

In The Name of Allaah, The Most Merciful, The Bestower of Mercy.

Shaikh Abdus Salaam Burjess [may Allaah have mercy upon him] said:

Imaam Ibn Abdul-Barr [may Allaah have mercy upon him] said, "The obligation of replying to the Islamic greeting is (found in the) statement of [Allaah]:

وَإِذَا حُيِّئْتُمْ بِتَحِيَّاتِهِ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا

When you are greeted with a greeting, greet in return with what is better than it, or (at least) return it equally. [Surah An-Nisaa. Verse 86]

Imaam Ibn Katheer [may Allaah have mercy upon him] said, "To give the Islamic greeting is voluntary and it is an obligation to respond to it. This is what all the scholars say- that it is obligated on the one who is given the salaam to reply and he has sinned if he does not reply, because he has opposed Allaah's command".

The abandonment of replying to the Islamic greeting is an evil and ugly deed and many people have been afflicted with it in this era. They are prevented from it due to pride and self-amazement. So, we gently say to all of them, "Who are you?! And from what are you from?!" Allaah said:

مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ ۖ

مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُ ۖ فَقَدَّرَهُ ۖ

From what thing did He create him? From Nutfah (male and female semen drops) He created him, and then set him in due proportion." [Abasa: Verses 17-18]

Are you greater in status than the Messenger [peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him]? Indeed he responded to the Islamic greeting of the young, the old, the free person and the slave, and he also greeted them. Therefore, let there be a good example in the Messenger of Allaah for you to follow. We ask Allaah for guidance and success for all. Also when a person is leaving a gathering and gives the salaam, it is obligatory to reply to him. (1)

Replying to The Greetings of non-Muslims

If the non-Muslims give us salaam, we return the [salaam] because Allaah [The Most High] said: When you are greeted with a greeting, greet in return with what is better than it, or (at least) return it equally. [Surah An-Nisaa' Aayah 86]

So, if they [i.e. non-muslims] say: 'Assalaamu alaykum [i.e. peace be upon you]', we say clearly 'Alaykumus salaam' [i.e. peace be upon you], because [Allaah] states in the Aayah [i.e. Aayah 86 Surah An-Nisaa]: Greet in return with what is better than it, or [at least] return it equally. The only [reason] the Prophet [sallal laahu alayhi wasallam] commanded us to say 'Wa alaykum' [i.e. 'And upon you' without the word Salaam] is because they [i.e. some of the yahood in Madeenah used to say to the Muslims out of hatred], 'As-Saam Alaykum [i.e. death be upon you] as occurs in the hadeeth narrated by Abdullaah Ibn Umar: "Indeed, when the Yahood give you salaam, they say, As-saam 'alaykum [i.e. death be upon you]; so say, 'Wa alaykum' [i.e. And upon you]. (2)

The Right of The Roads

Umar [may Allaah be pleased with him] said that Allaah's Messenger [sallal laahu alayhi wasallam] said, "Beware of sitting on the roads [i.e. the pavements, pathways where people pass by]! But if you must sit, then fulfil the rights of the road. They asked, 'What are the rights of the road?' He said, 'Lower the gaze, respond to Salaam and give directions to the one who has lost his way'.

This hadeeth contains guidance - from the Prophet [peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him] - for the entire Ummah. Firstly, they should refrain from sitting on the roads [i.e. pavements, pathways etc] because different people do walk past them. Sitting on the road has obligations – in relation to it - to be fulfilled and there are forbidden deeds which one must avoid. Secondly, it is permissible to sit, but the one doing so is required to give the roads [i.e. pathways, pavement etc] its rights - fulfilling what is commanded and avoiding what is forbidden.

Indeed the Prophet made known the rights of the road in this hadeeth, saying, "Lower your gaze". The women and others walk past, therefore it is obligatory to divert one's gaze away from every Haraam, and first and foremost is that one is not to look at strange women [i.e. women he has been forbidden to look at]. Reply to salaam: When a passer-by gives salaams, it is obligated on you to respond because Allaah said: [وَإِذَا حُيِّئْتُمْ بِتَحِيَّهِ فَحَيُّوْا] - *وَإِذَا حُيِّئْتُمْ بِتَحِيَّهِ فَحَيُّوْا* - When you are greeted with a greeting, greet in return with what is better than it, or (at least) return it equally] [Surah An-Nisaa. Aayah 86]. Guide the one who has lost his way:

Not every person knows the right way [to get to his destination]. It maybe that some people are unaware of the way to get to the place they want to go to; therefore if they ask you for advice - that you give him direction and you know where the place is, then it is obligated on you to give him directions. You should make an effort to give him directions, because Allaah continues to aid a slave [of His] as long as the slave helps his Muslim brother. (3)

[Ref 1: An Excerpt from 'Al-Ilaam Bi-Ba'di Ahkaam As-Salaam'- pages: 11-12. slightly paraphrased]

[Ref 2: An Excerpt from Sharh Hilyati Taalibal Ilm. 54-55]

[Ref 3: At-taleeqaatul Maleehah Alaa Silsilah Al-Ahaadeeth As-Saheehah Vol 1. Page 158. Slightly paraphrased]