3320 - Is it permissible to allow a Christian wife to practise her religion in the home?

the question

I know that Allah (S) has permitted us to marry Christians and the Jews. Now, can she practice her religious rites in the same house and have pictures of the crucifiction of Jesus (A) and celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas and etc. Can her kids join her? If no, would not it hurt her feelings? Please, answer me on this issue.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is not permissible for a Muslim to allow his wife from among the People of the Book to celebrate her festivals in his home, for the man is in charge of that woman and she does not have the right to openly celebrate her festivals in his home, because of the resulting effects of corruption, forbidden things and display of the symbols of kufr in his home. He should keep his children from taking part in those innovated festivals, because the children belong to the father and he should keep them away from these forbidden celebrations. At the same time he should direct them towards what will benefit them, even if that affects his relationship with his wife. The aims of sharee'ah and protecting one's religion – which is one of the most important aims of sharee'ah – take priority over everything else.

Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal was asked about a man who had a Christian wife – could he let her go out to join in the Christian festivals or to go to the church? He said, no.

In al-Mughni (1/21), Ibn Qudaamah says: "(Treatment of women): If his wife is a dhimmiyyah [a Jew or Christian living under Islamic rule], he can prevent her from going to the church, because that is not an act of obedience to Allah."

If these scholars said that the husband should stop a Christian wife from going to church, then what do you think is the case with regard to her celebrating these innovated festivals in the house of her Muslim husband? Especially when we know the harm that results from these festivals, which is far worse than her merely going to the church.

And Allah knows best.