

# HOW DO WE ISLAMIZE OUR GATHERINGS AND ASSEMBLIES

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The background of the cover features a silhouette of a caravan of people riding camels across a desert landscape. The scene is set against a bright, hazy sky, likely during sunrise or sunset, with the sun's glow creating a soft, golden light. The camels and riders are dark against the lighter background, and their shadows are cast on the ground. The overall mood is serene and evokes a sense of traditional Islamic culture.

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## *How Do We Islaamize Our Gatherings and assemblies*

Dear brothers! We must pay attention to our gatherings and meetings, because they have a major effect on us. If one were to take a quick look at Muslim gatherings today, he would find that it is nothing but a means of people occupying themselves with life, each according to his interest or field of work; this is aside from indulging in some prohibitions and major sins, in some cases.

These get-togethers, which people have engrossed themselves in, have hardened their hearts, against which Allaah has warned us, when He says that which means: ***“Then woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of Allaah. Those are in manifest error.”*** (Az-Zumar: 22); indeed, this admonition necessitates that we determine the reasons behind hard hearts.

Dear brothers! Was this the way the Companions, may Allaah be pleased with them, conducted themselves in their gatherings? Were these the topics and matters they engaged themselves with? Surely not. I am not talking about declaring these assemblies and the conversations that flow in them as prohibited, because women may meet and talk to each other about different topics, and so may men gather and chat about their work problems and things of the sort – this is fine and permissible, because Islaam did not forbid it. Rather, what we are talking about is making this one’s only concern and addressing nothing else but life and worldly issues in them, to the extent that not a single verse or narration from the Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* or even the recommended supplication to conclude gatherings with, is heard being recited; in effect, there is no mention of Allaah at all.

Undeniably, this is a dangerous and dispraised situation, given that all said things are permissible. Yet, how will the case be if the meetings involve prohibitions? How will it be if people are indulged in major sins, such as backbiting and talebearing? Allaah says that which means: ***“And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead?”*** (Al-Hujuraat: 12) How will the case be if the gatherings incorporate lies and mockery of others, while the Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* advised: ***“Do not falsely accuse each other”***, which is done by lying and slandering, as the scholars commented.

Moreover, how will it be if the assemblies contain scorning the slaves of Allaah and abusing one another, when Allaah says that which means: ***“O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people ... And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name [i.e. mention] of disobedience after [one’s] faith.”*** (Al-Hujuraat: 11) How will it be if the gatherings today are full of sinning and insulting, although the Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* said: ***“Two persons insulting one another are like two devils who lie and fling false accusations at each other.”***

Indeed, how will the case be if the gatherings today are those of hypocrisy, flattery and formality, while the Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* informed us that praising someone in his face is like beheading him, and, Allaah says that which means: ***“So do not ascribe purity to yourselves”*** (An-Najm: 32).

How will it be if some of the get-togethers today embrace ridicule of Islaam and those who are

devoted to it and belittlement of the Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam*, scorning his way of dressing, character and manners?

Additionally, how will it be if these gatherings involve disparaging Islaamic rulings and laws? A person present in them may say: "You want to take us back to dealing according to some law that declares: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth?" Verily, Allaah is glorified and exalted above what they say.

Dear brothers! Many of the Muslim assemblies today contain mockery of people, whether concerning the way they talk or a habit of theirs or the way they walk. The Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* said to 'Aa'ishah, may Allaah be pleased with her: "***I do not like that I should imitate someone even if I am paid in return such-and-such (an amount of money)***", meaning that he *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* would never mention a person or mimic him as a way of ridicule. The story behind this statement is that 'Aa'ishah, may Allaah be pleased with her, said to the Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam*: "*Such-and-such a thing of Safiyyah, may Allaah be pleased with her, is sufficient for you*", implying that she was a short woman. Thereupon, he *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* remarked: "***You have indeed uttered a word which would pollute the (whole) sea if it were mixed in it.***" In view of this, how is the case with today's expressions and statements which people exchange during their gatherings?

Dear brothers! Today, many of the Muslim assemblies involve prohibitions. For example, one would find that two people converse privately in the presence of a third, while the Messenger of Allaah *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* counseled: "***When three of you are together, two of you must not whisper (to each other), ignoring the third***"; then, he *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* rationalized that by adding: "***...lest the third should be grieved.***" Despite this, secret conversations are a disease that has permeated today's gatherings.

The way people sit in their gathering also includes prohibitions; for instance, some men do not cover their 'Awrah (i.e., parts of the body which are illegal to be exposed to others Islaamically, namely from the navel down to the knees) or do not wear sufficient clothing under their garment so that when one of them moves his thigh, it becomes exposed. Yet, when reasoned with one of them (regarding this), he would reply: "*Are we women that we need to cover up and have certain parts as a 'Awrah?*" This is in spite of the fact that the Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* said to one of the Companions, may Allaah be pleased with him: "***O Jurhud! Cover your thigh, for it is a part of the 'Awrah.***"

Even in the way people eat and drink, one will come across prohibited acts, such as eating and drinking using the left hand or neglecting to mention the name of Allaah before starting. Furthermore, the way they talk and argue also contradicts Islaamic teachings, for they may raise their voice, be harsh in their tone of speech, interrupt each other and youngsters may precede the elders in talking.

It is worthy to note that the meetings during which the name of Allaah is not mentioned or remembered, nor is the Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* mentioned or exalted; such meetings are subject to the warning in which the Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* says: "***Whenever a***

*group of people sit in a gathering in which they do not remember Allaah, the Exalted, nor supplicate for the elevation of the rank of their Prophet, such a gathering will be a cause of regret for them on the Day of Resurrection.”*; in another authentic narration, he *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam* went on to say: *“...even if they enter Paradise”*, because they will perceive the reward they missed out on due to not bringing up the name of Allaah and remembering Him, or exalting the mention of the Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam*, in their gatherings in this life. The Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* also said: *“Those people who get up from a gathering in which they have not remembered Allaah, will conclude it as if it has a foul odor similar to that of a rotten carcass of a donkey and it will be a cause of remorse for them (on the Day of Judgment).”* Bring to mind your gatherings to see whether or not the name of Allaah was brought up and remembered and the Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* was mentioned and exalted in them. Verily, every get-together must include mentioning and thinking of Allaah; do you hear a verse from the Qur’aan, a Prophetic *Hadeeth*, a religious advice, discussion revolving around an Islaamic ruling or an Islaamic reminder in today’s gatherings except for those upon whom Allaah has mercy?

Dear brothers! We must pay attention to this dangerous, negative trend – Muslims, these days, actually fool themselves by hanging some Qur’aanic verses or Prophetic sayings on the walls. Some of these frames of verses are nicely written and well-decorated and contain a command from Allaah to His slaves to be pious or reminding that Allaah is All-Knowing of all that they do and of all things, but they contradict what it says. Likewise, some might hang a frame which displays the recommended supplication to conclude gatherings with, yet they never utter it.

Dear brothers! To what a low condition have we fallen nowadays to put up a verse or a *Hadeeth*, then oppose it in our actions and words? What, then, is the benefit behind hanging it? This is the reason why some scholars have prohibited the hanging of verses and Prophetic *Hadeeth* on the wall, as it is a way of mocking what is quoted in these frames.

Due to all this, some wise Muslims avoid gatherings of people or conversing with them, saying: “Why should we sit with people when this is their situation?” These people are doing the proper thing provided that they are not capable of changing what goes on during these meetings, because one must shun the places of sin. Alternatively, our gatherings should become places to think of Allaah and bring up His Name, in order to attain the promised reward that the Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* spoke about when he said: *“Whenever a group of people gather and remember Allaah and mention Him, then they separate, it will be said to them: ‘You have been forgiven’”*. He *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* also said: *“Whenever a group of people congregate and think of Allaah and talk about Him, then they disperse, it will be said to them: ‘Allaah has forgiven your sins and replaced your bad deeds with good ones’.”* These narrations are not limited to study circles in the mosque; rather they are applicable in the case of any meeting.

One is delighted and proud to see some people, when they sit in a gathering, they start asking a person of knowledge amongst them, things like: “Talk to us about such-and-such a verse. What does it mean?”, “What is the story of so-and-so Prophet?”, and: “What is the ruling regarding this issue?” These are the people whom the Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* has described as keys for good (i.e., initiators), who prevent evil. Many of them might not have knowledge, but they are

keen to learn and increase their knowledge; they are dedicated to making their gatherings righteous, by mentioning during them that which pleases Allaah. We ask Allaah to increase the number of such people.

Dear brothers! Assemblies have diseases that need to be rectified, so we must know the etiquettes of gatherings and the manner in which to rectify them, in order to attain the sought type of gathering.

The Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* has mentioned many etiquettes, such as the following:

- He *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* said: ***“It is not permissible for a man to separate between two men when sitting, except after their permission”***; thus, one may not enter into a meeting and sit in the middle of two people who are next to each other unless he seeks their consent, or else, he should sit in any other spot he can find.
- It is the *Sunnah* that one sits in the furthest place he can reach and find an open spot in, and he may not make someone leave his place or seat, so as to sit there. The Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* said: ***“It is not allowed for a man to get another man up from his spot to sit in his place.”***
- Sometimes one might be invited to a private get-together, in which the conversations may consist of secrets of the host; it is not permissible for him to reveal their secrets or those of their family, because the Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* said: ***“Secrets (or personal issues) discussed during gatherings must be kept concealed.”***
- He *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* is reported to have said: ***“The best assemblies are those which are spacious.”*** Hence, it is recommended to make the assembly area sizeable for the guests as a way of expressing generosity, if a person can afford to do so.
- Making room for each other during gatherings is a desirable thing, especially when the place becomes full. Allaah says that which means: ***“O you who have believed, when you are told, “Space yourselves” in assemblies, then make space; Allaah will make space for you (i.e., In His mercy, in Paradise, or in everything good).”*** (*Al-Mujaadilah: 11*) When one’s heart has place for his brother, then his gatherings will automatically become spacious and people will make room for one another; otherwise, if one does not harbor such feelings towards his brother, he will not make room for him, and even if he does make room, one will not be doing it willingly.
- Saying the designated supplication before leaving an assembly; he *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* said: ***“Whoever sits in a gathering and indulges in useless talk, but before getting up, he supplicates: ‘Subhaanaka Allaahumma wa bihamdika, ash-hadu allaa ilaaha illaa Anta, astaghfiruka wa atoobu ilayka (O Allaah! You are free from every imperfection; praise be to You. I testify that there is none worthy of worship except You; I ask Your Pardon and turn to You in repentance),’ he will be forgiven (for the sins he may have intentionally or unintentionally committed) in that assembly.”*** What can people want more than this? Islaam gives one the chance to make amends and grants him the opportunity to be forgiven for the sins which he may have committed, by uttering these few words. Truly, the forgiveness of Allaah is great, as He says that which means: ***“Allaah is the possessor of great bounty”*** (*Al-Jumu’ah: 4*).

### ***Second Khutbah:***

Dear brothers! There are more manners during gatherings and assemblies like:

- It is narrated that whenever the Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* met one of his Companions, may Allaah be pleased with them, he would not leave the meeting until the other man would be the one who got up and left; and, when he met a man who greeted him by taking his hand, he *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* would give him his hand and not take it away until the man himself let go of it.
- The Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* was very polite and courteous. Whenever his guest would get up to leave, he *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* would get up with him to see him off and shake his hand. When, in a gathering, if a man wanted to whisper into his ear, he *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* would listen until he finished what he desired to say. Undoubtedly, he *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* was exceptionally well-mannered.

This is how our Prophet *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam* was, the example whom we must follow and emulate.