

2179 - Clarification of the important rule: it is haraam to take kaafirs as close friends and protectors

the question

We hope that you will be able to explain, with examples, what is meant by the phrase, "Taking kaafirs as close friends and protectors is haraam."

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Yes, examples will certainly explain and clarify what is meant, so we will move straight on to quoting some of the most important points that the scholars and leaders of da'wah have said about different ways of showing friendship towards kaafirs.

1. Accepting their kufr and doubting that it is kufr at all, or refraining from labelling them as kaafirs, or praising their religion. Allaah says about the kufr of the one who accepts them (interpretation of the meaning): "... but such as open their breasts to disbelief..." [al-Nahl 16:106]. Allaah says, making it obligatory to label the kaafirs as such (interpretation of the meaning): "... Whoever disbelieves in Taaghoot [false deities] and believes in Allaah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break..." [al-Baqarah 2:256]. Allaah says about the munaafiqoon (hypocrites) who prefer the kuffaar to the Muslims (interpretation of the meaning) "... [they] say to the disbelievers that they are better guided as regards the way than the believers (Muslims)." [al-Nisa' 4:51].
2. Referring to them for judgement. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "... they wish to get for judgement (in their disputes) to the Taaghoot (false judges, etc.) while they have

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:

Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

been ordered to reject them..." [al-Nisa' 4:60]

3. Befriending and liking them. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "You 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 58:22]
4. Inclining towards them, relying upon them and taking them as a support. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "And incline not towards those who do wrong, lest the Fire should touch you..." [Hood 11:113]
5. Helping and supporting them against the Muslims. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "The believers, men and women, are awliya' (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another..." [al-Tawbah 9:71]. He also says of the kuffaar that they are "but awliya' (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) to one another..." [al-Maa'idah 5:51]. And He says (interpretation of the meaning): "...And if any amongst you takes them as awliya', then surely he is one of them." [al-Maa'idah 5:51].
6. Becoming members of their societies, joining their parties, increasing their numbers, taking their nationalities (except in cases of necessity), serving in their armies or helping to develop their weapons.
7. Bringing their laws and rules to the Muslim countries. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "Do they then seek the judgement of the Days of Ignorance?..." [al-Maa'idah 5:50]
8. Taking them as friends in general terms, taking them as helpers and supporters, and throwing in one's lot with them. Allaah forbids all this, as He says (interpretation of the

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:

Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

meaning): “O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as awliya’ (friends, protectors, helpers, etc.), they are but awliya’ to one another...” [al-Maa’idah 5:51].

9. Compromising with them and being nice to them at the expense of one’s religion. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “They wish that you should compromise (in religion out of courtesy) with them, so that they (too) would compromise with you.” [al-Qalam 68:9]. This includes sitting with them and entering upon them at the time when they are making fun of the Signs of Allaah. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “And it has already been revealed to you in the Book that when you hear the Verses of Allaah being denied and mocked at, then sit not with them, until they engage in a talk other than that; (but if you stayed with them), certainly in that case you would be like them...” [al-Nisa’ 4:140]
10. Trusting them and taking them as advisors and consultants instead of the believers. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “O you who believe! Take not as (your) bitaanah (advisors, consultants, protectors, helpers, friends, etc.) those outside your religion (pagans, Jews, Christians, and hypocrites) since they will not fail to do their best to corrupt you. They desire to harm you severely. Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, but what their breasts conceal is far worse. Indeed We have made clear to you the aayaat (proofs, evidence, verses), if you understand. Lo! You are the ones who love them but they love you not, and you believe in all the Scriptures [i.e., you believe in the Tawraat and the Injeel, while they disbelieve in your Book (the Qur’aan)]. And when they meet you, they say, ‘We believe.’ But when they are alone, they bite the tips of their fingers at you in rage. Say: ‘Perish in your rage. Certainly Allaah knows what is in the breasts (all the secrets).’ If a good befalls you, it grieves them, but some evil overtakes you, they rejoice at it...” [Aal ‘Imran 3:118-120].

Imaam Ahmad and Muslim reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

went out to (the battle of) Badr, and a man from among the mushrikeen followed him and caught up with him at al-Harrah. He said, "I wanted to follow you and join you, and have some of the war-booty with you." (The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)) said: "Do you believe in Allaah and His Messenger?" He said, "No." He said, "Go back, I do not need help from a mushrik."

From these texts it is clear that we are forbidden to appoint kaafirs to positions whereby they could find out the secrets of the Muslims and plot against them by trying to do all kinds of harm.

Putting them in administrative positions where they are bosses of Muslims and can humiliate them, run their affairs and prevent them from practising their religion. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "... and never will Allaah grant to the disbelievers a way (to triumph) over the believers." [al-Nisa' 4:141]. Imaam Ahmad reported that Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "I said to 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him). 'I have a Christian scribe.' He said, 'What is wrong with you, may Allaah strike you dead! Have you not heard the words of Allaah (interpretation of the meaning), "O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as awliya' (friends, protectors, helpers, etc.), they are but awliya' to one another..." [al-Maa'idah 5:51]"? Why do you not employ a haneef [i.e., a Muslim]?' I said, 'O Ameer al-Mu'mineen, I benefit from his work and he keeps his religion to himself.' He said, 'I will never honour them when Allaah has humiliated them, and I will never bring them close to me when Allaah has expelled them from His mercy.'"

Similarly, we should not employ them in Muslim homes where they can see our private matters and they bring our children up as kaafirs. This is what is happening nowadays when kaafirs are brought to Muslim countries as workers, drivers, servants and nannies in Muslim homes and families.

Neither should we send our children to kaafir schools, missionary institutions and evil colleges and

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

universities, or make them live with kaafir families.

Imitating the kaafirs in dress, appearance, speech, etc., because this indicates love of the person or people imitated. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘Whoever imitates a people is one of them.’

It is forbidden to imitate the kaafirs in customs, habits and matters of outward appearance and conduct that are characteristic of them. This includes shaving the beard, letting the moustache grow long, and speaking their languages, except when necessary, as well as matters of clothing, food and drink, etc.

Staying in their countries when there is no need to do so. Allaah forbade the weak and oppressed Muslims to stay among the kaafirs if they are able to migrate. He says (interpretation of the meaning): “Verily! As for those whom the angels take (in death) while they are wronging themselves (as they stayed among the disbelievers even though emigration was obligatory for them), they (angels) say (to them): ‘In what (condition) were you?’ They reply, ‘We were weak and oppressed on earth.’ They (angels) say: ‘Was not the earth of Allaah spacious enough for you to emigrate therein?’ Such men will find their abode in Hell –what an evil destination! Except the weak ones among men, women and children, who cannot devise a plan, nor are the able to direct their way.” [al-Nisa’ 4:97-98].

Nobody will be excused for staying in a kaafir country except for those who are truly weak and oppressed and cannot migrate, or those who stay among them for a valid religious purpose such as da’wah and spreading Islam in their countries.

It is forbidden to live among them when there is no need to do so. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “I disown the one who stays among the mushrikeen.”

Travelling to their countries for vacations and leisure purposes. But going there for a legitimate

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:

Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

reason – such as medical treatment, trade, and learning specialized skills that cannot be obtained in any other way – is permitted in cases of need, and when the need has been fulfilled, it is obligatory to return to the Muslim world.

This permission is also given under the condition that the would-be traveller has sufficient knowledge to dispel his doubts, to control his physical desires, to demonstrate his religion, to be proud of being Muslim, to keep away from evil places, and to be aware and cautious of the plots of his enemies. It is also permissible, and even obligatory, to travel to their lands for the sake of da'wah and spreading Islam.

Praising them and their civilization and culture, defending them, and admiring their behaviour and skills, without taking note of their false ideology and corrupt religion. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “And strain not your eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to various groups of them (disbelievers), the splendour of the life of this world that We may test them thereby. But the provision (good reward in the Hereafter) of your Lord is better and more lasting.” [Ta-Ha 20:131]. It is also forbidden to honour them, give them titles of respect, initiate greetings to them, give them the best seats in gatherings, and give way to them in the street. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Do not be the first to greet a Jew or a Christian (do not initiate the greeting), and if you meet one of them in the street, then push him to the narrowest part of the way.”

Forsaking the Islamic calendar and using their calendar, especially since it reflects their rituals and festivals, as is the case with the Gregorian (Western) calendar, which is connected to the supposed date of the birth of the Messiah (peace be upon him), which is an innovation that they have fabricated and that has nothing to do with the religion of 'Eesa (Jesus). Using this calendar implies approval of their festivals and symbols.

In order to avoid all of that, when the Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them) established a

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

calendar for the Muslims during the time of 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him), they ignored all the systems of the kuffaar and created a new calendar starting from the date of the Prophet's Hijrah. This indicates that it is obligatory to differ from the kuffaar in this matter and others where it is the matter of distinct characteristics. And Allaah is the Source of Help.

Taking part in their holidays and festivals, helping them to celebrate them, congratulating them on these occasions or attending places where such celebrations are held. The phrase al-zoor [falsehood] in the aayah (interpretation of the meaning) "And those who do not witness falsehood..." [al-Furqaan 25:72] was interpreted as meaning the festivals of the kuffaar.

Using their names that have bad meanings. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) changed names whose meanings involved shirk, such as 'Abd al-'Uzza and 'Abd al-Ka'bah.

Seeking forgiveness for them and asking Allaah for mercy for them. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "It is not (proper) for the Prophet and those who believe to ask Allaah's forgiveness for the mushrikeen, even though they be of kin, after it has become clear to them that they are the dwellers of the Fire (because they died in a state of disbelief)." [al-Tawbah 9:113]

These examples should give a clear picture of what is meant by the prohibition of forming close friendships with the kaafirs. We ask Allaah to keep our belief sound and our faith strong. And Allaah is the Source of Help.