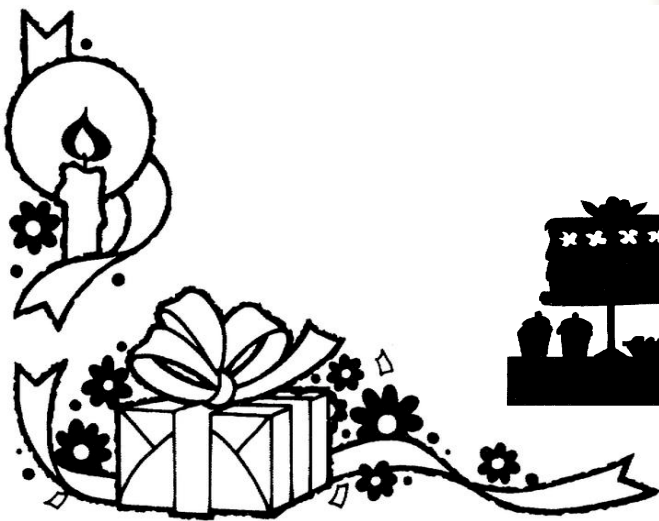
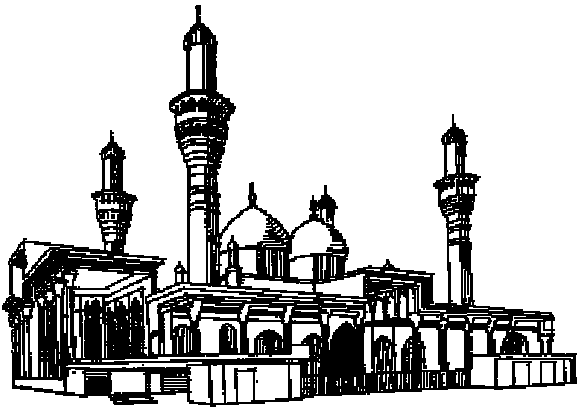


Muslims, and Western Celebrations



Muslims Eids
Western celebration
Which one for my kids?

- Mommy? Why are you not eating anything today? Aren't you hungry?
- I am preparing myself for the fasting month of Ramadhan. You can also fast with me twice a week if you want to my pearl.
- But you are fasting more than that this month, aren't you, mom?
- Well... The months before and after Ramadhan are sacred months; we must fast as much as we can! Besides, I slowly get used to not eating and drinking during daytime, so that, when Ramadhan comes, it does not seem that hard.
- I always wondered. Why are we the only people in the neighborhood to do Ramadhan? Everyone here is preparing for the celebration of Halloween, for a lot of fun, not for fasting. And when Halloween is finished, there is Thanksgiving, and then Christmas, New Year's Eve, and everybody is having so much fun!
I cannot wait till our Ramadhan is finished! And you know what?
- What dear?
- Teacher said I would have presents for my birthday. It's almost time for it. All the children have already gathered some money, and when it will be my birthday, I will get what I want. Cool! We just have to ask for it!
- Do you enjoy to have everything you want all the time, dear?
- Sure, mom!
- Well, I do not! I think it is more fun to be surprised by people, like when you receive something and it is not a special occasion, you know that people give you something because they really want to give it to you, not because they have to...

- Well... That's true, in a sense.

I like Fatimah's gifts because she always makes them themselves. She spends hours for me, thinking about me, drawing and crafting just for me! When you feel you have to give something because everybody does it, that's true, I feel forced! That's fun to give too, but I feel better when I give whenever nobody is watching, and I am not obliged to give to Amy or Melissa. But some time, I'd like to have my very own computer too! Like everybody!

- Do you really need one, Su?

- Well, everybody has one!

- Ah! Ah!

- Ok, mom, I do not really really absolutely need one, but what I want to know is why are we always different? For instance, why are we always staying at home when people are outside enjoying themselves? I mean, sometimes it is good to do like others, to socialize!

- Su! It is because we are Muslims; it is not our ways. Besides, do you enjoy it better when we go outside together and we play our own games, not everybody's games? We speak about important things and we can decide to change our plans anytime.

Don't you like meeting other Muslims and having picnics together?

- I like that too, Mom. But does that mean Muslims cannot have fun like anybody else?

- No, it doesn't mean this. It means that Muslims have joy and happiness, not fun! Fun is like the smoke coming from a fire; it disappears as soon as burned.

On the contrary, happiness is like the stars in the sky, appearing every night! It is like being satisfied we have pleased Allah Ta'alah. How many fun activities do Americans have during the year anyway? Do you know how many festivities, dear?

- Well, I don't know... maybe 4... but much more, I know.
- Then, let's get the Roman calendar and let's have a look. See, all these red numbers mean a different holiday. So... how many are there?
- 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.....10, no, 11! That is sure a lot of holidays! I sure would like to dress up in funny outfits, have tons of gifts and blow my first birthday cake like Christians do! Last time I went to Kathy's birthday there were plenty of children and she made a wish before she blew the candles. Except for the fact that I did not tell you I was invited, I had a great time there!
- Is that true, dear? You have already forgotten what you told me about this party? Remember? When everybody was gone you said you overheard a conversation between your friends Jenny and Claris. You said they were criticizing the party.
- Yes! They wanted to have a bigger party for their birthdays. Jenny wanted to invite boys, and then they said wrong things about Kathy's parents.
- When you came back you cried yourself to sleep because you could no believe your friends could say such things. Maybe you were happy you do not celebrate birthdays so nobody can be jealous of you, right?
- That's a pity mom, why people cannot be nice all the time? Why they have to spoil all the fun every time?
- Because people, even little girls, want to look the best, so they can impress on people. They want people to envy them or at least to admire them. Maybe it is a good way to

live for many people, but Muslims do not believe it is the way of God. We just have a different way of living; we do not compare people with one another. We avoid comparing ourselves to others because everybody is beautiful his or her own way.

Birthdays make us stand out the wrong way.

- Mom? If I had a party and I could choose my friends carefully, believe me, that would not happen to me!
- Well, dear, we always think we can control any situation, but we are misleading ourselves all the time! Since my little pearl has a short memory, I will be your memory. You remember when Ann did that? She said she would invite only her best friends. I remember you were one of them!

Su frowned and parted her lips in frustration.

- Yes, I remember well mom, she said sadly. Ann thought she was some kind of a princess. She said we were lucky to have been invited because she was very selective towards her friends. And then she received so many gifts and so many compliments that she did not really appreciate them. Nobody could tell her the truth; I mean she did not behave very well to us, but we had to be polite. I thought I liked her, but I changed my mind! See, I made a doll for her with corn leaves. Two weeks after I found it in the trash after her mother and her had cleaned the room. I do not think I can forget this all my life!
- But if I invited only one friend to my birthday? Would it be ok, mom?
- Don't you think it would be boring?

Su sighed, at last convinced:

- I know, Mom, I noticed birthdays are only fun when there are a lot of people and we feel important. Birthdays are great when we are like the center of the world. But people get jealous and all, or they just come to see where we live and to see our parents. Everybody wish it would be the day for his or her birthday, not somebody else's birthday! Some people like birthdays and parties because they meet new friends and they have a good time, but among these people there are always people who cannot help behaving poorly. So, I guess I prefer to have a few true friends and always share instead of no knowing what people think of me and be troubled about it. And I also prefer these friends to be like me, to be like Muslims afterall.
- So, did you make up your mind what you are going to do next time your teacher gives a birthday party for you?
- Well... I think I will tell my teacher we do not celebrate birthdays because we are Muslims and it is not our ways. If she does not understand, I will tell her my bad experiences about birthdays.
- Well! Su. I do not advise you do that. Your teacher is a nice person and she might get offended. See, she does not understand our ways because she has always done differently. She might think you are judging her. And she expects you to be happy about the birthday she is going to give in your honor. Just say Muslims do differently and, believe me, she will understand!
- So, I cannot be myself and be frank?
- No, you cannot, because you respect people. See, Su, Christians have their ways too. You do not judge people's ways; you just do not approve of them. You know it is fun

for them for certain reasons, but their ways cannot fit into your ways! And sometimes it causes more trouble to explain things rather than just say them!

- You mean that, if I tell her the truth, she might hate me?
- No, I am not talking about that, my Su. See, Muslims do not do things to be appreciated by people. We do things first because it is Allah's command. But you have to understand also why Allah forbids us to do such or such things. If we put people before Allah, we would feel enslaved or dependent on these people. Muslims are independent; they do not need to justify what they believe in all the time! We pray by ourselves; we decide to fast or to give charity by ourselves. We do not need people to approve; we do not because it is what Allah expects from us, and we do it easily because we know it is good and it makes us feel in peace and we get a reward from Allah for it too. See, Allah has purchased our lives; in exchange He gives us Paradise. Now, Muslims respect others, but we do not live for others.

Imagine you ask one of your friends to give you \$1 to take the bus home. Next time this person asks you anything, you will not be able to say no. Am I right?

- Hum! I think you are right mom.
- In that case, you would not be free anymore. Now, imagine your friend is a good person. It is ok to ask her because you know that everything will be fine between you. But if this person is not very good at heart, that might be the beginning of problems between this person and you!

The same thing with your teacher. You do not bet on the fact she is nice or not, she likes you or not, she will judge you badly or not. No, you just state your beliefs and that is all.

- But why sometimes you ask people eggs when the shops are closed, Mom?
- Because they are Muslims, and I trust them in case of need and I know they will not judge me. Actually Muslims do things only for Allah. It is true that when I borrow eggs from them, I bake cakes for them too. This way, I make them happy I borrowed eggs from them! And I know I repaid them already. But I do not need to. Actually Muslims never expect anything in return when they give or do things for people. When people borrow money from us, we should act like we do not expect this person to return the money. That way, we do not make people feel indebted to us and we do not feel superior to them or angry with them if they cannot return it to us or if they forgot about us. Whatever we give is anyway returned ten times to us by the Benediction of Allah. What you do to others return to you in good or bad, depending on your intention and if your act upon this intention.
- I was thinking about that the other day, Mom. Is this like love, mom?
- What do you mean, Su?
- You know, when we give gifts to others out of love, we do not expect any gift in return. When we love, we do not expect to be loved in return?
- Yes, Su, this is true love and it is also true respect for yourself. The more you train yourself to give that way, the more you will love yourself and love Allah too because to love Allah begins by knowing your self first, and your limits.
- Some Christians give gifts to Jesus during Christmas, Mom. They pray Jesus instead of Allah and they give big parties too, and many many gifts to each other.
- Do you know what Christmas is, Su?

- Not really, mom. I only know what people do during Christmas. They have big sales and all the streets and front houses have decorations and lights. Some people sing and ask for money, and also there is Santa Klaus who comes at Christmas Eve, actually, many Santas... Santa is supposed to reward children when they have been good all year, except, of course, Muslim children. But I know it is a make belief because, if Santa Klaus existed, why would he forget about Muslim children? We are good children too, mommy, aren't we?
- Yes, you are good; this is why Allah loves you. This is why He gave you to me and to your father! See, Su, Westerners think Christmas is Christ birthday's date.
- Who is Christ, mom? Is he a helper of Santa or his son maybe?
- No, Christ is another name for Jesus, Iesa in Arabic. Iesa is mentioned many times in the Qur'an.
- We commit to memory a lot of passages of the Qur'an mom, but I never read in the Qur'an about Iesa's birthday!
- Me neither, Su. That's because, in Islam, there is no such thing as a Prophet's birthday or anybody else's birthday for that matter. See, prophets like Musa (Moses) or Muhammad (Mohammed) or Iesa (Christ), Peace be upon Them, are only men for us. They were men, but men of great piety, exceptional men of Faith; they were true believers and Allah chose them as messengers. They received two great gifts from Allah; the first one was the gift a prophecy; the second one differed from one Prophet to another. For instance, Musa (PBUH) delivered the slaves from Egypt; Iesa (PBUH) could heal sick people; Sulaiman (Solomon) (PBUH) could speak to animals, and Muhammad, peace be upon him, was the seal of the prophets, that

means he ended the coming of prophets and was given the Qur'an as a revelation for all mankind! Actually all the prophets were sent for a special tribe or a given people, but Muhammad, peace be upon him, and the Qur'an, were sent for everybody!

Unlike Muslims, Christians think Iesa (PBUH) is a god or the son of God, so they celebrate his birthday like the birthday of a king. On the contrary, Muslims think it is wrong because only Allah has the right to be treated like a king, and nobody celebrates His birthday. Besides, Allah does not have a wife and does not covet children since he made us; He created us and that was easy for Him. Remember:

Lam Yalid wa lam Yulad

Wa lam yakun lahu kufuyan ahad

- Yes, of course, that's one of the first verses I learned from the Qur'an about the Unicity of Allah.
- Me too, Su. Muslims must believe in only One God, which is called monotheism. On the contrary, Christians believe in 3 gods in one, and not only that, they also pray saints, and Mary who was the mother of Iesa (peace be upon him). December 25 is the date Christians have set for Iesa's birthday, but that's not the real date according to historians. Anyway, this date would mark the creation of the Roman calendar; this is why the New Year begins just after Christmas in Western countries. On one hand, this Roman calendar is a proof that Prophet Iesa (PBUH) was a real man who did something very special in his lifetime, something so special that people wanted to remember it. BC really means Before Christ. On the other hand, the Muslim calendar begins with the Hegira or Hijra of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Hegira began when the followers of Islam fled from Mecca where they were

persecuted and went to Medinah to establish an Islamic government. See, the Islamic calendar does not begin at the birth of Muhammad, but when the religion of Islam began to take roots. But, do you know what are the main differences between the Roman calendar and the Islamic Calendar, Su?

- Well... They both have 12 months, but the Islamic calendar begins later. For instance the year 1999 is the year 1420 in the Islamic calendar. Hum..... Hum..... No, for the rest, I don't know mom. How are they different?
- Well, during Ramadhan, what do we look at to know when Ramadhan begins and when it ends?
- We look at the moon.
- Right! And how many days do Ramadhan goes back every year?
- I think it is 11 days; I counted last time.
- So, what do you conclude, Su?
- Well, the Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar; it depends on the astronomical position of the moon, while the Roman calendar is a solar calendar; it depends on the sun position in the sky.
- Yes, that's correct! Not only that, but the lunar months are shorter than the solar months since they go between 29 and 30 days instead of 30 to 31 days for the Roman calendar.
- We are the only one to go by the Lunar calendar, mom?
- No, the Chinese do to for instance.
- Does that mean Chinese are Muslims, mom?

- No, Su. Only a minority of Chinese are Muslims; they live in West China and also in Mongolia. Chinese have discovered a long time ago that the lunar calendar was more precise. See, Chinese were great astronomers, as Arab Muslims would become later. Actually, Chinese and Muslims share a lot of things in common throughout history. In fact, Asia is the part of the world where you can find most Muslims in the world; Arabs represent only 15% or so of the entire Muslim population in the world!
- Wow! This is why we are not Arabs, mom?
- That's right, Su. So, where were we in this conversation? Why did I mention about the calendars?
- Because Christians use the Roman calendar since Christ birth?
- Yes, but before that?
- Because Iesa (PBUH) is one of the prophets; he is not a god at all, so we do not begin our calendar at the same date or with the birth of somebody in particular.
- And before that, Su?
- Hum... We were talking about Christmas and why Muslims do not celebrate birthdays or Western celebrations.
- Here we are Su!
- Mom?
- Yes, dear?
- If Christians believe Christmas is Prophet Iesa's birthday, why do they give each other's gifts? They should give Iesa (jesus) gifts!
- Oh! That's another question! See, Su, Christians mix pagan beliefs with their religion. They do that because they mix worldly things with spiritual things; they mix

their desire with their duty to God. If we Muslims would celebrate Christmas, it would be called an innovation. An innovation is something Allah disapproves of because it is not permitted or mentioned in the Qur'an. An innovation is considered a great sin in Islam because it is like disobeying Allah. Do you know what the word *Muslim* really means, Su?

- Yes, it means total submission to the will of Allah.
- Do you know where these laws are collected, Su?
- Yes, in the Qur'an, and the Sunnah, i.e., in our holy book and in the actions of prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that people have precisely recorded 15 centuries ago. Muhammad was a model for all Muslims so whatever he did was the best!
- That's right, Su. I see you remember this part very well. So, Muslims follow those two written records in everything: law, personal behavior, economics, politics, etc. And do you know why they were written and well preserved and unchanged for centuries, Su?
- To make sure everybody does the same things?
- Sort of! Mostly to ensure peace and balance inside the Muslim community, and to make sure our religion is kept pure, and also to make certain Muslims remain just, equitable in any affairs, even with strangers and people of other religions.
- Mom? How come Christians have invalidated their religion by mixing pagan beliefs with religious beliefs?
- See, Su, it began a long time ago, at a time called the Middle Ages, in Europe. There was a hierarchy in the church who ruled the Christian affairs. This hierarchy had

people at its head who wanted to have power and gain money. In order to realize their goals, they began to innovate and create new laws. The hierarchy of priests is an innovation by itself, as well as the existence of the Pope, or even the trinity.

- What is the trinity, mom?
- The trinity is the belief that there are 3 gods in one. In France, big meetings were held to determine whether Christ was a god or a part of God, or the son of God. The losers were burned alive!
- So, all these people innovated new laws, mom?
- Yes. They asked people to pay cash for a piece of paper destined to forgive their sins. The church soon created intermediaries or priests who would give you absolution or pardon. People would tell them their intimate sins and the priests would punish them by giving them verses to recite or painful punitive acts they had to inflict upon themselves. For instance, they liked to walk for miles on their knees or to whip themselves. Actually, priests controlled people that way. So, nobody addressed God directly for pardon; they asked the advise of men who did not know much than you and me about God's decisions and they would pray to dead people they called saints for help. They placed intermediaries between themselves and God, as if God did not know what was in their heart!

Towards the 17th century, a group of people began to react to these abuses. They claimed that the Bible was falsified and was interpreted wrongly by the church. In fact, the Bible was translated in Latin at a time very few people could read or write and less knew Latin. Furthermore, the monks who copied these translations that went through many translations before that, these monks added words or meaning to the

translation to make it flow better. Actually, there were no set rules since dictionaries or grammars did not exist yet, and the language was fluctuant. So, in the 17th century, a group of learned men rejected altogether the institution of the church and called themselves rebels, or more precisely Lutherans and Protestants. These people who protested against the church nowadays call themselves Presbyterians, Baptists, Church of Christ, etc, etc. They came to North America in order to find religious freedom. The rebels were angry against the interpretations of the Bible conducted by the church. They rejected the hierarchy of the priests and they accused monks and nuns to be in the wrong by locking themselves from the outside world. But even if the first rebels were sincere, they still made mistakes later one. How come today anyone can open a church as long as he or she has money and power? How come one must pay a fee to belong to a church? How come there are no special rules to follow and most people just follow their heart? Since there are no set rules, people come to church with masks of Halloween in their bags, and put them on right after the service. The same way, they pray Christ during Christmas, the man they think sacrificed himself for human beings and suffered for human beings, and right after that they hold big parties and cover trees with gifts for themselves. If they were sincere, maybe they should give all these gifts to the needy instead! And they do this because they dissociate religious life from daily life; after church, after they did their Christian duties, they do not feel they have more responsibilities.

The same way, they make fun of the bad spirits during Halloween; they become bad spirits, but they never think that means bad spirits are ok for them!

See, when all these people from Europe were exiled from their native countries, and they came to America to be in peace or those who came to find money, there was what was called a melting pot, or a medley of cultures and beliefs. Old beliefs, new beliefs, no beliefs at all were mixed up in the afflux of people from different origins and different backgrounds. People came because of religion, but many also came because they were poor or they did not have great lives over seas. They had to learn tolerance in order to live together! That was not easy! Tolerance is a great gift, Su, but it is a tool that one must use with precaution! Do you know what the word tolerance really means, my little pearl?

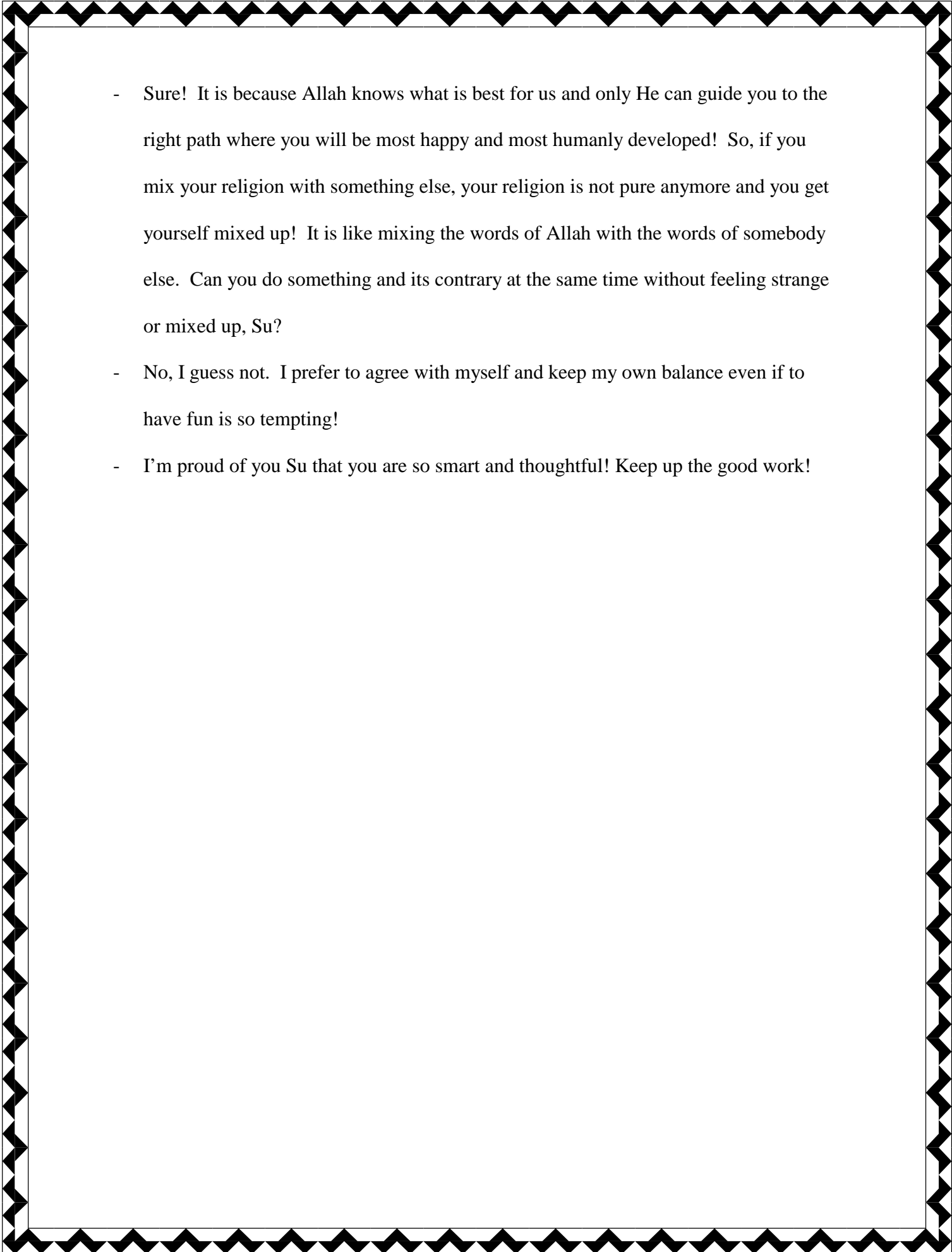
- I guess it is to accept others as they are. You do not prefer one person over the other. You try to treat one person like the other, no matter what! I do not see any side effect in being tolerant, mom!
- It's because you did not think too much about it. Imagine you have a close friend from India. OK?
- Ok.
- Are you tempted to do like she does, I mean to eat the way she eats when you go to her house, or to sleep the way she sleeps, or to try anything she does differently from you?
- Sure, mom, it's fun!
- Well, this is where the danger lurks!
- What do you mean mom? Is there anything wrong with wanting to try new things?
- It is ok as long as you do not have friends from West Africa for instance who eat so spicy if you eat the same food you can be sick for days! See, the same applies to

your religion. It is fine to share as long as you do not let other people's beliefs interfere with yours. Tolerance is good as long as you do not assimilate to this culture because it is not your ways! So, to be tolerant is not to treat everybody the same way; it is to treat everybody differently but in a just and equitable way.

Western people have forgotten that, especially Americans who finally mixed the tradition of Santa Klaus with the religious event of Christmas. Everybody is able to recognize the truth when they see it, but everybody makes different choices in life.

We are Muslims, we do not choose to be assimilated, and we do choose to respect other people, whoever they are, as long as they do not interfere with our own beliefs!

- I see, too much tolerance can hurt my religion and my convictions if I do not keep to myself. We are not like them, and they are not like us, and our ways are different and cannot mix!
- That's the idea!
- See, Americans like intervarsity of faith groups. These groups are great as long as you just exchange ideas, not when you begin making concessions! You are not going to pray like a Jew because you want to show your interest or your respect! The same way, intercultural exchanges at school are wonderful ways to discover each other's ways and become more tolerant and respectful of others. But when you are invited to join and participate in non-Islamic activities, it is not tolerance anymore, it is assimilation, and assimilation in Islam is a great sin because we believe our religion have been perfected by Allah in the Qur'an, the last holy book on earth!
- So, religion is very serious, mom?

- 
- Sure! It is because Allah knows what is best for us and only He can guide you to the right path where you will be most happy and most humanly developed! So, if you mix your religion with something else, your religion is not pure anymore and you get yourself mixed up! It is like mixing the words of Allah with the words of somebody else. Can you do something and its contrary at the same time without feeling strange or mixed up, Su?
 - No, I guess not. I prefer to agree with myself and keep my own balance even if to have fun is so tempting!
 - I'm proud of you Su that you are so smart and thoughtful! Keep up the good work!

Glossary:

Assimilation:

Assimilate is the act of making people like ourselves. To assimilate in another culture is to forget about our own culture. We become like the people of another culture and we do exactly like they do.

Christians, Jews:

Christians and Jews are what Muslims call *the people of the book*. Christians are followers of Jesus or Christ, called Iesa in Arabic; the Jews are people who followed Moses, called Musa in Arabic. Among the Christians are, on one hand, the Catholics who believe in the authority of the Pope and the Church; on the other hand, the Protestants who were also called the rebels who believe they can have their own interpretation of the Bible.

Intervarsity:

Intervarsity of faith is groups from different religion who meet together in order to speak about their different religions and to pray together.

Exiled:

A person who is exiled is a person who was banishes, rejected by people from the same country or community. This person is not allowed to come back in his, her country or community.

Hierarchy:

A hierarchy is a system where some people are more powerful than others, where people less powerful obey the laws of people more powerful.

Hegira:

Hegira means migration from place to another.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Halloween,
Christmas
&
anniversaries



From an
Islamic Perspective

Halloween



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Halloween is celebrated in America October 31 of each year. Halloween was not, at least at the beginning, a Christian celebration. It was a celebration of the pagan druids (priests). Dressing up in costumes was done to keep away the spirits of the dead.

Druids asked for food from house to house. If they did not get what they wanted, they would cast spells upon the people of the house and bring sickness and damage.

1) Is Halloween at the same time a religious and a non-religious celebration?

True

False

In the 1,800, the Christian Pope permitted to celebrate the day of Halloween to remember the death of all holy men. So, Halloween is originally the 'Day of All Hallows'. Halloween is the day of Hallows' Eve.

2) The word 'Hallow' means?

to allow, to authorize, to give permission

Holy

3) Do Muslims celebrate the death or the birth of anybody?

Yes

No

4) Why?

Because Muslims believe in a before and after-life.

To celebrate somebody's birth or death can be like worshipping the person.

because to celebrate birthdays or deaths is to forget about Allah Almighty; it is to forget that Allah is higher than we are.

5) Do Muslims pray holy men so their sins can be forgiven?

Yes

No

6) Who can ask Allah to forgive some of our sins?

Only prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him)

Prophet Jesus (Iesa, PBUH)

Everybody

7) Do non-Muslims ask (pray) holy men to obtain something?

yes

No

8) What do non-Muslims represent by their costumes during Halloween?

9) Do Muslims believe in witches, bloodsuckers, skeletons or spirits moving around, etc?

Yes

No

10) Do Muslims believe in evil, devils, and Shaytans?

Yes

No

11) Do Muslims like devils?

Yes

No

Why?

Because

12) If you go to a party where devils are considered fun, what does this mean?

they worship or like devils or think they are OK

It does not mean anything

13) When you do things like non-Muslims, you can become like non-Muslims?

Right

Wrong

14) If you have a best friend, do you do things your friend do?

Your best friend does things like you?

Yes

No

Why?

.....

15) When you love a non-Muslim, does that mean you love what he does and say or think?

Right

Wrong

16) When non-Muslims pray, are you happy?

Yes

No

Why?

17) If non-Muslims ask you to pray like them, do you do it?

Yes

No

Why?

18) How do you feel about being different? It is:

OK

Great

Not good

19) Why and when do you like to be like everybody?

Because -----

When -----

Because -----

When -----

Because -----

When -----

20) Why is it great to be different?

Because -----

Because -----

Because

21) How are Muslims different from non-Muslims?

Muslims

Muslims

Muslims

Muslims

Muslims

Muslims

21) Do you prefer to be a Muslim?

Why?

.....

22) Muslims think that Shaytan likes Halloween because people make evil become funny and innocent. Do you agree?

Yes

No

23) Shaytan is our enemy?

Yes

No

24) Do you tag along (make friends) with your enemy?

Yes

No

25) Is Halloween safe for you, and your faith?

Yes

No

Why?

Give a few safety guidelines for Halloween:

Do you think it is ok to mix religious celebrations with non-religious celebrations?

Christmas



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Christmas is a Christian celebration happening December 25 of each year. The name 'Christmas' comes from the root 'Christ'; the "mass" for Christ". Christ is another name for Jesus known as Iesa by Muslims. Christ gave the name for the religion: Christianity.

27) What does the word 'Muslim' mean?

28) Do Muslims name their religion after the name of a Prophet?

Yes

No

Why?

29) Does that mean that Christians think Jesus is their God, or at least half a God?

Yes

No

30) What is Christmas?

A celebration of the birth of Jesus

A celebration of trees

31) Is it a Muslim celebration?

Yes

No

32) Do Muslims believe in Jesus (Isa)?

Yes

No

So, why Muslims do not celebrate the birth of Jesus?

Because

33) What do non-Muslims do during Christmas

They

They

They

They

They

34) Do you think non-Muslims show their faith during Christmas?

Yes

No

35) Do you think Christmas is really a religious celebration?

Yes

No

Did you know that the word *Christmas* does not exist in the Bible (the holy book of Christians)?

A monk chose Jesus' birthday date in 530, that is, 6 centuries after the birth of Jesus. Do you know that the birth of Jesus marks the beginning of the Gregorian calendar? Do you know how the Gregorian calendar is different from the Islamic and the Chinese calendars?

Non-Muslims ornate evergreen trees during Christmas time. The tradition comes from the pagans who used to worship trees a long time ago. Christmas day was actually the celebration of their god of light called Mithra. The Bible speaks about the decoration of trees by the pagans. The Bible criticizes this practice because trees are cut out and worshipped instead of God.

Here again non-Muslims mix up religious and non-religious events.

36) How many celebrations do non-Muslims have all year round? About:

35

5

16

37) How many of these celebrations are recognized as religious holidays?

5

3

16

38) How many celebrations do Muslims have?

1

3

2

39) The Muslim celebrations:

- O Begin something
- O End something
- O Do not begin or end anything

If they begin or end something, what is it?

40) Non-Muslim celebrations end or begin something?

- O Yes
- O No

If yes, what is it?

Muslim Eids (celebrations) are celebrated after the end of two great events in the Muslim life: the end of the fasting month of Ramadhan, and the end of the pilgrimage to Mecca known as Hajj. These celebrations show that Muslims are happy because they have done their duty towards Allah Ta'alah (Almighty). Muslims feel deeply moved at the end of the eids because they did a great effort and this effort was full of prayers and love for Allah.

Muslims celebrate their Eids by giving alms to the poor and visiting each other with greetings of peace. These celebrations are peaceful.

Muslims begin the day of each celebration by a prayer in group and follow by asking forgiveness to people they know. If the fast or the pilgrimage was good and accepted by Allah, their sins are forgiven.

41) What do non-Muslims usually do during their celebrations?

They -----

42) Which celebrations make more sense to you: the Muslim one or the non-Muslim one?

The -----one!

Why?

Because -----

Respect Others!



Finally, Muslims do respect other people beliefs. A Muslim is a person whose neighbor can be safe from. Muslims should never harm anyone who does not harm them. Muslims do not speak evil of people and do not act unjustly. Furthermore, it is an obligation for each Muslim to respect non-Muslims.

43) What does the word 'respect' mean?

O I am different from you; I do not do like what you do,
but I let you do what you want to do as long as
you do not harm anybody or anything.

O I like what you do and I want to be like you.

O I hate you because you are not like me.

O The way I live is great. Do like I do; stop doing like you do!

44) So, what will be your attitude next time there is a non-Muslim celebration at your school or where you work? Are you going to join non-Muslims in their activities?

Can you propose solutions for Muslims at this occasion? Explain:

Checking comprehension:

Questions:

1) **Can Muslims send postal cards made by non-Muslims and representing something of the Christian religion or something of the western celebrations?**

O-yes

O-No

2) **Can a Muslim celebrate a non Muslim holiday like Thanksgiving?**

O-yes

O-No

3) **Can Muslims imitate non-Muslims in deed and worship?**

O-yes

O-No

4) **Can non-Muslims celebrate their holidays in a Muslim land?**

O-yes

O-No

5) Can we take part in non-Muslim celebration only so that they might be attracted to our celebrations and our religion?

O-yes

O-No

6) What is the evidence on celebrating birthdays, is it allowed in Islam?

O-yes

O-No

7) Is it permissible to allow a Christian wife to practice her religion in the home?

O-yes

O-No

8) Is it permissible to celebrate al-Mawlid or the Prophet's Birthday?

O-yes

O-No

9) Is it ok to attend other gatherings like annual festivals or national celebrations?

O-yes

O-No

Answers:

1) Can Muslims send postal cards made by non-Muslims and representing something of the Christian religion or something of the western celebrations?

Muslim should not help non-Muslims to celebrate their holidays because these holidays are unlawful to Muslims. Muslims should not send postcards to non-Muslims on this occasion and should not send them gifts or present items non-Muslims would buy in such occasions. Greeting the non-Muslims on Christmas and other religious holidays of theirs is haraam. To say 'A happy festival to you' or 'May you enjoy your festival,' and so on is forbidden. It is like congratulating someone for prostrating to the cross, or even worse than that. If they greet us on the occasion of their festivals, we should not respond, because these are not our festivals, and because they are not festivals which are acceptable to Allaah. We should not do so even to be polite or because we are shy, or else.

2) Can a Muslim celebrate a non Muslim holiday like Thanksgiving?

It is haraam to help non-Muslims in their celebrations. Following the same idea, it is unacceptable for a Muslim to sell the non-Muslims grapes or juice which they will use to produce wine or alcoholic beverages; it is unacceptable for a Muslim to sell them weapons that will be used to fight Muslims. It is wrong to help people do something wrong.

If you do so, "If you disbelieve, then verily, Allaah is not in need of you, He likes not disbelief for His slaves. And if you are grateful (by being believers), He is pleased therewith for you. "[al-Zumar 39:7]

Furthermore, these festivals are innovations in their religions.

Similarly, Muslims are forbidden to imitate the non-Muslims by having parties on such occasions, or exchanging gifts, or giving out sweets or food, or taking time off work, etc., because the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him, said:

"Whoever imitates a people is one of them."

3) Can Muslims imitate non-Muslims in deed and worship?

Indeed, the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him, went to great lengths to command Muslims to be different from non-Muslims in many issues that are mubaah (permitted) and in many ways of worship, lest that lead them to be like them in other matters too. This being different was to be a barrier in all aspects, because the more different you are from the people of Hell, the less likely you are to do the acts of the people of Hell.

4) Can non-Muslims celebrate their holidays in a Muslim land?

Those of the People of the Book who have agreed to live under Islamic rule should not celebrate their festivals openly in Daar al-Islam, which means lands under Islamic rule. But it is ok for them to celebrate in their homes because of the corruption involved in some of them, because of the sin or symbols of sin.

5) Can we take part in non-Muslim celebrations only so that they might be attracted to our celebrations and religion?

If what is referred to is accepting an invitation to a meal, for example, and there is nothing involved that is forbidden in Islam, such as mixing of men and women, or foods forbidden by Allaah such as wine and pork, or dancing and music and so on, and this participation does not imply that one loves these kuffaar, then there is nothing wrong with accepting their invitation. He should try to convey the message of Islam to them. The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him, accepted the invitation of some of the Jews. And Allaah knows best.

6) What is the evidence on celebrating birthdays? Is it allowed in Islam?

The evidence in the Qur'aan and Sunnah indicates that celebrating birthdays is a kind of bid'ah or innovation in religion. It is not permitted to accept invitations to birthday celebrations, because this involves supporting and encouraging bid'ah.

According to saheeh reports, the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him, said: "Whoever does something that is a not part of this matter of ours (i.e., Islam) will have it rejected" (reported by Muslim in his Saheeh).

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him, said, warning us against following non-Muslims ways and traditions: "You would follow the ways of those who came before you step by step, to such an extent that if they were to enter a lizard's hole, you would enter it too." They said, "O Messenger of Allaah, (do you mean) the Jews and Christians?" He said, "Who else?" (Reported by al-Bukhaari and Muslim). The Prophet,

peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him, also said: “Whoever imitates a people is one of them.” (Fataawa Islamiyyah, 1/115)

7) Is it permissible to allow a Christian wife to practice her religion in the home?

It is not permissible for a Muslim to allow his wife from among the People of the Book to celebrate her festivals in his home, for the man is in charge of that woman and she does not have the right to openly celebrate her festivals in his home, because of the resulting effects of corruption, forbidden things and display of the symbols of kufr, disbelief, in his home. He should keep his children from taking part in those innovated festivals.

8) Is it permissible to celebrate al-Mawlid or the Prophet’s Birthday?

Some Muslims commemorate Mawlid on the 12th day of Rabee’ al-Awwal each Hijri year. However, celebrating the birthday of the Prophet , peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him, is haraam, even by sending salaam (greetings) upon him and reading soorahs from the Qur’aan during such celebrations, holding gatherings of dhikr. It is haraam because this is a matter that has been innovated in the religion. The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him, did not do this, neither did his successor.

“... And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain from it...” [al-Hashr 59:7]

“... And let those who oppose the Messenger’s commandment beware, lest some fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, etc.) befall them, or a painful torment be inflicted on them.”

[al-Noor 24:63]

“Indeed in the Messenger of Allaah you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allaah and the Last Day and remembers Allaah much.” [al-Ahzaab 33:21]

In a saheeh hadeeth, the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him, said: “Beware of going to extremes in religion, for those who came before you were destroyed by their going to extremes in religion.” He also said: “Do not exaggerate about me as the Christians exaggerated about the son of Maryam. I am only a slave, so say “the slave and Messenger of Allaah.”” (Reported by al-Bukhaari in his Saheeh from the hadeeth of ‘Umar, may Allaah be pleased with him).

Some of them think that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him, actually attends the mawlid celebration, so they stand up to greet and welcome him. This is a serious falsehood and a form of gross ignorance. The Messenger of Allaah, peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him, will not come out of his grave, or contact anybody, or attend any gatherings. He will remain in his grave until the Day of Resurrection, and his soul is in the highest ‘Illiyoon (in Paradise), with his Lord in the abode of honour, as Allaah says in Soorat al-Mu’minoos (interpretation of the meaning): “After that, surely, you will die. Then (again), surely, you will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection” [al-Mu’minoos 23:15].

Prophet, peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him, and everyone else who has died will only emerge from their graves on the Day of Resurrection.

9) Is it ok to attend other gatherings like annual festivals or national celebrations?

As regards holding regular gatherings, whether weekly, monthly or annually, apart from the gatherings that are prescribed in Sharee'ah, islamic law, this implies that one is making them as important as the gatherings for the five daily prayers, Jumu'ah, Eid and Hajj, and this is a newly-invented innovation.

The principle in question here is: the Islamic acts of worship which are repeated at certain intervals and are thus special occasions, have been prescribed by Allaah and are sufficient for mankind. If any other gatherings are invented in addition to these gatherings, it means that they are being given a status equal to that of the occasions prescribed by Allaah, which leads to the adverse effects referred to above. This is in contrast to what a person or a small specialized group may undertake on their own sometimes.

So, it is not permissible for the Muslim to take part in these events which are celebrated regularly every year, because of their resemblance to the prescribed Islamic festivals, as explained above. But if it is a "one-off" event that is not repeated, and the Muslim can use the occasion to convey the truth to people, then there is nothing wrong with that, in sha Allaah. And Allaah knows best.

HALLOW'EEN Harmless or Haraam?

An Islamic Perspective.

(Article found in: www.islam-qa.com - Question on Halloween)

Every year, on the evening of October 31st, millions of children across North America paint their faces, dress up in costumes, and go door to door collecting treats. The adults often decorate their houses with ghostly figures, carve scary faces on pumpkins, and put candles in them to create "Jack-O-Lanterns." Unfortunately, among the millions of North Americans indulging in this custom, many are also Muslims. This article will shed some light on the significance and origins of Hallow'een, and why Muslims should not participate in it.

Origins of the Hallow'een Festival?

The ancient Celtic (Irish/Scottish/Welsh) festival called Samhain is considered by most historians and scholars to be the predecessor of what is now Hallow'een. Samhain was the New Year's day of the pagan Celts. It was also the Day of the Dead, a time when it was believed that the souls of those who had died during the year were allowed access into the "land of the dead". Many traditional beliefs and customs associated with Samhain continue to be practiced today on the 31st of October. Most notable of these customs are the practice of leaving offerings of food and drink (now candy) to masked and costumed revelers, and the lighting of bonfires. Elements of this festival were incorporated into the Christian festival of All Hallow's Eve, or Hallow-Even, the night preceding All Saint's (Hallows') Day. It is the glossing of the name Hallow- Even that has given us the name of

Hallow'een. Until recent times in some parts of Europe, it was believed that on this night the dead walked amongst them, and that witches and warlocks flew in their midst. In preparation for this, bonfires were built to ward off these malevolent spirits.

By the 19th century, witches' pranks were replaced by children's tricks. The spirits of Samhain, once believed to be wild and powerful, were now recognized as being evil.

Devout Christians began rejecting this festival. They had discovered that the so-called gods, goddesses, and other spiritual beings of the pagan religions, were diabolical deceptions. The spiritual forces that people experienced during this festival were indeed real, but they were manifestations of the devil who misled people toward the worship of false idols. Thus, they rejected the customs associated with Hallow'een, including all representations of ghosts, vampires, and human skeletons - symbols of the dead - and of the devil and other malevolent and evil creatures. It must also be noted that, to this day, many Satan-worshippers consider the evening of October 31st to be their most sacred. And many devout Christians today continue to distance themselves from this pagan festival.

The Islamic Perspective?

Iman (faith) is the foundation of Islamic society, and tauheed (the belief in the existence and Oneness of Allah) is the essence of this faith and the very core of Islam. The safeguarding of this iman, and of this pure tauheed, is the primary objective of all Islamic teachings and legislation. In order to keep the Muslim society purified of all traces of shirk (associating partners with Allah) and remnants of error, a continuous war

must be waged against all customs and practises which originate from societies' ignorance of divine guidance, and in the errors of idol worship.

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (s.a.s.) issued a stern warning: "Whoever imitates a nation is one of them!" (Abu Da'oud). Muslims should heed this warning and refrain from copying or imitating the kufar in their celebrations. Islam has strongly forbidden Muslims to follow the religious or social customs of the non-Muslims, and especially of the idol-worshippers or those who worship the devil. The Prophet (s.a.s.) said: "By Him in Whose hands is my life, you are ordered to enjoin good and forbid evil, or else Allah will certainly afflict you with torments. Thereafter, even your du'a (supplications) will not be accepted." (Tirmidhi).

From an Islamic standpoint, Hallow'een is one of the worst celebrations because of its origins and history. It is HARAM (forbidden), even if there may be some seemingly good or harmless elements in those practises, as evidenced by a statement from the Prophet (s.a.s.) "Every innovation (in our religion) is misguidance, even if the people regard it as something good" (ad-Daarimee.). Although it may be argued that the celebration of Hallow'een today has nothing to do with devil-worship, it is still forbidden for Muslims to participate in it. If Muslims begin to take part in such customs, it is a sure sign of weak iman and that we have either forgotten, or outrightly rejected the mission of our Prophet (s.a.s.) who came to cleanse us from jahiliyyah customs, superstitions and false practises.

Muslims are enjoined to neither imitate the behaviour and customs of the non-Muslims, nor to commit their indecencies. Behaviour-imitation will affect the attitude of a Muslim and may create a feeling of sympathy towards the indecent modes of life. Islam seeks to cleanse the Muslim of all immoral conducts and habits, and thus paving the way for the Qur'an and Sunnah to be the correct and pure source for original Islamic thought and behaviour. A Muslim should be a model for others in faith and practice, behaviour and moral character, and not a blind imitator dependant on other nations and cultures.

Even if one decides to go along with the outward practises of Hallow'een without acknowledging the deeper significance or historical background of this custom, he or she is still guilty of indulging in this pagan festival. Undoubtedly, even after hearing the Truth, some Muslims will still participate in Hallow'een, send their kids "trick-or-treating," and they will try to justify it by saying they are doing it merely to make their children happy. But what is the duty of Muslim parents? Is it to follow the wishes of their children without question, or to mould them within the correct Islamic framework as outlined in the Qur'an and Sunnah? Is it not the responsibility of Muslim parents to impart correct Islamic training and instruction to their children? How can this duty be performed if, instead of instructing the children in Islam, parents allow and encourage their children to be taught the way of the unbelievers? Allah exposes these types of people in the Qur'an: "We have sent them the Truth, but they indeed practice falsehood" (23:10). Muslim parents must teach their children to refrain from practicing falsehood, and not to imitate the non-Muslims in their customs and festivals. If the children are taught to be proud of their Islamic heritage, they themselves will, insha Allah, abstain

from Hallow'een and other non-Muslim celebrations, such as birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, Valentines Day, etc. The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.s.) said: The Final Hour will not come until my followers copy the deeds of the previous nations and follow them very closely, span by span, and cubit by cubit (inch by inch). (Bukhari). Islam is a pure religion with no need to accommodate any custom, practice or celebration that is not a part of it. Islam does not distinguish between "secular and sacred;" the shari'ah must rule every aspect of our lives.

"You must keep to my Sunnah and the sunnah of the rightly-guided Caliphs; cling to it firmly. Beware of newly invented matters, for every new matter is an innovation, and every innovation is misleading." (Bukhari)

"When the people see a person committing a wrong, but do not seize his hand to restrain him or her from the deed, it is likely that Allah will punish them both." (Abu Da'oud, Nasa'i, Tirmidhi)

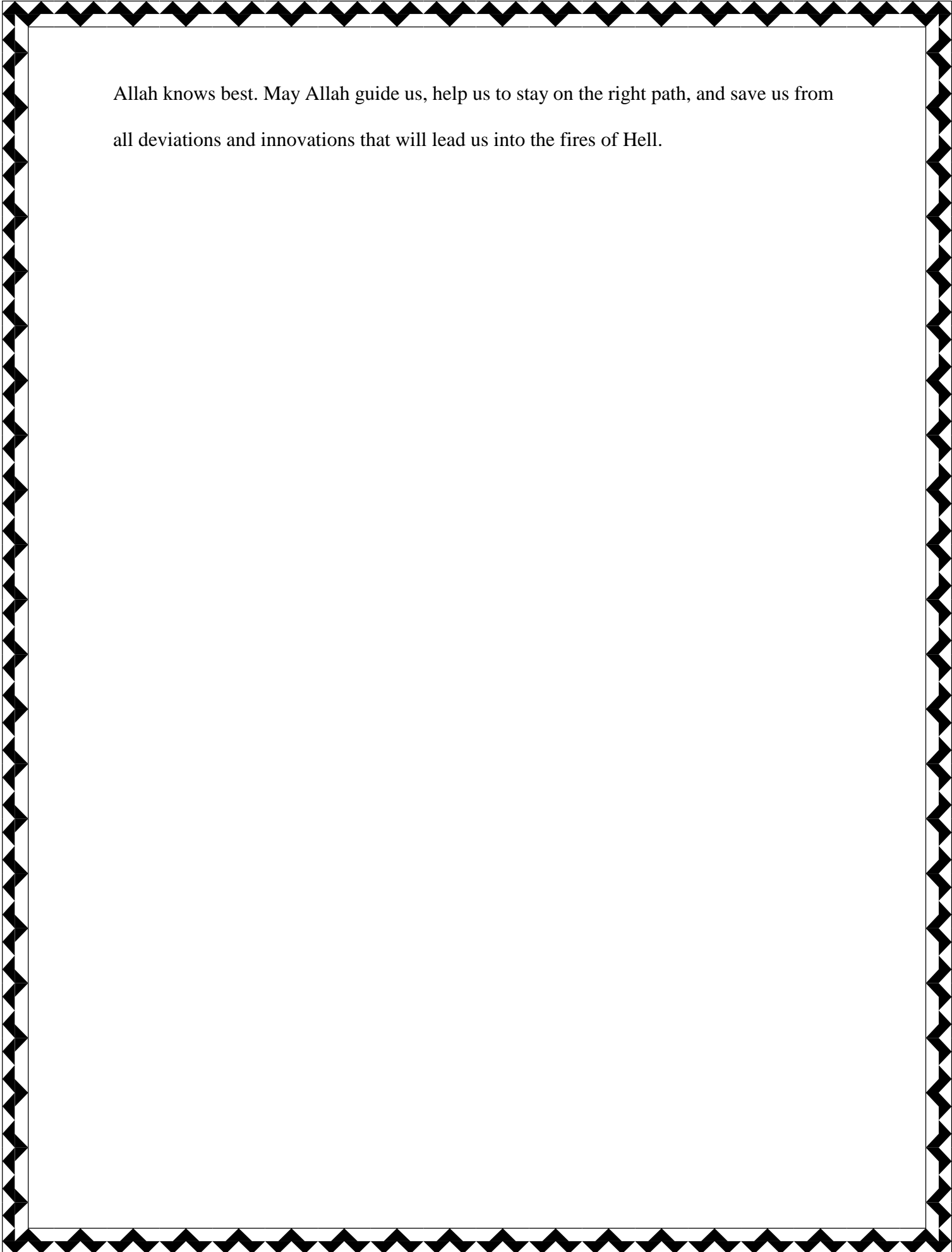
"Whoever imitates a nation is one of them." (Abu Da'oud)

What to do on Halloween?

We have established, beyond doubt, that the celebration of Hallow'een is absolutely forbidden in Islam. It is HARAM. The question arises as to what to do on this night. Muslim parents must not send their kids out "trick-or-treating" on Hallow'een night. Our children must be told why we do not celebrate Hallow'een. Most children are very receptive when taught with sincerity, and especially when shown in practice the joy of their own Islamic celebrations and traditions. In this regard, teach them about the two Islamic festivals of Eid. (Eid-ul-Fitr is fast approaching, and this is the perfect time to start preparing them for it.) It must also be mentioned that, even Muslims who stay home and give out treats to those who come to their door are still participating in this festival. In order to avoid this, leave the front lights off and do not open the door. Educate your neighbours about our Islamic teachings.

Inform them in advance that Muslims do not participate in Hallow'een, and explain the reasons why. (Give them a copy of this flyer if needed.) They will respect your wishes, and you will gain respect in the process. "A person who calls another to guidance will be rewarded, as will the one who accepts the message." (Tirmidhi)

Finally, we must remember that we are fully accountable to Allah for all of our actions and deeds. If, after knowing the Truth, we do not cease our un-Islamic practises, we risk the wrath of Allah as He himself warned us in the Qur'an: "Then let them beware who refuse the Messenger's order lest some trial befall them, or a grievous punishment be afflicted upon them!" (24:63). This is a serious matter and not to be taken lightly. And

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Allah knows best. May Allah guide us, help us to stay on the right path, and save us from all deviations and innovations that will lead us into the fires of Hell.