

Greetings

Into The Light @ <http://islam.itl.org.uk>

I switched on the Radio. After some music, the announcer said, "This is Asian Sound Radio. If you have just joined us, Greetings, Good morning, *Namastey, Sath siri akal, Salam alaikum* to you out there." He catered for almost everyone in the community. Like many Muslim friends, most Christians from the Middle East, Iran and Pakistan also use the word *Salam*, Peace, when they meet others.

According to some Islamic traditions a Muslim should not be the first to say *Salam* or greetings to either Jews or Christians. However, a Muslim is encouraged to take the first opportunity to confer peace on his or her fellow Muslim. There are many Muslims who doubt whether the Prophet of Islam wished to encourage such exclusive behaviour.

Both Jews and Christians use the word *Salam* or *Shalom* as well. The Bible also contains other words and phrases that were in use and are often used today. For example, "God be gracious to you" and "The Lord be with you" (Genesis 43:29; Ruth 2:4). To ask of someone's well-being is also treated as a kind of greeting. The usual words in Hebrews are *Shal la shalom* (Genesis 43:27; Exodus 18:7). Along with Hebrew *Shalom*, Greek speaking Christians in the past used also the Greek word *Charis* (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; Galatians 1:3).

In Jesus' time there were some exclusive groups of Jews who exchanged greetings only with their own people. Jesus rejected this practice and said, "If you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?" (Matthew 5:47) He encouraged his followers to be more open to others. He said, "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even tax collectors doing that?" (Matthew 5:46)

Some people today use greetings in a traditional manner just because others do. However, such a practice is rejected in the Scriptures, "If a man loudly blesses his neighbour early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse." (Proverbs 27:14). A person who speaks cordially to others but does not really mean it is abhorrent in God's sight (Jeremiah 9:8-9).

When Jesus sent his disciples to preach and teach, among other things he instructed them; "Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. As you enter the home, give it your greetings. If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you" (Matthew 10:11-13).

Jesus taught many other things which can be found in the New Testament section of the Bible. If you would like a copy in the English language, please write to the address below. Note: As we have a limited number of copies please

place your request early to avoid
disappointment.

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