



243327 - Is it permissible to joke and play around with brothers and friends by trading teasing insults and hitting one another?

the question

I read in one of your answers that it is permissible for family members to hit one another, so long as it does not cause harm. I have two questions:

The first question is: is it permissible to joke and teasingly insult one another among family members, especially among brothers? Such as saying: "You are crazy" or "You are a mongol," or insulting him in ways that are worse than that, such as calling him a dog or a donkey, or saying "I'm going to rearrange your face" by way of joking?

The second question is: among my friends, we often joke a lot and we fight by way of playing or wrestle one another to the ground, as in the days of the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), or we do other things, like hitting with our hands or kicking or head-butting, but that is by way of joking and playing around. Is that permissible? If it is permissible, are there any specific guidelines on that? Did the scholars say anything about that?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The Muslim should spend his life always trying his best to do righteous deeds and make the most of his time to increase in good deeds and prepare for the Day of Resurrection, in obedience to the words of Allah, may He be Exalted:

{And hasten towards forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as vast as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous} [Al `Imran 3:133].



It was narrated that `Abdullah ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) took hold of my shoulder and said: “Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a wayfarer.” Ibn `Umar used to say: “When evening comes, do not expect to see the morning, and when morning comes, do not expect to see the evening, and take from your health for your sickness, and (take) from your life for your death.”

Narrated by al-Bukhari, 6416.

But this earnestness and striving is not undermined by joking and being playful sometimes, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to joke and be playful with his companions sometimes.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: They said: O Messenger of Allah, you joke with us sometimes. He said: “Indeed I do not say anything except that which is true.”

Narrated by at-Tirmidhi, 1990; he said: This is an authentic and sound hadith. Al- Albani classed it as authentic in *As-Silsilah as-Sahihah*, 4/304.

It was narrated that Ibn `Umar said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Indeed I joke, but I do not say anything except that which is true.” Narrated by at-Tabarani in *Al-Mu`jam al-Awsat*, 1/298; classed as authentic by al-Albani in *Sahih al-Jami` as-Saghir*, 1/489.

In order for jokes and playfulness to be like that of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), they should not undermine seriousness and earnestness; rather they should enhance it. Therefore the Muslim should pay attention [when joking or being playful] to one of two goals: either to put his companions and brothers at ease so as to increase the love between them and strengthen their bonds, or to relax after being active and doing some serious work, and to re-energise oneself for future tasks, and that is by means of alleviating boredom and tiredness.

Al-Mawardi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The wise person, when he resorts to joking and playfulness, seeks one of two purposes, and there



is no third:

The first is to put his companions at ease and to be friendly towards those with whom he mixes. This may be done by using sweet words and doing kind deeds.

Sa`id ibn al-`As said to his son: Be moderate in your joking and playfulness, because going to extremes in that leads to loss of respect and encourages foolish people to speak rudely to you, and falling short in playfulness may cause your companions to leave you and make them feel uncomfortable with you.

The second is to alleviate boredom and stress by means of joking and playfulness. It was said that the one who has carried something on his chest needs to take a deep breath, as Abul-Fat-h al-Basti said in verse:

Help yourself after striving hard by taking a rest, then you will feel better, and some jokes and playfulness could offer relief;

but if you joke, then let it be only as much as you add salt to food.

The joking and playfulness of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) were like this.

End quote from *Adab ad-Dunya wad-Din*, p. 319.

To sum up: when the Muslim jokes or acts in a playful manner, it should be for a good reason, and not because he has nothing to do and merely wants to pass the time.

And it should be in a manner that is not contrary to Islamic teachings, as is indicated by the hadiths of Abu Hurayrah and Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).

Secondly:

Joking with the words and phrases mentioned in your question is a kind of joking that is not permissible and is disallowed:



1.. Because this is contrary to Allah's command to speak kind words and avoid calling people by offensive nicknames. Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{And [remember] when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel [saying]: Do not worship anyone but Allah; show kindness to your parents and kindred, and to orphans and those in need; speak good words to people; establish prayer; and give zakat. Then you turned away, except a few of you, and paid no heed} [Al-Baqarah 2:83]

{O you who believe, let not some men ridicule others, for it may be that they are better than them; and let not some women ridicule others, for it may be that they are better than them. Do not speak ill of one another, and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. What a bad thing it is to be called an evildoer after having believed. And whoever does not repent, it is they who are the wrongdoers} [Al-Hujurat 49:11].

2.. Calling people by the phrases that you refer to is the way in which the Shaytan stirs up enmity and resentment among the Muslims. Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{Tell My slaves that they should say what is best, for Shaytan sows discord among them. Verily, Shayt@ân is to man an avowed enemy } [Al-Isra' 17:53].

3.. These are blatantly offensive words and insults, so it is not permissible to say such things even if the one to whom these words are addressed accepts that.

4.. Uttering such foul and indecent words and becoming used to doing that is contrary to the proper manners and praiseworthy qualities that the believer should have, which Allah loves for His slaves.

It was narrated that `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "The believer is not given to slandering or cursing others, nor is he immoral or foul-mouthed."

Narrated by at-Tirmidhi, 1977; he said: this is a hasan gharib hadith. Al-Albani classed it as authentic in *Silsilat al-Ahadith as-Sahihah*, 1/634.



Thirdly:

With regard to playing around with one's brothers and friends in a physical sense, such as striking with the hand, head-butting, wrestling and the like:

** If that playing around is done in a way that does not usually cause harm and does not involve any humiliation, and the other party accepts this kind of playing around, and it only happens occasionally and at appropriate times, then in this case there does not seem to be any reason to disallow it. The Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them) would occasionally throw pieces of melon rind at one another, but when faced with serious matters they were true men [meaning that they were serious and filled with resolve]. Narrated by al-Bukhari in *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*; classed as authentic by al-Albani in *Silsilat al-Ahadith as-Sahihah*, 435.

But you should choose appropriate times and circumstances for such jokes and playing around, so that that will not turn into enmity and fighting.

Sufyan ibn `Uyaynah said: Joking is Sunnah, but only for one who does that appropriately and in the right time and place.

** But if that type of joking and playing around usually causes harm and pain, or involves humiliation, then in this case it is not permissible:

1.. Because it is hurting and causing harm to another person, and harming people with no justification is not permissible, especially when such joking and playing around does not increase love and respect among the brothers; rather it causes loss of respect and dignity, and encourages minors to be rude to adults; the Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hands the Muslims are safe.

It was narrated from `Abdullah ibn `Amr (may Allah be pleased with him), from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), who said: "The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe." Narrated by al-Bukhari, 10; and Muslim, 40.

2.. This kind of joking and playing around sometimes leads to serious troubles that cannot be



resolved, and sometimes such joking and playfulness happens at a time when the one who is on the receiving end is in a bad mood, so the playfulness turns into fighting, arguments and hatred, as we sometimes see.

Conclusion:

Joking and playing around in this manner may be harmful and lead to negative consequences, and it serves no real interest, therefore it is something that is disallowed.

Please see the answer to question no. [22170](#) for important guidelines on permissible kinds of joking and playfulness.

And Allah knows best.