

Halloween

Abu Abdillaah Muhammad Al-Jibaaly

Source: Festivals & Celebrations In Islam p132-134 (2nd edition)
Al-Kitaab & as-Sunnah Publishing

Halloween originated many centuries before Christianity. The pagan Celts in ancient Britain and Ireland believed that, during the night of October 31st, the gods (may Allah be exalted above their blasphemy) played tricks on their mortal worshipers, bringing about danger, fear and supernatural episodes. They also believed that the souls of the dead were let loose and were allowed to revisit their homes, and that hosts of evil spirits roamed the earth. Thus, this night acquired a sinister significance, filled with spirits, ghosts, witches, hobgoblins, black cats, fairies, and demons. The Celts made sacrifices and offerings to ward off the perils of the season and the anger of the deities, and they set huge bonfires on hilltops to frighten away evil spirits.

After the pagan Romans conquered Britain, they added to October 31st some features from their Harvest Festival, held in honour of Pomona, goddess of tree fruits.

Some years later, the early Western Christian churches celebrated on the same day the All Saints (or All-Hallows) Day, as well as its night (Hallows Eve or Halloween). Adopting some of their pagan heritage, they continued to believe that on this night the dead walked among them and witches and warlocks flew in their midst, and bonfires continued to be lit to ward off those malevolent spirits.

Gradually, Halloween turned into a family observance. By the 19th century, additional customs developed, and witches' pranks were replaced by tricks and games played by children and young adults.

But even in modern times, Halloween's seemingly innocent practices still carry a good deal of its pagan roots. Homes and yards are often decorated with ghostly figures and, on Halloween's night, children paint their faces, wear costumes, and go from house to house, demanding "trick-or-treat". The old practice of leaving offerings of food and drink to obscure spirits has been replaced by giving candy to costumed children, and bonfires have been substituted by "Jack-O-Lanterns" – hollowed-out pumpkins carved in the appearance of demonic faces, with lighted candles fixed in their centre.

And since Halloween was largely based on rituals involving dead spirits and devil worship, it also represents, nowadays an archaically sacred day for the devil worshipers.

From the above, it is obvious that taking a part in celebrating Halloween is strongly prohibited in Islam. Yet, it is indeed appalling to see some ignorant Muslims participate in it, purchase and wear silly Halloween costumes, and send their children to collect candy. This clear endorsement of Halloween's diabolical origin is totally unacceptable, and may not be justified by saying that they want to make their children happy.

Rather, the duty of Muslim parents is to enlighten their children and caution them from the dangers of participating in Halloween or other un-Islamic occasions. Instead of meekly following their children's wishes, they should strive to mould them within the correct Islamic framework of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Their serious responsibility of imparting correct Islamic knowledge and training to their

children cannot be fulfilled unless they firmly guard them from the deviant ways of the non-Muslims.

If the children are taught to be proud of their Islamic heritage, they themselves will abstain from Halloween and other un-Islamic celebrations. Islam is a pure and complete religion with no need for adopting alien customs, practices or celebrations.

On Halloween's night, the Muslim parents must not send their children to collect candy. Rather, they should teach them why we do not celebrate Halloween. Most children are very receptive when taught with sincerity,

It must also be noted that the Muslims who stay home but give out treats to those who come to their door are thereby participating in this festival. In order to avoid this, they should leave their front lights off and should not open their door.

Furthermore, they should educate their neighbours about the Islamic teachings and inform them in advance that Muslims do not participate in Halloween.