rather showing off could be a factor when one makes a show of humility, appearing scruffy and not adorning oneself, as it may also be a factor in showing off adornments and expressing joy when the pilgrim arrives. What counts in that is the intention of the one who does it, and what he feels in his heart. It seems that this adornment comes under the heading of customs and traditions, and the basic principle is that they are permissible. Those who regard them as haraam do not have any evidence that is strong enough to counter the view that they are permissible.

Secondly:

With regard to congratulating the pilgrim who has returned from Hajj, and making food for him, it seems that this is also permissible, and even if the person who has come from Hajj makes food himself and invites people to a meal, that is also permissible. How can it be said that it is not permissible for people to make food for him?

It is proven in the saheeh Sunnah that the Sahaabah used to rejoice when travellers arrived, whether they were coming from 'Umrah, Hajj, journeys for trade or any other kind of journey.

It was narrated that Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came to Makkah - during the conquest - the children of Banu 'Abd al-Muttalib met him and he carried one of them in front of him (on his mount) and another behind him.

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (1704) in Kitaab al-'Umrah; he entitled the chapter: "Chapter on welcoming arriving pilgrims, and three men on one mount."

Ibn al-Zubayr said to Ibn Ja'far (may Allaah be pleased with them both): Do you remember when we met the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), me and you and Ibn 'Abbaas? He said: Yes, and he carried us (on his mount) and left you. Narrated by al-Bukhaari (2916).

It was narrated that 'Abd-Allaah ibn Ja'far said: When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came from a journey we would be taken to meet him. Al-Hasan or al-Husayn and I were taken to meet him, and he seated one of us on his mount in front of him and the other behind him, until we entered Madeenah

Narrated by Muslim (2428).

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

It is mustahabb to offer naqee'ah, which is a type of food that is made to welcome a traveller, and the word may also refer to what is done by the arriving traveller or what others do for him ... among the evidence that is quoted for that is the hadeeth of Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) which says that when the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came to Madeenah from a journey, he would slaughter a camel or a cow. Narrated by al-Bukhaari.

Al-Majmoo' (4/400).

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked:

There is a custom that is widespread, particularly in the villages, when the pilgrims come back from Makkah.

The Shaykh:

This year?

Questioner:

It is almost every year. They prepare feasts that they call “sacrifice for the pilgrims” or “celebration for the pilgrims” or “greeting the pilgrims” and this meat may be from the sacrificial meat (udhiyah) or meat that has been newly slaughtered, and that is accompanied by a kind of squandering. What is your opinion on that from a shar’i point of view, and from a social point of view?

The Shaykh:

There is nothing wrong with this. There is nothing wrong with honouring the pilgrims on their arrival, because this is a kind of congratulating them and encouraging them to do Hajj. But the squandering referred to and the extravagance is what is forbidden, because extravagance is forbidden whether on this occasion or at other times. Allaah, may He be blessed and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“and waste not by extravagance. Verily, He likes not Al-Musrifoon (those who waste by extravagance)”

[al-An’aam 6:141]

“Verily, the spendthrifts are brothers of the Shayaateen (devils)”

[al-Isra’ 17:27]

But if it is an appropriate feast, with enough for those who are present or a little more, then there is nothing wrong with it from a shar’i point of view, and from a social point of view. This may be in the villages, but in the cities it does not happen, and we see many people coming back from Hajj with no meal made for them. But in the small villages this may happen, and there is nothing wrong with it. The people of the villages are generous and none of them would like to fall short in his treatment of another.

Liqaa’aat al-Baab al-Maftooh (154/question no. 12).

Thirdly:

There is nothing wrong with those who come to congratulate the pilgrim on his safe return using whatever expressions they want, so long as they are permissible according to sharee'ah and indicate what is meant, such as saying "May Allaah accept your worship" or "May Allaah accept your Hajj" or "Hajjaan mabrooran wa sa'ee'an mashkoooran". There are da'eef (weak) ahaadeeth and reports which describe what is to be said to the pilgrim on his return, which cannot be proven as far as their isnaads are concerned, but there is nothing wrong with using the du'aa's mentioned in them. That includes saying "May Allaah accept your Hajj, forgive your sin and compensate your expenditure" and "May Allaah accept your rituals, increase your reward and compensate your expenditure". The matter is broad in scope, praise be to Allaah.

And Allaah knows best.