

## 71968 - Visiting the sick - some etiquettes

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### the question

What Ruling on visiting the sick ?.

### Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Visiting the sick is called 'iyaadah in Arabic (from a root word meaning return) because people come back time after time.

Ruling on visiting the sick

Some of the scholars are of the view that it is a confirmed Sunnah (Sunnah mu'akkadah). Shaykh al-Islam (Ibn Taymiyah) favoured the view that it is a communal obligation (fard kifaayah), as stated in al-Ikhtiyaaraat (p. 85) and this is the correct view. It is proven in al-Saheehaayn that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "There are five duties that the Muslim owes to his brother Muslim," one of which is visiting the sick. According to another version: "The rights of one Muslim over another are..." Al-Bukhaari said: Chapter on the obligation of visiting the sick, and he narrated the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): "Feed the hungry, visit the sick and free the captives." End quote.

This hadeeth indicates that it is obligatory, and may be understood as meaning that it is a communal obligation, like feeding the hungry and freeing the captives. Al-Nawawi narrated that there is scholarly consensus that it is not waajib (obligatory). Al-Haafiz said in al-Fath (10/117): i.e., it is not obligatory for individuals.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Sharh al-Mumtī' (5/173):

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The correct view is that it is a communal obligation, and the Muslims are obliged to visit their sick.  
End quote.

The virtue of visiting the sick

There are many ahaadeeth which speak of its virtue, such as the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): “When the Muslim visits his (sick) Muslim brother, he is harvesting the fruits of Paradise until he returns.” Narrated by Muslim, 2568.

The reward attained by the one who visits the sick is likened to the harvest reaped by one who gathers fruit.

According to al-Tirmidhi (2008), the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever visits a sick person or visits a brother in Islam, a caller cries out to him: ‘May you be happy, may your walking be blessed, and may you occupy a dignified position in Paradise’.” Classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi.

Imam Ahmad narrated that Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever visits a sick person is plunging into mercy until he sits down, and when he sits down he is submerged in it.” Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in al-Silsilah al-Saheehah, 2504.

Al-Tirmidhi (969) narrated that ‘Ali (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say: “There is no Muslim who visits a (sick) Muslim early in the morning but seventy thousand angels send blessings upon him until evening comes, and if he visits him in the evening, seventy thousand angels send blessings upon him until morning comes, and he will have a garden in Paradise.” Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi.

Visiting the sick does not involve only those whom you know, rather it is prescribed for those

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whom you know and those whom you do not know. This was stated by al-Nawawi in Sharh Muslim.

Definition of the sick person whom it is obligatory to visit

It is the sick person whose sickness is preventing him from seeing people. If he is sick but he is still going out and seeing people, then it is not obligatory to visit him.

Al-Sharh al-Mumti', 5/171

Visiting a non-mahram woman

There is no sin in a man visiting a non-mahram woman, or a woman visiting a non-mahram man, so long as the following conditions are met: proper covering, no risk of fitnah, and no being alone together.

Imam al-Bukhaari said: "Chapter on women visiting (sick) men. Umm al-Darda' visited one of the Ansaari men from the mosque." Then he narrated a hadeeth from 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her), who said that she visited Abu Bakr and Bilaal (may Allaah be pleased with them both) when they fell sick when they first came to Madeenah.

Muslim narrated from Anas that Abu Bakr said to 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with them), after the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) died: "Let us go to Umm Ayman and visit her as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to visit her," so they went to her.

Ibn al-Jawzi said: This is to be interpreted as referring to one from whom there is no fear of fitnah, such as an old woman. End quote.

Visiting a kaafir

There is no sin in visiting a mushrik kaafir who is sick, if that serves an interest. The Prophet

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(peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) visited a Jewish boy and called him to Islam, and he became Muslim. Narrated by al-Bukhaari (1356). And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was present when his paternal uncle Abu Taalib was dying, and he called him to Islam but he refused. Agreed upon.

The purpose in that case may be to call the person to Islam, or to restrain his evil, or to soften his heart, and so on.

See Fath al-Baari, 10/125

Should the visit be repeated?

Some scholars are of the view that one should not visit every day so that it will not become burdensome for the sick person. The correct view is that it varies according to the situation. Some people may be dear to the sick person and it may be hard for him if he does not see them every day. In that case it is Sunnah to visit continuously, so long as they do not know that the sick person dislikes it.

Haashiyat Ibn Qaasim, 3/12

One should not sit too long with the sick person

The visitor should not sit for too long with the sick person, rather the visit should be short so that it does not cause any hardship to him or his family. The sick person may pass through periods when he suffers pain because of his sickness, or he may do something that he would not like anyone to see, so sitting with him for too long will cause him embarrassment.

However, it depends on the situation; the sick person may like some people to sit with him for a long time.

Haashiyat Ibn Qaasim, 3/12; al-Sharh al-Mumti', 5/174

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## Time for visiting

There is nothing in the Sunnah that suggests that there is a specific time for visiting the sick. Ibn al-Qayyim said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not specify any particular day or time for visiting the sick, rather he prescribed that for his ummah by night and by day, at all times. End quote.

## Zaad al-Ma'aad, 1/497

Some of the salaf used to visit the sick at the beginning of the day or in the early evening, so that the angels would send blessings upon them for the longest time, based on the hadeeth quoted above: "There is no Muslim who visits a (sick) Muslim early in the morning but seventy thousand angels send blessings upon him until evening comes, and if he visits him in the evening, seventy thousand angels send blessings upon him until morning comes, and he will have a garden in Paradise."

But we should pay attention to the condition of the sick person and what is easiest for him; the visitor should not choose the time that suits him best, if that is going to cause hardship to the sick person or his family. That can be worked out with the sick person himself or with his family.

Frequent visits from people who do not take care to keep their visits short or choose the right time may make the sick person's sickness even worse.

## Making du'aa' for the sick person

Du'aa' should be made for the sick person in the manner narrated in the Sunnah: "La ba's, tuhoor in sha Allaah (No worry, it is a purification, if Allah wills)." Narrated by al-Bukhaari.

Du'aa' for healing should be said three times. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) visited Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqaas and said: "O Allaah, heal Sa'd," three times. Narrated by al-

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Bukhaari (5659) and Muslim (1628).

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to place his right hand on the sick person and say: “Adhib al-ba’s Rabb an-naas, wa’shfi anta al-Shaafi, laa shifaa’a illa shifaa’uka shifaa’an laa yughaadir saqaman (Take away the pain, O Lord of mankind, and grant healing, for You are the Healer, and there is no healing but Your healing that leaves no trace of sickness).” Narrated by Muslim, 2191.

It was narrated by Ahmad and Abu Dawood (3106) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever visits a sick person who is not yet dying, and says seven times in his presence: ‘As’alu Allaah al-‘Azeem rabb al-‘arsh il-‘azeem an yashfiyaka (I ask Allaah the Almighty, Lord of the mighty Throne, to heal you), Allaah will heal him of that sickness.” Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

The visitor should ask him how he is and how he is feeling, etc. That is proven from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), as narrated by al-Tirmidhi (983) and classed as hasan by al-Albaani.

It is also narrated in Saheeh al-Bukhaari that ‘Aa’ishah did that when she visited Abu Bakr and Bilaal (may Allaah be pleased with them both).

Reassuring him and giving him hope of a long life

A hadeeth concerning that was narrated by al-Tirmidhi (2087) but it is a weak hadeeth: “When you enter upon a sick person and reassure him that he is going to live, that does not change anything, but it lifts his spirits.” It was classed as da’eef (weak) by al-Albaani in Da’eef al-Tirmidhi.

But it is supported in meaning by the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): “La ba’s, tuhoor in sha Allaah (No worry, it is a purification, if Allah wills).” So we should try to cheer him up and give him glad tidings of healing in sha Allaah, for that will comfort the sick

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person.

See al-Sharh al-Mumti', 5/171-176.