

Statement from the Standing Committee on Research and Issuing Fatwaas

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Concerning the ruling on celebrating the Gregorian Year 2000 etc.

Praise be to Allaah Alone and blessings and peace be upon the one after whom there is no Prophet.

The Standing Committee on Academic Research and Issuing Fatwaas has reviewed the many questions and requests for fatwaas submitted to His Excellence the Grand Mufti and forwarded to the Standing Committee from the general trust of the Council of Senior 'Ulamaa' (no. 3825, dated 21/7/1420 AH). People have asked questions concerning the rulings on paying attention to and celebrating the European (Gregorian) millenium, and others matters pertaining to this event. It is sufficient for us to quote just two of the questions asked:

In the first question, it is asked: "Nowadays we are seeing media reports about the events and preparations leading to the Year 2000 CE and the beginning of the third millenium. The kuffaar, Jews, Christians and others, are excited about this and are pinning great hopes on this event. My question, O respected Shaykh, is this: some so-called Muslims are also showing interest in this event and regard it as an auspicious time for getting married or doing certain things. Some of them are advertising this event in their stores and companies etc., in ways that are offensive to Muslims. What is the shar'i ruling on respecting this occasion, showing an interest in it, exchanging greeting on this occasion - whether verbally or by sending cards - etc.? May Allaah reward you with much good on behalf of Islam and the Muslims."

Another question which has been asked is as follows:

“The Jews and Christians are preparing to celebrate the year 2000 according to their calendar, making unusual preparations to further their plans and spread their beliefs throughout the world, especially the Muslim states.

Some Muslims have been influenced by this propaganda and have started to make preparations of their own, such as offering discounts to mark this occasion. There is a fear that this may have an impact on the ‘aqeedah of Muslims by making them allies of non-Muslims.

We hope that you will issue a statement concerning the ruling on Muslims’ imitation of the kuffaar on their festivals, propagating and celebrating them, and the ruling on making this a day off, as some institutions and companies plan to do on this occasion.

Does doing any of these things or similar things, or accepting them, have any effect on a Muslim’s ‘aqeedah?”

Having studied these issues, the Standing Committee has issued the following response:

The greatest blessing which Allaah has bestowed upon His slaves is the blessing of Islam and guidance to the Straight Path. By His Mercy, He has enjoined His believing slaves to ask Him for His guidance in their prayers (salaah), so they ask Him to show them the Straight Path and to help them to adhere to it. He has described this Path as the Path of those on whom Allaah has bestowed His Grace, the Prophets, believers in the Truth, martyrs and righteous people, not the path of those who are misguided such as the Jews, Christians and all other kuffaar and mushrikeen.

Once this is understood, the Muslim must realize how great is the blessing of Allaah, and he must give thanks to Allaah, may He be glorified, in his words, actions and beliefs. He has to guard and protect this blessing, and do everything he can to keep it from being lost.

Anyone who has an understanding of the religion of Allaah, in today’s world where truth is confused with falsehood in the hearts of many Muslims, will clearly see that the enemies of Islam are striving to obscure the realities of the religion and to extinguish its light. They are

trying to distance Muslims from their religion and cut their ties with it, by all available means. Not only that, they are also trying to distort its image and to produce accusations and lies which will stop humanity from following the path of Allaah and believing in that which He revealed to His Messenger Muhammad ibn 'Abd-Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). This is confirmed in the words of Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted (interpretation of the meanings):

“Many of the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) wish that if they could turn you away as disbelievers after you have believed, out of envy from their ownelves, even after the truth (that Muhammad is Allaah’s Messenger) has become manifest unto them” [al-Baqarah 2:109]

“A party of the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) wish to lead you astray. But they shall not lead astray anyone except themselves, and they perceive not. “ [Aal ‘Imraan 3:69]

“O you who believe! If you obey those who disbelieve, they will send you back on your heels, and you will turn back (from Faith) as losers” [Aal ‘Imraan 3:149]

“Say: “O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Why do you stop those who have believed, from the path of Allaah, seeking to make it seem crooked, while you (yourselves) are witnesses [to Muhammad as a Messenger of Allaah and Islam (Allaah’s religion, i.e. to worship none but Him Alone)]? And Allaah is not unaware of what you do” [Aal ‘Imraan 3:99]

And there are other similar aayaat.

But in spite of all this, Allaah has promised to protect His Religion and His Book, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, We, it is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e. the Qur’aan) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption)” [al-Hijr 15:9] – all praise be to Allaah. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) has told us that a group from among his Ummah will

continue to prevail and they will not be harmed by those who let them down or go against them, until the Hour begins. All praise be to Allaah. We ask Him, for He is Ever-Near and responds to our prayers, to make us and our brothers in Islam among this group, for He is the Most Generous Bestower.

The Standing Committee on Academic Research and Issuing Fatwaas has heard of and seen the huge preparations that are being made by Jewish and Christian groups, and those so-called Muslims who are influenced by them, for the occasion of the Year 2000 and the onset of the third millenium according to the Gregorian calendar. Having seen and heard all this, the Committee feels obliged to offer sincere advice and issue a clear statement to all Muslims about the real nature of this occasion and the rulings of the pure Sharee'ah on this matter, so that Muslims will have clear guidance from their religion and can beware of being misled by those who have earned the Anger of Allaah and have gone astray.

We say:

Firstly:

the Jews and Christians are pinning great hopes on this millenium, and are awaiting events which they believe, with greater or lesser certainty, will come to pass because they are a result of their research and studies, as they claim. Some of them have religious beliefs that are connected to this millenium, claiming that it is something which is to be found in their corrupted scriptures. Muslims should not pay any attention to such things and should not accept them; rather they should be content with the Book of their Lord and the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), to the exclusion of all else, for the theories and opinions that go against them are nothing more than illusions.

Secondly:

this and other similar occasions involve concealing the truth with falsehood and calling people to kufr, misguidance, promiscuity and atheism, and other things which are clearly unacceptable according to sharee'ah. Examples include the call for unity of all religions; regarding Islam as equal to other, false, religions and sects; seeking the blessing of the

cross; openly displaying the symbols and rituals of the Christians and Jews; and other actions which imply either that the superceded laws of Judaism and Christianity are regarded as means of reaching God, or approval of some of their features which contradict Islam, or other things which – according to the consensus of the ummah – imply disbelief in Allaah, His Messenger and Islam. This is addition to the fact that this occasion is one of many means of alienating the Muslims from their religion.

Thirdly:

there is a great deal of evidence in the Qur’aan, Sunnah and saheeh reports that it is forbidden to imitate the kuffaar with regard to things that are exclusively theirs. This includes imitating them in their ‘Eids or celebrating those ‘Eids. ‘Eid (festival) is a generic term which (in the context of these reports) includes every day or occasion which is repeated and is venerated by the kuffaar, or any place in which the kuffaar hold religious gatherings, or any action which they do in these places or at these times – all of that is part of their ‘Eids or festivals. The prohibition applies not only to their festivals, but to everything that they venerate. The days leading up to and following their festivals are also covered by this prohibition, as Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) pointed out.

One of the texts which specifically forbid imitating them in their festivals is the aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

“... and those who do not witness falsehood [al-zoor]...” [al-Furqaan 25:72]. This is listed as one of the attributes of the believing slaves of Allaah. A group of the Salaf, including Ibn Seereen, Mujaahid and al-Rabee’ ibn Anas interpreted the word *al-zoor* (falsehood) as referring to the festivals of the kuffaar. It was reported that Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: when the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came to Madeenah, they had two days when they would play. He said, “What are these two days?” They said, “We used to play on these two days during the Jaahiliyyah.” The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Allaah has given you two days instead of these that are better than them, the day of (‘Eid) al-Adhaa

and the day of ('Eid) al-Fitr." (Narrated by Imaam Ahmad, Abu Dawood and al-Nasaa'i with a saheeh isnaad).

It was reported that Thaabit ibn al-Dahhaak (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "At the time of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), a man vowed to sacrifice some camels in Bawwaanah. He came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said, 'I have vowed to sacrifice some camels in Bawwaanah.' The Prophet Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'Were there any idols there that were worshipped during the Jaahiliyyah?' He said, 'No.' He said, 'Did they hold any of their festivals there?' He said, 'No.' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'Then fulfil your vow, for there is no fulfilment of any vow which involves disobeying Allaah, or with regard to something that the son of Adam does not own.'" (Narrated by Abu Dawood with a saheeh isnaad).

'Umar ibn al-Khattaab (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: Do not enter upon the mushrikeen in their churches on the day of their festival, for the wrath (of Allaah) descends upon them. He also said: Avoid the enemies of Allaah during their festival.

'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Amr (may Allaah be pleased with them both) said: Whoever lives in the land of the non-Muslims and observes their Nawrooz (New Year) and their Mahrajaan (festivals), and imitates them until he dies in that state, will be gathered with them on the Day of Resurrection.

Fourthly:

we are also forbidden to join in the festivals of the kuffaar for many other reasons, including the following:

Imitating them in some of their festivals implies that one condones and approves of their false beliefs. Imitating them and behaving like them with regard to external matters leads one to imitating them and behaving like them with regard to internal matters such as their corrupt beliefs, and being slowly and subtly won over to their way of thinking.

One of the greatest evils that results from this is that imitating the kuffaar with regard to external appearances generates feelings of love and friendship towards them, which contradicts faith, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as Awliyaa’ (friends, protectors, helpers), they are but Awliyaa’ of each other. And if any amongst you takes them (as Awliyaa’), then surely, he is one of them. Verily, Allaah guides not those people who are the zaalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers and unjust).” [al-Maa’idah 5:51]

“You (O Muhammad) will not find any people who believe in Allaah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allaah and His Messenger...” [al-Mujaadilah 58:28]

Fifthly:

Based on the above, it is not permissible for a Muslim who believes in Allaah as his Lord, Islam as his religion, and Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) as his Prophet and Messenger, to celebrate any festival that has no basis in the religion of Islam. This includes the so-called millenium. Neither is he permitted to attend such festivals or take part in them, or to help others do so in any way whatsoever, because this is a sin and is transgressing the limits set by Allaah. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“... do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allaah. Verily, Allaah is Severe in punishment.” [al-Maa’idah 5:2].

Sixthly:

it is not permissible for a Muslim to co-operate in any way, shape or form with the kuffaar with regard to their festivals. This includes publicizing and announcing their festivals – including the millenium under discussion here; propagating them by any means, whether through the media or by setting up clocks to mark the count-down to the millenium; or by manufacturing clothing and other commemorative items and souvenirs; or by printing

cards and books; or offering discounts and prizes to mark the occasion; or organizing sporting events; or producing special slogans or logos.

Seventhly:

it is not permissible for Muslims to consider the festivals of the kuffar – including the millenium – to be auspicious events or blessed times for taking the day off work, getting married, starting a business or beginning new projects, etc. It is not permissible to believe that these days are any different to other days, because these are just like any other days, and because this is a corrupt belief that does not change the reality of these days in the slightest. Such beliefs are nothing but sin upon sin. We ask Allaah to keep us safe and sound.

Eighthly:

it is not permissible for a Muslim to offer congratulations on the occasion of the kaafir festivals, because this implies a kind of approval of their false beliefs and makes them happy. Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “As for congratulating them for the symbols of kufr that belong exclusively to them, this is haraam according to scholarly consensus, such as congratulating them for their festivals and fasts, and saying, ‘A blessed festival to you’ and the like. Even though the person who says this might not become a kaafir by saying this, it is still forbidden, and it is the same as congratulating them for prostrating to the cross. Indeed, it is an even greater sin with Allaah and is more hated by Him than congratulating them for drinking wine, killing people and committing adultery, and so on.

Many of those who do not care about religion do this, and do not realize how abhorrent their actions are. Whoever congratulates a person for his sin, bid’ah (innovation) or kufr exposes himself to the wrath and anger of Allaah.”

Ninethly:

It is a great honour for the Muslims to follow the Hijri calendar which is based on the Hijrah (migration) of their Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), upon which the Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them) agreed and which they adopted without celebration. The Muslims inherited this from them fourteen hundred years ago and it is still in existence today, so it is not permissible for the Muslims to abandon the Hijri calendar and adopt the calendar of any other nation on earth, such as the Gregorian calendar. This is a kind of replacement which involves the substitution of something in which there is no good for something which is good.

We advise all our Muslim brothers to fear Allaah and obey Him, to keep far away from sin and to advise one another to do likewise and to adhere to that with patience.

Let every believer who cares for his soul strive to save it from the wrath of Allaah and His curse in this world and the Hereafter, by attaining true knowledge and faith. Let him take Allaah as his Guide, Helper, Lawgiver and Supporter, for He is the best Supporter and the Best Helper. Let him be content with his Lord as his guide and helper, and let him pray as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) prayed: "O Allaah, Lord of Jibraa'eel, Mikaa'eel and Israafeel, Creator of heaven and earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen, You judge between Your slaves concerning that in which they dispute. Guide me to the truth in matters concerning which there is dispute, by Your leave, for You guide whomsoever You will to the Straight Path. And praise be to Allaah the Lord of the Worlds."

May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions, and grant them peace.

Standing Committee for Academic Research and Issuing Fatwaas.

The following question was put to Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih ibn 'Uthaymeen, may Allaah keep him safe and take care of him:

In the coming days, the world will be preparing to welcome the third millenium, and we see the newspapers covering this topic extensively. My question is: what, in your view, is the Islamic ruling on this matter? How should Muslims prepare to welcome the new millenium?

He, may Allaah preserve him, answered as follows:

Muslims should not pay any attention to this matter or attach any importance to it, because it is nothing to do with them. The calendar of the Muslims is the Hijri calendar which is based on one of the best occasions, the most appropriate occasion to mark the beginning of the Islamic calendar, because it is the date which reminds Muslims of the beginning of their glory, the establishment of their state and the start of their power.

With regard to what people are saying about what will happen, all of this is conjecture and has no basis, whether in sharee'ah, reason or tangible proof – except for things which are the results of their own actions and planning.

The knowledge of the unseen belongs to Allaah alone, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say: “None in the heavens and the earth knows the Ghayb (Unseen) except Allaah, nor can they perceive when they shall be resurrected.” [al-Naml 27:65].

We ask Allaah to grant us pride in our faith and victory over our enemies, for he is the Most Generous Giver.