235658 - Guidelines on seeking permission to enter

the question

We are asking if you could clarify the correct understanding and implementation of seeking permission to enter homes and properties in accordance with the orders of Allah and the sunnah of His Messenger صَلَى الله عليهِ وسَلَّم and if this differs according to Urf or local custom or is the same for all of the Muslims.

In Surah Al-Nur 27-29 Allah mentions how to seek permission and enter the homes, and the exceptions. We are asking if you can explain these ayat and regarding two points in specific. One being what are the places or homes that are "not lived in" and what are the rules or limits of entering them when they have owners who are known.

There are homes that some may only use in certain seasons or times of the year like the summers or winters, or only for special occasions, like family gatherings or weddings. Also what about land like farm land or homes which are under construction and that are not yet lived in, or warehouses equipment or livestock?
Can these properties be entered without the permission of the caretakers, guards, or owners simply because they are not used daily or lived in by families, or must the people still seek permission from the owners or caretakers to enter them?Also some have said that by custom if the gate or door to a property or home is left open, for some reason, that no permission is needed to enter, is this a correct understanding according to either local custom or Islamicly ?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

There are guidelines on seeking permission to enter which are fixed and do not change. They

include the following:

-1-

Not looking inside the house before permission to enter is given. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: It is not permissible for a Muslim to look inside any house until he has been given permission." Narrated by al-Bukhaari in al-Adab al-Mufrad (1093); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani.

The requirement to seek permission to enter has been enjoined so as to prevent looking, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: Seeking permission is enjoined only so as to prevent looking." Narrated by al-Bukhaari (6241).

-2-

Saying salaam before asking permission to enter. It was narrated that Rib'i said: A man from Banu 'Aamir told us that he asked permission to enter upon the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) when he was in a house. 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. Say to him: Say: As-salaamu alaykum, may I come in?" The man heard him and said: As-salaamu 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 Dawood (5177); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani.

With regard to the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

"O you who believe! Enter not houses other than your own, until you have asked permission and greeted those in them; that is better for you, in order that you may remember"

[an-Noor 24:27],

the conjunction "and" does not imply sequence; perhaps the fact that seeking permission is mentioned first is to highlight its importance, and does not mean that this is to be done first. Al-

Baghawi said in his Tafseer (3/398): The scholars differed as to whether seeking permission or greeting should come first. Some said that seeking permission should come first, so one should say: “May I enter? As-salaamu ‘alaykum”, because Allah, may He be exalted, says, “until you have asked permission and greeted those in them.” But the majority are of the view that the greeting should come first, so one should say: As-salaamu ‘alaykum, may I enter? End quote.

-3-

Knocking on the door or ringing the bell, and so on, take the place of asking permission verbally, and opening the door by remote means takes the place of giving permission, if the visitor knows that they opened the door for him.

-4-

It is essential to mention one’s name if the people inside the house ask who is there. It was narrated that Jaabir ibn ‘Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I came to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and knocked on the door, and he said: “Who is there?” I said: It’s me. And he said: “Me, me?” as if he disliked that, Narrated by al-Bukhaari (6250).

That is because if the one who is seeking permission to enter says “It’s me,” he is not properly identifying himself.

-5-

It is Sunnah not to stand facing the door, so that one’s gaze will not fall upon anything inside the house. Rather one should stand to one side of the door, either on the right or left. It was narrated from Talhah that Huzayl said: A man came and stood at the door of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), asking permission to enter, and he stood at the door – ‘Uthmaan said: facing the door. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: ““(Stand) like this or like this (i.e., to one side or other of the door), for seeking permission is enjoined only so as to prevent looking.” Narrated by Abu Dawood (5174); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani. It says in ‘Awn al-Ma‘bood: That is, he should step away from the door, and face some other direction. End

quote.

-6-

One should seek permission to enter three times, unless he is certain or thinks it most likely that the people inside the house did not hear him. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “If one of you seeks permission to enter three times but is not given permission, let him go back.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (6245).

An-Nawawi said in al-Majmoo‘ (4/622): If he is sure that they did not hear him, because the place is far away or the like, then what appears to be the case is that there is nothing wrong with trying more than that. The hadith applies to one who does not think that they did not hear him. End quote.

-7-

If the owner of the house is known to have given permission or there is any indication to that effect, that may be acted upon, such as if he has opened the door or put a light on. It was narrated that Ibn Mas‘ood said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to me: “Your permission to enter upon me is when the curtain is raised, or when you hear me speaking quietly, unless I forbid you.” Narrated by Muslim (2169).

-8-

One should not seek permission to enter aggressively, or bang on the door or ring the bell aggressively, because that is rude and is not polite. It was narrated that Anas ibn Maalik said: People used to knock on the doors of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) with their fingernails. Narrated by al-Bukhaari in al-Adab al-Mufrad (1080). Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani.

-9-

If a person is not given permission to enter, he should go back without getting upset, because

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And if you are asked to go back, go back, for it is purer for you”

[an-Noor 24:28].

-10-

The requirement to seek permission to enter is waived in cases of necessity, such as rescuing someone or preventing an evil when action cannot be delayed, such as cases of murder or adultery, or raiding places of immorality or places where alcohol is produced.

-11-

The requirement to seek permission to enter is not waived if the people are not in the house, because Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And if you find no one therein, still, enter not until permission has been given”

[an-Noor 24:28].

If the house is being built, then no permission is required as in the case of houses that are locked up, because they do not come under the same protection and prohibition on looking at what is inside them. But one should not enter them if they are surrounded by a fence and the like. It says in Kashshaaf al-Qinaa‘ (3/161):

Otherwise it is prohibited to enter the property of someone else without his permission, if he is the owner of the land that has been fenced off, because that is interfering with the property of another person without his permission. Otherwise if it has not been fenced off, it is permissible to enter without his permission and without causing damage, because the fact that he did not fence it off implies permission. End quote.

-12-

Permission from someone other than the owner of the house is of no significance, unless it is known verbally or customarily that the owner of the house allows him to give permission, such as a minor when it is known, explicitly or implicitly, that his giving permission is acceptable to the owner of the house. Anas ibn Maalik was below the age of puberty, and people would ask him for permission to enter the house of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) did likewise with their sons and slaves. End quote from Tafseer al-Qurtubi (12/220).

-13-

The necessity to seek permission also includes visitors and those who are invited, unless there is clear indication of permission to enter, such as if the door is open or if the envoy who was sent to invite someone comes with that invited guest. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “If one of you is invited and he comes with the envoy who was sent to invite him, then that is his permission to enter.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari in al-Adab al-Mufrad in a chapter entitled: Chapter: An invitation to a man is permission to enter (1075). Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani.

Nevertheless, seeking permission to enter in this case is preferable. Al-Haleemi said: Seeking permission to enter in this case is preferable, because circumstances may have changed. End quote from Shu‘ab al-Eemaan (11/224).

Al-Haleemi’s view is supported by the report narrated by al-Bukhaari (6246) from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I entered with the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) [the house of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)] and he found some milk in a vessel, so he said: “O Abu Hirr [Abu Hurayrah], go to Ahl as-Suffah and call them to me.” So I went to them and called them, and they came and asked permission to enter; he gave them permission and they entered.

-14-

If someone enters before being granted permission to do so, it is permissible to make him leave. It was narrated from Kaladah ibn Hanbal that Safwaan ibn Umayyah sent him to the Messenger of

Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) with some milk, young gazelle meat and small cucumbers, when the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was in the upper part of Makkah. I entered but I did not say salaam. He said: “Go back and say: ‘As-salaamu ‘alaykum.’” Narrated by Abu Dawood (5176); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani.

And Allah knows best.