

RULES OF HOSTING

آداب الضيافة

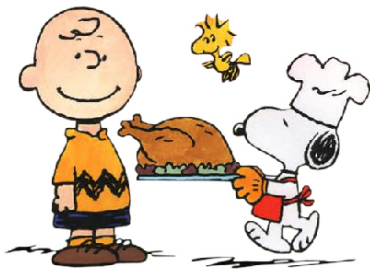
Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Islam encourages to have guests, in moderation, and to accept invitations, in moderation
- There are great rewards in hosting and visiting other believers
- Islam encourages us to be selective about whom we invite to our homes, and whose invitations we accept
- While we should be generous to our guests, we should not exceed moderation
- While we should have some formalities with guests, we should not exceed moderation

Rules of Hosting

Islam is a religion which encourages us to meet with each other and invite our friends and family to gatherings. However, these gatherings have some rules that we must follow so that they be accepted by Allah (SWT) and so that we avoid displeasing Him. In this lesson, we will look at some of the rules of hosting.



SOCIAL ISLAM

JUNIOR LEVEL

ISLAM AND GUESTS

Prophet Muhammad (saw) has said that:

“Guests are the guide to paradise.”

We Muslims are very much encouraged to have guests, and there is tremendous reward in hosting them with kindness, generosity, honour and respect. As Muslims, we should keep our connections with our relatives and friends strong and invite them to our houses frequently.

We should also accept invitations to ḥalāl gatherings, and this is a right of our fellow Muslim brothers and sisters upon us. In fact, visiting our relatives often is one of our most important Islamic duties. However, it is important that we make sure to keep these both in moderation, meaning that we should not invite guests or accept invitations too often such that we are not able to meet our other obligations and duties.



The Holy Prophet (saw) has also said that:

“When Allah (SWT) wants to bless people, He sends a valuable gift to them.”

When asked what this valuable gift was, he replied:

“Guests! They enter with their provision and leave with the household’s sins.”

This means that when we have guests, Allah (SWT) brings with them an increase in our provision, and forgives the sins of our family. This shows how much

Allah loves those who host righteous gatherings and invite guests.

BEING SELECTIVE IN OUR GATHERINGS

Of course, there are rules regarding who we can invite and who we can accept invitations from. We should make sure that we only host or attend gatherings where there are righteous people who remind us of Allah (SWT) and observe His rulings. We must not find ourselves amongst those who sin and take us away from Allah as we do not wish to be among such wrongdoers in the Hereafter.

BALANCING OUR GENEROSITY



We all know that we should be generous to our guests and offer them the best of food and a pleasurable stay. However, we Muslims sometimes fall into the traps of being excessive in our deeds while thinking that we are being generous. This can be in the form of:

- Wasting: We often forget that we should make sure that we are not making too much food such that a lot of it remains and goes into the rubbish bin afterwards.
- Extravagancy: This happens when we forget that our hospitality should only be for the sake of Allah (SWT) and instead try to show off by having too many different types of expensive food and so on...
- Putting ourselves and others in difficulty: Imagine that we invite many guests every single night and put a heavy cost and amount of work on our parents! This causes a lot of difficulty for ourselves and others and must also be avoided.

AVOIDING EXCESSIVE FORMALITIES

It is important in Islam to have some formalities. We are encouraged to have some formalities. However, these

formalities should be only for necessary things like politeness, generosity and making our guests feel comfortable. It is very important though, to keep these formalities in moderation, and not become excessive in following them.

Imagine addressing our guests as “Sir” & “Madam” all the time and not talking with each other comfortably! Or imagine that you have guests over until 1 or 2 am every night, even though we have to work the next day, because we were too shy to tell them we have work! Islam encourages everything in moderation, and we should never take anything too far.

A good example of this is a story mentioned in the Holy Qur’an about the Prophet and some of his companions.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى
طَعَامٍ غَيْرٍ نَاطِرِينَ إِنَاءَهُ

وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا وَلَا مُسْتَأْنِسِينَ
لِحَدِيثٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ يُؤْذِي النَّبِيَّ فَيَسْتَحْيِي مِنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا
يَسْتَحْيِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ

“O you who believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses, except when leave is given to you for a meal, (and then) not (so early as) to wait for its preparation. But when you are invited, enter, and when you have taken your meal, disperse, without sitting for a talk. Verily, such (behaviour) annoys the Prophet, and he is shy of (asking) you (to go), but Allah is not shy of (telling you) the truth.” (33:53)

The Prophet had invited some of his companions to his house for dinner. While most of them left shortly after eating, some remained in the house of the Prophet for a very long time, engaged in long discussions and conversations. They inconvenienced the Prophet and his family very much. However, the Prophet (saw) was too shy to tell them to leave. Therefore, the above āyāt were revealed, instructing the believers to limit their social visits to reasonable lengths of time, and to not inconvenience their hosts.

It is not appropriate for believers to spend hours socializing unproductively. We should learn the habit of not only setting a

start time, but also an end time for our social gatherings, in order not to put undue pressure on ourselves and not let our time waste away.

Review Questions

Q1. In regards to inviting our relatives, we should:

- a) Invite all of them every single day.
- b) Only invite them once a year.
- c) Invite them often, though keeping it in moderation.

Q2. With regards to the mentioned hadith, the Holy Prophet (saw) regards which of the following as a valuable gift sent as a blessing to people from Allah?

- a) Money.
- b) Guests.
- c) Status.

Q3. When having guests we should make sure that we:

- a) Make much more food than is necessary.
- b) Do not be extravagant and do not waste food.
- c) Make many different types of food.

Q4. We should make sure that we do not invite others to or attend gatherings of:

- a) Righteous friends and family who remind us of Allah (SWT) and observe the Islamic rulings.
- b) Those who sin and take us away from Allah (SWT)
- c) Our distant relatives.