

In the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful

Relations with Non Muslims According to Islam

Allah the Most High has stated in the Holy Qur'an: "O Mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him created his wife (Eve), and from them both He created many men and women...." (Ch 4, v1)

It is the teaching of Islam that all of creation (human kind) are one family, we are all branches of the same tree. Just as one Muslim is the brother of another Muslim, each individual on this Earth is part of a large family. From this we are made attentive to the fact that, as a Muslim we are taught to respect and be kind to all our fellow brothers and sisters.

The Prophet Muhammed (peace and blessings be upon him) stated:

- "Those who are merciful, Allah shows mercy to them...If you show mercy to those on the Earth, the one in the skies (Allah Almighty) will show mercy to you." (Sunan Abu Dawood, # 4941)

The reference in this Hadith of 'to those on the Earth' is not restricted to Human beings but all of creation, including animals. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has in many narrations forbidden people from oppressing and over burdening animals in their possession. To the extent that people have been instructed to not burden any animal with a load more than it is capable of carrying. People have also been instructed that when they stop and rest during a journey to relieve the animal of its load as well, so that it too may rest. If this is the extent that Islam goes to ensure the good treatment of animals, then the good treatment of fellow human beings is far more superior and courteous.

Allah (the Most High) has stated in the Holy Qur'an: "There is not a moving (living) creature on Earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but they are communities like you..." (Ch 6, v38)

- "A believer is he, from whom other people (Man kind) are safe." (Sunan Nisai, # 4998)
- "All of creation are the family of Allah the Almighty. The best liked amongst the creation to their creator are those who are best to their family." (Baihaqi, Mishkaat Masabih, p212)

In the term 'creation', Muslim, non-Muslim of all other faiths are included.

Allah (the Most High) has stated in the Holy Qur'an:

"Indeed, we honoured the children of Adam (Mankind)..." (Ch 17, v70)

"Verily, we created mankind in the best of statures..." (Ch 95, v4)

This message from the Holy Qur'an, ordering the respect and reverence of creation is applicable to the whole of creation. The Prophet of Mercy (peace be upon him), who was sent as the embodiment of Mercy to Mankind gave the practical example of this injunction.

There was once a funeral procession of a Jewish man passing by where the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) and his companions were seated. The Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) stood up and was informed by the people that it was the funeral of a Jew. In response to this the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "He too has life within him (He is also a human)." (Sahih Bukhari, Hadith 1312)

The value of life in the sight of Islam:

Allah the Almighty has stated in the Holy Qur'an: "...If anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or to spread mischief in the land – it would be as if he killed all of mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind..." (Ch 5, v32)

To harm ones own body is also not allowed in Islam. This is because even a person's own physical health and body is considered the trust (Immanah) of the creator, Almighty Allah. As the glorious Qur'an mentions: "O you who believe! Eat not the property among yourselves unjustly except it be a trade amongst you, by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves (nor kill one another). Surely, Allah is Most Merciful to you." (Ch 4, v29)

In the same context, to unjustly take the life of a baby (in the form of abortion) be it the decision of the female herself or influence of others, is a great sin in Islam for all liable parties involved. As the Qur'an mentions "And kill not your

children for fear of poverty. We shall provide for them as well as for you. Surely, the killing of them is a great sin” (Ch 17, v31)

From the entire creation of Allah, Mankind is considered the best of creation. In Islam however morality is emphasised to such a high degree that even the unjust killing of animals is considered incorrect. As Allah the Almighty states in the Qur’an “And kill not any living creation whom Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause. This He has commanded you that you may understand.” (Ch 6, v151)

Good Character towards Non-Muslims:

It is a foundation of the teaching of Islam that it is necessary for a Muslim to adopt the religious code of Islam and also to have good relations and character towards those of other faiths. The Qur’an clearly states that the guidance of a people, a nation... and acceptance of the true religion is only due to the divine will of the Creator Allah Almighty. However, if in place of this a Muslim does not uphold good relations and character with those of other faiths, this is incorrect. However sublime the treatment and character of a Muslim is towards others including those of other faiths, Allah the Most High will reward him/her for their actions accordingly.

Allah the Most High has stated in the Holy Qur’an: “Their guidance is not upon you (O Muhammed), but Allah guides whom He wills. Whatever you spend in good, you will be rewarded for it in full...” (Ch 2, v272)

In the time of the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him), the enemies of the message of Islam, expelled the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions through oppression and harshness that cannot be imagined, from the city of their birth (Makkah). The oppression and hardships on the new Muslims was fresh in the hearts of the Muslims. At this time there was an intense famine in Makkah, to the extent that people were forced to eat carrion and garbage to survive. The Muslims were not blessed with a great deal of wealth at this time, even so, through their mercy Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) collected and sent **500 Dinars** (gold coins) to the leaders of Makkah (Abu Sufyan and Safwan) to be used to feed the people, who ultimately were responsible for their exile. (Rahkdul Mukhtar, vol 3, p302)

The Respect of the Other Faiths and Their Practices:

The simple message of the Holy Qur’an is the propagation of belief in ‘One God (Allah the Almighty)’. There is nothing more necessary to understand in Islam, than this principle of the oneness of God. At the same time there is nothing more important to beware of than associating partners with Allah the Almighty. Islam has however, taught us the way of justice, every person has the free will to follow whichever belief they desire. And it is not permissible to force the belief of Islam upon anyone.

Allah Most High has stated in the Holy Qur’an: “There is no compulsion in religion. Verily the right has become apparent from the wrong.....” (Ch 2, v256)

Abu Rafi relates: ‘The Quraysh sent me as an ambassador of Makkah to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) – (after the truce of Hudaibiya). When I reached Madinah and saw the blessed face of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the reality of Islam entered my heart and I was ready to accept the religion of Islam. I told the Prophet (peace be upon him): ‘O Prophet of Allah the Most High (peace be upon him), now I will not return to my people.’ The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him: ‘I will not break the oath that I have given to your people. Nor will I keep the ambassador they sent to me, you should return to your people. If, after leaving here, this feeling remains in your heart, then you can return.’ Abu Rafi states: ‘I left Madinah and then returned to the Prophet (peace be upon him) as he had stated and became a Muslim.’ (Sunan Abu Dawood/ Tarjamanus Sunan, vol 2, p155)

Even after Abu Rafi was ready to accept Islam and stay with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Madinah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not keep him in Madinah or force him to accept Islam, as this was against the pact that had been made with the Makkans. Abu Rafi was told to return to his people, after which he returned to Madinah of his own desire and accepted Islam at the hands of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Abu Hurairah (Allah will be pleased with him) narrates: ‘The Prophet (peace be upon him) sent a group of his Companions (Allah will be pleased with them) to the area of Najid. On route to Najid, the Companions (Allah will be pleased with them) came across a man from amongst those who were fighting the Muslims. They captured him as a prisoner, He was known as Thamamah. This man (Thamamah) was taken to Madinah and tied to one of the pillars of the Masjid (Mosque). The Prophet (peace be upon him) came to see him and asked him: ‘O Thamamah, what do you say?’ he said: ‘O Muhammad! (peace be upon him) Remember, if you kill me, I am the leader of my people and verily, they will take revenge of my blood. If you are gratuitous to me, then I will never forget your gratitude. If you need merchandise, tell me and if you need wealth, tell me.’ The Prophet (peace be upon him) left Thamamah as he was that day. The second day the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to Thamamah and asked: ‘O Thamamah, what do you say?’ he said: ‘It is the same and that what I previously said: ‘If you are gratuitous to me, then I will never forget your gratitude. I will always stay thankful to your favour.’ The Prophet (peace be upon him) left Thamamah as he was this day also. On the third day the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to Thamamah and asked: ‘O Thamamah, what do you say?’ he said: ‘The same and that which I previously said.’ The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered: ‘Release Thamamah, let him go.’ Thamamah left

the Masjid and went to a date orchard near the Masjid of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and took a bath. He then returned to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: 'I bear witness there is no god worthy of worship besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah' (the testimony of Faith in Islam, by which one enters the religion of Islam.) Thamamah then stated: 'O Messenger of Allah, before today there was no face that I detested more on the face of this Earth than yours. But today, there is no face more beloved to me on the face of this Earth than yours. I swear by Allah, that there was no religion that I detested more than yours, but today this religion of Islam is now the most loved by me. I swear by Allah, there was no city from the cities of this world that was more detested by me than your city of Madinah, but today there is no city more beloved to me than it.' (Sunan Abu Dawood/ Tarjamanus Sunan, vol 2, p156)

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) released Thamamah without any conditions, he was free to return to his people. During his three days in captivity, he was not forced to accept Islam, nor punished or tortured in any way. Upon his release, of his own accord, Thamamah bathed to clean himself and went back to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and accepted Islam readily. The reason being that he did not wish to accept Islam whilst he was a prisoner.

The leader of the Muslims Umar (Allah will be pleased with him) had a servant, who he brought up from childhood and propagated the message of Islam to him on many occasions. However, he continually refused to accept Islam, Umar (Allah will be pleased with him) would always say in response to his refusal: "There is no compulsion in religion." To the extent that near the death of Umar, he freed this servant. (Kitabul Amwaal, vol 1, p154) When no compulsion was made one's own servant how can we compel other non muslims to accept Islam?

Refraining from insulting those of other Religions:

Allah the Most High has stated in the Holy Qur'an: "Insult not those who worship others besides Allah..." (Ch 6, v108)

From the above verse of the Holy Qur'an, it is clear that those people who follow a religion besides Islam cannot be mocked or insulted for doing so, even though Islam does not allow the worship of any diety besides Allah the Almighty. In view of this fact, the teachings of Islam are that, even in this matter it is incumbent upon a Muslim to respect the beliefs of other religions even though they are not in conformity with the Islamic ideology.

The Freedom to practise other Religions:

Islam openly proclaims the message of truth and propogates it. However, there is no allowance to force the beliefs of Islam upon others. If there are people who wish to practise their religion, then Islam allows them complete freedom to do so. It is Allah the Mighty that guides a person to the straight path. The Holy Qur'an being the very word of Allah the Almighty, proclaimed to the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him): "To you be your religion, and to me my religion." (Ch 109, v6)

And in other places the Holy Qur'an states: "Dispute you with us about Allah the Most High while he is our Lord and your Lord? We are to be rewarded for our deeds and you for your deeds." (Ch 2, v139)

The Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) showed us through his practical actions when a group of Christians from Najran came to visit the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Medina. The Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) gave them permission to worship according to their teachings whilst they stayed in Medina. (Ahkaam Ahle Zima, vol 1, p316)

The jurists of Islam have written that it is not necessary to marry 'People of the Book' (the Jews and Christians). However, there is an allowance within the teachings of Islam that if a Muslim man did marry a Jewish or Christian woman, then she too will be given the freedom to practice her religion in wedlock to a Muslim, i.e. fasting on her religious days of the week etc... and her Muslim husband should not prevent her from doing so. (Ahkaam Ahle Zima, vol 1, p316)

During the time of Abu Bakr Siddique (Allah will be pleased with him), the 1st Khalifa after the demise of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the area of Hayra was conquered. Abu Bakr Siddique (Allah will be pleased with him) drafted a piece of legislation from the conquered land, from which the 1st ruling was that there would be no interference with the religious practices of the Christians in that area. The 2nd ruling stipulated was that their religion (Christianity) was not to be mocked or insulted. (Mowsu-atul Khiraj, p143)

The way the Tartars oppressed and tortured the Muslims has been recorded in history (8, Rajab, 699 Hijri/ 13, March, 1300). When the Tartars reached Damascus, there were many religions present in the City; Muslims, Jews, Christians etc. The Tartars captured all of them, at that time Shaykul Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (rah) stood up and fought the Tartars. The matter reached such a stage that the Tartars agreed to release the Muslim prisoners they had with them to so prevent any more fighting. Ibn Taymiyyah (rah) stated: 'I will not accept this truce, as there are also amongst your captives Christians and Jews who have stayed under the Muslim rule and abided by the law of the land. We (the Muslims) therefore have a duty to ensure they are also released without condition. If this is not agreed, then we will continue to fight you.' (Al Bidayah wal Nihayah, vol 14, p11/ Tarikh Dawatu Azeemat, vol 2, p57)

Government/ Foreign Relations:

Islam recommends the creation of an ideal system on foreign relations between Muslims and Non Muslims. To the extent, that the teachings of Islam allow those of other religions to be granted the opportunity to work within a Muslim country without discrimination. Even in the time of the companions of the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him), Non Muslims used to occupy very respectable and distinguished posts within the Islamic Government.

1. In the time of the companion Muawiya (Allah will be pleased with him) the head of the treasury/financial commission in Homs (Aleppo, Syria) Ibn Athal was a Christian.
2. King Abdul Malik bin Marwan's scribe was Ibn Thurzoon, who used to write the king's legislative documents and letters, was also a Christian.
3. In the Abbasia rule, Nasr bin Haroon, a Christian, was the deputy Prime Minister and enjoyed honour and respect from both Muslims and Non Muslims alike. There are many other examples like this. (Makala Shibli, vol 2, p 217-219)

Why is tax taken from Non Muslims in Muslim Lands?

In the Muslim Lands, the Islamic Law (Shariah) stipulates that all Muslims who have reached the age of maturity will have to give Zakat (Charity) if their individual wealth reaches the value stated by the Shariah. The Government will take this 'Zakat' (fixed at 2.5% of the excess wealth) from those eligible to pay once a year. There is a clear statement that this charity will be taken from all those who are of mature age and their wealth is above that of the required amount: be they male or female, young or old, able or physically challenged. (Kutub-e-Fiqh)

If this very same system was used for Non Muslims that reside in Muslim ruled lands, it would be a very heavy burden on them, as the Muslim will pay the tax due to it being a principle of their religion. Hence, Jizya (tax) is not taken from the non muslims in the same way as Zakat applies for the Muslims, infact discretion is given.

Those Non muslims that earn a low wage are expected to pay only 12 Dirhams (£3) for the whole year. Those that earn a moderate wage are expected to pay 24 Dirhams (£6). Those that earn a high wage are expected to pay 48 Dirhams (£12). (Sunan Baihaqi vol 9, p329, # 18685)

Further Non Muslim women, children, old, sick, physically challenged, poor and religious leaders of other faiths are not expected to pay this Jizya (tax). Only those men are expected to pay a very small amount once a year who are in employment. (Hidaya, vol 4, p318. Ahkaam Ahle Zima, vol 1, p148)

The reason for collecting this small amount of Jizya (tax) is to ensure the safety and security of the Non Muslims not because of them being Non Muslims.

The Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) has very forcefully stated that the blood, life and wealth of a Non Muslim living under Muslim rule is to be safeguarded in the same way as the Muslims would be. (Sunan Baihaqi)

There is no differentiation between the two. The Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) stated that any Zimmi (a Non Muslim living under Muslim rule) or those who have a treaty with the Muslims to live in peace, if anyone was to harm these people living under the Muslim rule they will not even be able to smell the fragrance of Heaven (they will not enter Heaven). (Sahih Bukhari # 3166)

It is necessary that Muslims understand that they need to preach the true teaching of Islam to their Non Muslim brothers and sisters. Non Muslims should also try and learn and understand what the true teachings of Islam are.

We hope from this it is clear that it is very simple to make this World a place of peace and security for all those that live in it, regardless of religion, race or creed.

والله وحده هو المسؤول والمستعان وهو الهادي إلى سبيل الخير والسلام .



مفتى محمد يوسف دنكا (عفا الله عنه)

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