147652 - Does a Muslim Need Permission to Enter His House?

the question

Is it permissible to enter one’s house without asking permission, even if he is one of the residents of the house? Please give evidence from the Quran or Sunnah.

Summary of answer

• Allah has instructed the believers not to enter houses other than their own until they have sought permission before entering.
• A Muslim man has the right to enter his house even without seeking permission to enter.
• Part of perfect etiquette and kind treatment is for a man to seek permission even before entering the room where his wife is, lest he see her in a dishevelled state, or wearing scruffy clothes for doing housework, or similar scenarios in which she would not like him to see her.
• If there is another of his Mahrams in his house apart from his wife, such as his mother, his daughter or his sister, then the correct scholarly view is that he should seek permission before entering.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Importance of taking permissions to enter someone’s house in Islam

Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{O you who have believed, do not enter houses other than your own houses until you ascertain welcome and greet their inhabitants. That is best for you; perhaps you will be reminded.} [An-Nur 24:27]

Allah has instructed the believers not to enter houses other than their own until they have sought permission before entering . The Sunnah with regard to seeking to enter is to ask permission and give the greeting of Salam before entering.

Rib`i ibn Hirash (may Allah have mercy on him) said: A man from the tribe of Banu `Amir told us that he asked permission to enter a house where the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was. He said: May I get in? The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to his servant: “Go out to this man and teach him how to ask permission to enter. Tell him: Say: As-salamu `Alaykum, may I come in?” The man heard him and said: As-salamu `Alaykum, may I come in? The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) gave him permission and he came in. (Narrated by Abu Dawud (5177). Al-Albani classed it as authentic in Sahih Abu Dawud)

Al-`Azimabadi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in `Awn Al-Ma`bud:

“This indicates that the Sunnah is to combine the greeting of Salam with asking for permission, and that one should start with the Salam.”

Does a Muslim need permission to enter his house?

What may be understood from the verse quoted above is that a man has the right to enter his own house without seeking permission to enter.

Ibn Jizzi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “This verse enjoins seeking permission when wanting to enter a house other than one’s own. That includes the houses of relatives and others." (At-Tashil p. 1230)

The general meaning of this permission applies so long as there is no one in the house except his wife or concubine, because the husband or master may look at any part of them, even if they are fully naked. Seeking permission to enter is only ordained in order to protect the gaze, so that a person’s gaze does not fall upon anything that could upset him or any `Awrah (parts of the body that should be covered) that he should not look at.

Al-Bukhari (6241) and Muslim (2156) narrated that Sahl ibn Sa`d (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Seeking permission is only enjoined because of looking.”

Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“This was quoted as evidence that a person does not need permission to enter his own house, because the reason for which seeking permission was enjoined is not applicable in this case. Yes, if it is possible that a new reason may arise for which he needs to seek permission to enter, then in that case it is prescribed for him.”

Should a man seek permission from his wife to enter the house?

Part of perfect etiquette and kind treatment is for a man to seek permission even before entering the room where his wife is, lest he sees her in a dishevelled state, or wearing scruffy clothes for doing housework, or similar scenarios in which she would not like him to see her. Hence more than one of the scholars said that it is recommended for a man to seek permission from his wife before entering his own house.

Ibn Jurayj (may Allah have mercy on him) said: I said to `Ata’: Should a man seek permission from his wife to enter the house? He said: No.

Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“This is to be understood as meaning that it is not obligatory, but it is more appropriate for him to let her know when he is coming in and not startle her, because of the possibility that she may be in a state in which she does not want him to see her.

Zaynab (may Allah be pleased with her) the wife of Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ‘When `Abdullah returned from an errand, when he reached the door he would clear his throat and spit, so that he would not come in suddenly and see us in a state that could upset him.’ Its chain of narrators is authentic.

Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) said: ‘When a man enters his house, it is recommended for him to clear his throat and make a noise with his shoes.’

Hence it is narrated in An authentic Hadith that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade men to come back at night and enter their houses unexpectedly due to suspicion, in order to check whether his family are doing something wrong." (Tafsir Ibn Kathir 6/39-40)

When shoulda Muslim seek permission to enter his house?

If there is another of his Mahrams in his house apart from his wife, such as his mother, his daughter or his sister, then the correct scholarly view is that he should seek permission before entering .

Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“From this it may be understood that it is prescribed for him to seek permission to enter a house where anyone is, even his Mahrams, in case they are not covered properly. Al-Bukhari narrated in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad [it was classed as authentic by Al-Albani (812)] from Nafi` (may Allah have mercy on him) that when one of the children of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) reached puberty, he would not enter the room where he was except with permission. He also narrated via `Alqamah [Al-Albani classed it as authentic (813)]: A man came to Ibn Mas`ud and said: Should I ask permission to enter the room where my mother is? He said: You do not want to see her in all situations. And he narrated via Muslim ibn Nudhayr [Al-Albani classed its Isnad (chain of narrators) as sound (814)]: A man asked Hudhayfah (may Allah be pleased with him): Should I ask permission to enter the room where my mother is? He said: If you do not ask her for permission you may see something that upsets you. And he narrated via Musa ibn Talhah [Al-Albani classed its Isnad as authentic (815)]: My father entered a room where my mother was, and I followed him, but he shoved me in the chest and said: Are you entering without permission? And he narrated via `Ata’: I asked Ibn `Abbas: Should I ask permission to enter the room where my sister is? He said: Yes. I said: She lives with me. He said: Do you want to see her naked? The

Isnads of all these reports are authentic.”

Shaykh Muhammad Al-Amin Ash-Shinqiti (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“You should understand that the more correct view that no one should turn away from is that a man must seek permission to enter a room or house where his mother, his sister or his adult sons and daughters are, because if he enters where any of those mentioned are without seeking permission, he may see the `Awrahs of those mentioned, and that is not permissible for him.”

Shaykh Al-Amin (may Allah have mercy on him) also quoted the report quoted above from Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him), then he said:

“These reports from these Companions support what we have mentioned about seeking permission before entering places where those whom we have mentioned are. It may be understood from the authentic Hadith: “Seeking permission is only enjoined because of looking” that if the gaze falls on the `Awrahs of those mentioned, that is not permissible, as you can see… Then he also quoted words from Ibn Kathir to support what he said, some of which is quoted above.” (See Adwa’ Al-Bayan, 5/500-502)

And Allah knows best.