

someone comes to your office or home. When going to a restaurant for a meal, Pakistanis will always want to treat a newcomer. It is important that you reciprocate at a later date. Never “go Dutch.”

Tea breaks

Drinking tea is an important aspect of building relationships. Some Canadians think interrupting work for tea and a chat with colleagues is an imposition or a waste of time. However, Pakistanis may feel offended if the foreigner does not take the time regularly for tea and chitchat. When Pakistanis come into your office or home, always offer them tea or a soft drink before beginning any discussions. Always ask about their health and their family’s health before starting any business talk. There are many rituals around tea, such as always pouring for your guests.

Weddings and funerals

You will likely be invited to weddings of the family members of your Pakistani work partners and domestic staff. You should oblige whenever you can. It is greatly appreciated. It is a good way to learn about Pakistani culture first-hand. If an immediate family member of someone you are working with dies, you should visit the family to offer your condolences. This,

too, is highly appreciated and goes a long way in building interpersonal relations.

Gifts

Cards should be sent at Eid (the Muslim holiday marking the end of Ramazan) much in the way that Canadians send Christmas cards at Christmas, except that it is more important in Pakistan than in Canada. People will notice, and take note of, whether or not you sent an Eid card.

For weddings, it is customary to give money or a gift, similar to what you would give in Canada. Pakistanis do not expect thank-you cards. You should give small gifts to your work colleagues and domestic staff at Eid. A salary bonus is common at Eid. It is customary to tip all hotel and restaurant staff, as in Canada. At the end of your assignment, it is at your discretion whether or not to tip a driver or a *peon*, the fellow who brings you tea and does your photocopying.

Negotiating

Negotiation skills are very important. It is possible to negotiate on almost everything in Pakistan, especially prices. Always remember that Pakistanis are superb negotiators, especially the shopkeepers.