

Obligation to respond to an invitation by phone

Shaykh Aboo `Abd-al-Mu`iz `Alee Farkous al-Qoobee

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: You have been sent a question under the title: “The obligation to respond to an invitation for banquet by phone or other forms of substitution which express it”. However, the problem in inviting by phone is always arisen, as it is only reserved to people we know very well, as for people we know superficially, we should invite them directly without intermediary. This distinction is drawn from the uses of grandparents and forefathers in order that the guest will not feel ill at ease to go to people he does not know before. So what would you advise us? And may Allaah reward you abundantly.

Answer: All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

In fact, the prevailing usage previously mentioned is the most appropriate in inviting to a banquet, in such a way that the host invites the ones he wants personally. He could give personally an invitation card and write on it the name of his guest. This constitutes in fact a complete way of invitation.

However, it is known that inequality exists in most things, between the permissible and the complete, the good and the better, the appropriate and the more appropriate, the correct and the more correct and so on. In all these cases, the ruling is established with the valid permissible. Don't you see that in major ablution, there is what is permissible, which is pouring water to the whole body, and what is perfect if we add to it the minor ablutions. In both cases, the ruling which is the obligation of performing one's ablution is established. Moreover, the prayer of a woman is valid with a Dir¹ and a scarf, but it is more complete with a Mulaa'a². It is also permissible that a person deserving to lead the prayer prays behind a person who deserves it less, and the contrary is better and more complete and other known examples as regards acts of worship and usages.

Hereupon, if the invitation to a banquet is established with its least way, it will be obligatory to answer it, whether the guest is of old acquaintance or a mere one. Besides, the inequality as regards the convenience towards the guest has no effect on the validity of the ruling, and there is no harm to answer the invitation. The harm is rather in contradicting Sharee'ah's commandments and not abiding by its rulings.

¹ Dir`: a garment that goes from the neck till the feet.

² Mulaa'a: a garment for the woman that covers the whole body.

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We ask Allaah to guide us toward the good of real knowledge, and to bestow us pertinence in our words and deeds, surely He is the One Who is the Guardian of that and is Able to do that.

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ. Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet, his Family, his Companions and Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

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