

The ordinance of the salaam and its Benefits

Sh. Haatim 19th Jumada Al Thani -1417

Brothers and Sisters in Islam! One of the greatest ordinances in Islam is spreading the Salaam, which is the greetings of the People of Islam, the angels, the people of Jannah as well as of the Mu`min on the Day when they meet their Rabb. Allah ordered the Muslims to greet each other with the Salaam when visiting each other. In S. An Noor: (24:27)

"O you who believe! Enter not houses other than your own, until you have asked permission and greeted those in them, that is better for you, in order that you may remember."

In S. An Noor it also says: (4:61)

"....But when you enter the houses, greet one another with a greeting from Allah - i.e. say: As Salaamu Alaykum, blessed and good..... "

In a Hadeeth the Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam said, "When one of you meets his brother, he should say Salaam to him. If a tree, a wall or a rock comes in between them, and then they meet again, he should again say Salaam to him". This has been reported by Abu Dawood.

It is commanded that you must greet with the Salaam when entering upon, or departing from, a gathering of Muslim brothers. In a Hadeeth narrated by Abu Huraira, "the Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam said, 'If one of you join a gathering he should greet with the Salaam, and if he wanted to depart he should do so again, because the first greeting is not better than the second.'"

The Sunnah for the person who is riding, is to greet the person who is walking, the person who is walking, is to greet the one who is sitting, the small group is to greet the bigger group of people and the young is to greet the old. The way in which the Salaam is performed by the one greeting is to say, "As Salaam Alaykum Warahmattullaahi Wa Barakaatuh." For the one replying to say, "Wa Alaykumul Salaam Warahmattullaahi Wa Barakaatuh." This Brothers and Sisters is the most complete form of greeting. If the one who is greeting, shortens the greeting to just, As Salaam Alaykum, and the other replied by saying, "Wa Alaykumul Salaam", then that would be sufficient. However, it is better to reply in the first form because Allah says in S. An Nisaa:(4:86)

"When you are greeted with a greeting, greet in return with what is better than it, or at least return it equally."

Ibn Katheer explained this verse by saying: "If the person greeted you with the Salaam you should reply in a better form, or reply similarly. However, the extended form is preferable, but the shorter is compulsory. Which means that greeting is preferable but the

greeting in return is compulsory, and it should be in the form of the Salaam and not in any other form."

The Muslims of today have fallen into the habit of exchanging the greeting of the Salaam by saying Good Morning, Hi etc., and this Brothers and Sisters is not a Salaam. The greeting of the Salaam should be verbally and it is not enough to just wave the hand or nod the head since it has been forbidden.

In a Hadeeth narrated by Umar bin Shuaib by his father by his grandfather, that the Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam said, "He does not belong to us who imitates other people. Do not imitate the Jews or the Christians, for the Jews salutation is to make a gesture with the fingers and the Christians salutation is to make a gesture with the palms of the hands."

The Salaam is a religious observance of one Muslim upon another, except for the innovator or the faasiq - who is someone who do not fear Allah, hence cannot be trusted and should not be greeted with the Salaam or answered when they greet with the Salaam till they repent. The Prophet Muhammad, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam abandoned the three Companions who missed the Battle of Tabook until they repented to Allah Almighty. It is forbidden to greet the Disbeliever with the Salaam and if they do, then we should reply with, 'Wa Alaykum' - which means, 'And upon you', because of the Hadeeth which has been narrated by Abu Huraira, that the Prophet Muhammad, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam said: " Do not greet the Jews and the Christians before they greet you and when you meet anyone of them on the roads, force them to go to the narrowest part of it."

Abdullah ibn Umar narrated that the Prophet Muhammad, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam said: "When the Jews greet you, they usually say, As Samu Alaykum - which means Death be on you, so you should say in reply to them, Wa Alaykum - which means And on you".

Brothers and Sisters! There are situations in which we should not greet with the Salaam and that is:

While the person is relieving himself or in the toilet.

While the Khutbah of Jumu'ah is being delivered, a person should not greet the congregation with Salaam because they were ordered to listen, and not to return the Salaam.

We should not do what some people are doing and that is to shake hands after the Salaat and greet with the Salaam, because this Salaam is not approved. When it is performed regularly, then it becomes an innovation. If it is done for a certain reason for eg. seeing a person you have never met before or to discuss a certain situation, then it is no problem.

With reference to shaking hands when meeting, this is encouraged. In a Hadeeth the Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam said, Two Muslims will not meet and shake hands having their sins forgiven them before they separate. Reported by Abu Dawud.

Regarding hugging and kissing, it is allowed when meeting a person arriving from a journey, but it is not allowed under normal circumstances.

It is forbidden to bow when greeting with the Salaam because the Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam, was asked about a man meeting his brother by bowing down for him. He replied, "No". Reported By At Tirmidhee. Since bowing is a form of Rukoo, and the Rukoo and the Sujood are allowed only for Allah. We should pay attention to the rule and the honour regarding standing up for the Salaam.

Standing up for a person arriving from a journey or entering a gathering of people while they are sitting, is allowed to be greeted with the Salaam.

On the other hand, standing up to show respect for someone and not for the Salaam, as in the case of kings, queens etc., is forbidden.

Sheikh ul Islam Ibn Taimiyah said, It was not the habit of the Salaf at the time of the Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam, and the Righteous Caliphs to stand up every time they saw the Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam. Anas bin Maalik said, "Although there was no person more beloved to them, they - the Companions would not stand up for the Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam, because he use to dislike it". The Companions use to stand up for a person arriving from a journey by welcoming him, as it has been narrated that the Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam, stood up for Ikrima and said to the Ansaar when Sad bin Muaadh arrived, "Stand up for your Master".

The people should get used to following the Salaf and what they use to do at the time of the Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam, because they were the best of generations. The best of words is that of Allah and the best of guidance is that of the Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam.

The Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam said, "Whoever likes the people to stand up for him, he should prepare himself for his place in Hell". That is, when the people stand up while he is sitting and not for his arrival. It has been reported in Saheeh Muslim that the Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam, ordered his Companions to sit down when he led the prayer in a sitting position during his sickness. He also said, "Do not over glorify me like the disbelievers glorify each other, and he forbid his Companions from standing in the Salaat while he was sitting, so he would not imitate the disbelievers".

Dear Brothers and Sisters! Whoever receives the Salaam from an absent person, he should return it in the same form or reply better, so fear Allah and spread the Salaam among each other, because of the benefits and blessings that it contains. It is also a form of softening the heart and reviving the Sunnah.

In the Second Khutbah the noble Sh. continued by saying....

Brothers and Sisters! Spreading the Salaam among you is beneficial in the following ways:

It is one of the causes for gaining access to Jannah. The Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam said, "O you people! Spread the Salaam, feed the poor and needy, behave kindly to your blood relations, sever your relations, offer prayer when others are asleep, and thus enter Paradise in peace."

It will bring love into the heart. The Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam said, "You will not be admitted to Jannah till you believe, and will not believe, till you love each other. Should I guide you to a thing, that if you do it, you would love each other. Spread the Salaam among you."

The Salaam and the shaking of hands are two causes of forgiveness from sins. The Prophet, Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam said, "If a Muslim meets his brother and shakes his hand, their sins will fall off as a tree sheds its leaves on a windy day even if it were as much as the foam of the ocean".