

certainly hasten to join it!" We also learn from his seerah (biography) that he entered into a relationship of mutual cooperation and partnership with the Jews of Madinah. Although later on, they broke their part of the covenant, he never initiated such a breach.

So ask yourself what kind of socialization you are talking about. If it falls in the above category of virtue, piety or even things that are beneficial for worldly and other-worldly considerations, then we are certainly allowed to join in solidarity with them. Allah says "Cooperate on virtue and God-consciousness and do no cooperate on sin and aggression." (Al-Ma'idah: 2) If, on the other hand, by socialization you mean joining them in drinking, dancing, or any such activities that are considered unlawful, then we can never do so regardless of whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims. To think that we may do so with Muslims and not with non-Muslims is sheer ignorance, for haram shall remain haram, no matter who practices it, and halal shall remain halal, no matter who practices it.

Then there is yet another type of socialization which also falls under the forbidden or undesirable category. If, for instance, you are a weak Muslim and you are afraid of losing or compromising your values and morals while socializing with the non-Muslims, then you must not do so out of love for preserving your religion intact.

In light of the above, let me conclude by saying: We should consider our actions as well their effects carefully before we embark on them.

It is important for us Muslims to join with our fellow citizens in all laudable and beneficial projects that are intended for the betterment of the country and people. To do so is not only our duty as citizens but a religious duty since, as Muslims, we must always serve as instruments of goodness, mercy and compassion to all people and to all of Allah's creation. Among such noble and laudable projects we can include the following: working to eradicate poverty and homelessness; to save the children; to make our streets free of drugs, alcoholism, prostitution and homosexuality; to fight cruelty against animals; and to work for a cleaner environment, etcetera. We must never have any hesitation or reservation about cooperating with our non-Muslim neighbors for such causes.

As a matter of fact, this is our mandate as Muslims, for Allah states in the Qur'an, "O you who believe! Bow down, prostrate and worship your Lord and do good works in order for you to prosper." (Al-Hajj: 77)" Allah Almighty knows best. (Editor)

## Q & A

### Socialization with Non-Muslims

By: Dr. Shahtaaz & Others

**Q)** Are we ever allowed to socialize with non-Muslims? How do we tell our non-Muslim friends that we cannot be their friends anymore, without hurting their feelings? Jazakum Allah khayran. (Jamil).

**A)** Dear brother in Islam, we highly appreciate your interesting question and seize the chance to shed light on some of the Islamic teachings that are mostly misconceived. We implore Allah Almighty to help us serve His cause and render our work for His Sake.

First of all, Muslims are allowed to socialize with non-Muslims within limits. Muslims should have good relations with all people of every religion. At school, at work, in the neighborhood, et cetera, a Muslim should be kind and courteous to everyone. Islam teaches its adherents to interact with all people and cooperate for the good and betterment of the whole mankind. Muslims are taught to care for all people regardless of their faith or their opinions. In their relation with non-Muslims, Muslims should be aware of and observe their religious duties.

We can say that "It is not all correct or accurate to say that we are not allowed to socialize with non-Muslims at all. Therefore, instead of saying that all forms of socialization with non-Muslims are forbidden, we should be more specific, and make distinctions and say: while there are some types of socialization that are considered either permissible or recommended, while there are others that are considered impermissible and still there are certain others that are considered undesirable.

Islam encourages Muslims to cooperate with everyone regardless of his/her religion or creed in all projects that are virtuous or beneficial to humanity or other creatures of God; so we must cooperate with everyone on projects intended to restore justice, peace and betterment of humans or God's creation. We learn from the sources that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) as well as his Companions never stayed away from forging such relations with the non-Muslims. In fact, the Prophet fondly cherished his memories of a pact he had entered during the pre-Islamic times, which was related to siding with the oppressed against the oppressors and restoring the rights of those who have been victimized. His words in this context are almost axiomatic: "If I were to be invited to a similar pact by anyone, I would