

BIRMINGHAM CENTRAL MOSQUE



The Tolerance Of The **Prophet Muhammad** (P.B.U.H) Towards other religions



The dealings of the Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, with other religions can best be described in the verse of the Quran: **"To you be your religion, to me be mine."**

The Arabian Peninsula during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was a region in which various faiths were present. There were Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, polytheists, and others not affiliated with any religion. When one looks into the life of the Prophet, one may draw on many examples to portray the high level of tolerance shown to people of other faiths.

In order to understand and judge this tolerance, one must look into the period in which Islam was a formal state, with the specific laws laid down by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in accordance with the tenets of religion. Even though one can observe many examples of tolerance shown by the Prophet in the thirteen years of his stay in Makkah, the discussion will be limited to the period which commenced with the migration of the Prophet to Madina, and specifically once the constitution was set.

The best example of the tolerance shown by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to other religions may be the constitution itself, called the 'Saheefah' by early historians. When the Prophet migrated to Madina, his role as a mere religious leader ended; he was now the political leader of a state, governed by the precepts of Islam, which demanded that clear laws of governance be laid out to ensure harmony and stability in a society which once had been distraught by decades of war, one which must ensure the peaceful coexistence of Muslims, Jews, Christians and polytheists. Due to this, the Prophet laid down a 'constitution' which detailed the responsibilities of all parties which resided in Medina, their obligations towards each other, and certain restrictions which were placed on each. All parties were to obey what was mentioned therein, and any breach of its articles was regarded as an act of treachery.

The first article of the constitution was that all the inhabitants of Medina, the Muslims as well as those who had entered the pact from the Jews, Christian, and idolaters, were "one nation to the exclusion of all

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others." All were considered members and citizens of Medina society regardless of religion, race, or ancestry. People of other faiths were protected from harm as much as the Muslims, as is stated in another article, "To the Jews who follow us belong help and equity. He shall not be harmed nor his enemies be aided." Previously, each tribe had their alliances and enemies within and without Medina. The Prophet gathered these different tribes under one system of governance which upheld pacts of alliances previously in existence between those individual tribes. All tribes had to act as a whole with disregard to individual alliances. Any attack on other religion or tribe was considered an attack on the state and upon the Muslims as well.

The lives of the practitioners of other religions in the Muslim society was also given protective status. The Prophet said:

"Whoever kills a person who has a truce with the Muslims will never smell the fragrance of Paradise."
(Saheeh Muslim)

Since the upper hand was with the Muslims, the Prophet strictly warned against any maltreatment of people of other faiths. He said:

"Beware! Whoever is cruel and hard on a non-Muslim minority, or curtails their rights, or burdens them with more than they can bear, or takes anything from them against their free will; I (Prophet Muhammad) will complain against the person on the Day of Judgment."
(Abu Dawud)

In another article, it states, "the Jews have their religion and the Muslims have theirs." In this, it is clear that anything other than tolerance would not be tolerated, and that, although all were members of a society, each had their separate religion which could not be violated. Each was allowed to practice their beliefs freely without any hindrances, and no acts of provocation would be tolerated.

There are many other articles of this constitution which may be discussed, but emphasis will be placed on an article which states, "If any dispute or controversy likely to cause trouble should arise, it must be referred to God and His Messenger." This clause maintained that all inhabitants of the state must recognize a higher

level of authority, and in those matters which involved various tribes and religions, justice could not be meted out by individual leaders; rather it must be adjudicated by the leader of the state himself or his designated representatives. It was allowed, however, for individual tribes who were not Muslims, to refer to their own religious scriptures and their learned men in regards to their own personal affairs. They could though, if they opted, ask the Prophet to judge between them in their matters. God says in the Quran:

"...If they do come to you, either judge between them or decline to interfere..." (Quran 5:42)

Here we see that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) allowed each religion to judge in their own matters according to their own scriptures, as long as it did not stand in opposition to articles of the constitution, a pact which took into account the greater benefit of the peaceful co-existence of the society.

There are many other examples during the lifetime of the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, in addition to the Saheefah that practically portray the tolerance Islam shows for other religions.

Given consent by the constitution, the Jews had the complete freedom to practice their religion. The Jews in Medina at the time of the Prophet had their own school of learning, named Bait-ul-Midras, where they would recite the Torah, worship and educate themselves.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized in many letters to his emissaries that religious institutions should not be harmed. Here in a letter addressed to his emissary to the religious leaders of Saint Catherine in Mount Sinai who has sought the protection of the Muslims:

"This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them. Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by God! I hold out against anything that displeases them. No compulsion is to be on them. Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims' houses. Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God's covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are

my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate. No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. The Muslims are to fight for them. If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray. Their churches are declared to be protected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants. No one of the nation (Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world)."

As one can see, this Charter consisted of several clauses covering all important aspects of human rights, including such topics as the protection of minorities living under Islamic rule, freedom of worship and movement, freedom to appoint their own judges and to own and maintain their property, exemption from military service, and the right to protection in war.

On another occasion, the Prophet received a delegation of sixty Christians from the region of Najran, then a part of Yemen, at his mosque. When the time for their prayer came, they faced the direction of east and prayed. The Prophet ordered that they be left in their state and not harmed.

There are also examples in the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in which he cooperated between with people of other faiths in the political arena as well. He selected a non-Muslim, Amr-ibn Umaiyah-ad-Damri, as an ambassador to be sent to Negus, the King of Ethiopia.

These are only some of the examples of the Prophet's tolerance of other faiths.

Islam recognizes that there are a plurality of religions on this earth, and gives the right to individuals to choose the path which they believe to be true. Religion is not to be, and was never, forced upon an individual against their own will, and these examples from the life of the Prophet are an epitome of the verse of the Quran which promotes religious tolerance and sets the guideline for the Muslims' interaction with people of other faiths. God says:

"...There is no compulsion in religion..." (Quran 2:256)

PROPHET THE BEST MAN IN THE HISTORY MUHAMMAD PEACE BE UPON HIM

Views of non-Muslim scholars about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

Nepolean Bonaparte – Quoted in Christian Cherfils
BONAPARTE ET ISLAM (PARIS 1914)

"I hope the time is not far off when I shall be able to unite all the wise and educated men of all the countries and establish a uniform regime based on the principles of Qur'an which alone are true and which alone can lead men to happiness."

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, YOUNG INDIA, 1924

"...I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and his own mission. These, and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every trouble." YOUNG INDIA, 1924

Lamartine - Histoire de la Turquie, Paris 1854, Vol II, pp. 276-77:

"If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? The most famous men created arms, laws and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and souls... the forbearance in victory, his ambition,

which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire; his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death; all these attest not to an imposture but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma. This dogma was twofold, the unit of God and the immateriality of God; the former telling what God is, the latter telling what God is not; the one overthrowing false gods with the sword, the other starting an idea with words.

"Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?"

Edward Gibbon and Simon Ockley History of the Saracen Empire, London, 1870, p. 54:

"It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder, the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran...The Mahometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. 'I believe in One God and Mahomet the Apostle of God', is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honors of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue, and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion."

Who is muhammad?

George Bernard Shaw said about him: "He must be called the Savior of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it much-needed peace and happiness". (The Genuine Islam, Singapore, Vol. 1, No. 8, 1936)

Natural cures of Prophet Muhammad (Sallal la ho Alaihe Wassallam)

Milk: The Prophet (SAW) said that milk wipes away heat from the heart just as the finger wipes away sweat from the brow. It strengthens the back, increases the brain, augments intelligence, renews vision and drives away forgetfulness.

Honey: Considered to be the best remedy for diarrhea when mixed in hot water. It is the food of foods, drink of drinks and drug of drugs. It is used for creating appetite, strengthening the stomach, eliminating phlegm, as a meat preservative, hair conditioner, eye salve and mouthwash. It is extremely beneficial in the morning in warm water and is also a Sunnah.

Olive oil: excellent treatment for skin and hair, delays aging, treats inflammation of the stomach

Mushroom: The Prophet (SAW) said that mushroom is a good cure for the eyes - it also arrests paralysis.

Grapes: The Prophet was very fond of grapes; it purifies the blood, provides vigor and health, strengthens the kidneys and clears the bowels.

Dates: The Prophet (SAW) said that a house without dates has no food. Also to be eaten at the time of childbirth.

Figs: It is a fruit from paradise and a cure for piles.

Barley: Good for fever in a soup form.

Melon: Melon contains 1000 blessings and 1000 mercies, The prophet SAW said "None of your women who are pregnant and eat of water melon will fail to produce off spring who are good in countenance and good in character.

Pomegranate: The Prophet (SAW) said it cleanse you of Satan and evil aspirations for 40 days.

Water: The Prophet (SAW) said the best drink in this world and the next is Water, when you are thirsty drink it by sips and not gulps, gulping produces sickness of the liver. So praise be to our beloved Nabi (SAW) who produced us with marvelous knowledge which dazzles the wisest minds.

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