

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

10189 - He is staying in a Muslim country and the authorities do not allow Islamic dress

the question

I am a service member in the U.S. military in a foreign country working here, which happens to be Islamic, however the country's government is trying to transform into a secular state and keep religion in the house or mosque. I want to know whether or not I am being defiant and should respect the un-written laws which are; A. Islamic clothing will not be worn on or near one of their government buildings B. Carrying religious books or reading material openly like a Qur'an is said not to be in good favor with the government laws of the land. My intentions aren't to be defiant to the so-called rules, I just want to do as I do normally. Is there a Hadith on whether or not the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to alter his dress for the laws of the land or compromise speaking of the deen openly to other Muslims. I mean this is supposed to be an Islamic country, by no means am I trying to go against the grain, however I am a Muslim and doing these things are normal, besides I am observing Christians wearing crucifix openly along with other religious clothing?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

We think in this case that if you are able to openly manifest the symbols of Islam, you should not spare any effort to do so. If a person enters the kaafir lands, it is not permissible for him to settle there unless he is able to openly practise his religion and manifest its symbols. Undoubtedly this open manifestation includes remembering Allaah and reciting Qur'aan, as well as dressing in an Islamic fashion, allowing the beard to grow, and avoiding haraam things such as drinking alcohol, etc. As far as dress is concerned, we think that if you are able to openly wear Islamic clothing, then

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you should do so, and wear the dress of the Muslims, and you should say, 'We are Muslims and we have freedom to choose our religion and practise it openly, just as you Christians can wear your regular clothes and openly display the symbols of your religion, like the crosses you wear. We have the same rights as you do. If this system places these obligations on those who work for them, then we say that if you can find another country to move to where you will be able to openly manifest the symbols of your religion, then do so. But if you cannot do that, then manifest as much as you can of the symbols of your faith. The religion cannot be confined to the home and the mosque; the religion has to be adhered to in the market-places, streets, companies and all public places. Undoubtedly the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not compromise in matters of his religion. When he was in Makkah, before the Hijrah, he used to pray openly, whilst they were looking on. After the Muslims became a distinct community, a specific style of dress was ordained for them, and they commanded to forsake anything else that was a symbol of kufr and was distinctive to the kuffaar, because this is imitation, and whoever imitates a people is one of them, as it says in the hadeeth.

Shaykh 'Abd-Allaah ibn Jibreel

You should make the most of the opportunity of being in a Muslim country to remind the people of their Islamic origins and their ties to their religion and Islamic history. The position you are in enables you to say openly whatever you want without fearing any harm - most likely - from the people of that country. Your open display of your religion and wearing Islamic dress will encourage the Muslims and make them keen to manifest their religion. Do not forget to seek reward from Allaah by doing that. If you patiently bear the annoyance of what is said, the reward for that will be stored for you with Allaah, and Allaah never causes the reward of those who do good to be lost.