



Question:

Assalaamu ‘alaikum

Respected ‘Ulama

My family feels that I am breaking family ties by not attending birthday parties that are hosted by them and our friends.

They feel that I need to be present, even if I don't participate in the rituals. They say that I should have lunch and leave. They even tell us that when we have a TV in our home, then what's wrong with us attending the party?

Answer:

Bismihi Ta‘ala

Wa ‘alaikumus salaam wa rahmatullahi wa barakaatuh

Respected Sister in Islam

1. Maintaining relationships are extremely important. However, there is a line of priority. For instance, supposing if one's parents have invited one to their house, and exactly at the same time, a cousin in a neighbouring town has also invited one. If the parents' invitation is accepted, then the cousin would be upset due to not attending his invitation and vice versa. In such a situation, it is almost impossible that one is going to be able to please both. Hence, it would be necessary to accept the invitation of the parents and respectfully decline the invitation of the cousin even if she would be displeased, since the parents are the priority.

In a similar manner, the relationship with our Creator, Allah Ta'ala, is far more important than the relationship with all the creation, including our parents and immediate family. Where it is possible to maintain the relationship with one's family without affecting the most important relationship with Allah Ta'ala, then this would most certainly be done. Therefore, one should continue to be kind to them, help them to the extent possible, serve them if they are ill or have any other need, etc. However, if any interaction with them would cross the line of Deen, then this would be impermissible. One would have to maintain the relationship with Allah Ta'ala and respectfully decline to do any such act which, though it will please them but will displease Allah Ta'ala.

2. Celebrating birthdays is a custom of the disbelievers. Besides, a Mu-min's birthday should be calculated as per the hijrah calendar. The Gregorian calendar is to be used only due to the necessity, since we are not living in a Muslim country and the Gregorian calendar is being used here. Thus, our personal matters should be calculated as per the hijrah calendar.

3. Watching TV is also impermissible. Indulging in one wrong does not justify indulging in another wrong – both must be abandoned. To insist that since a person watches TV, hence they should also attend birthday parties is similar to saying that since a person engages in backbiting, what is wrong if the person also lies or uses vulgar language?

May Allah Ta'ala assist you.

Answered by:

Uswatul Muslimah Panel of 'Ulama