

Muslim And non-Muslim Relationship

By
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Introduction

to the Third Edition

Thanks are due to Allah the Lord of the Universe. Peace and blessings be upon the noblest creation and the seal of the Prophets as well as the other Prophets of Allah, the family of the Prophet, his Companions and all who follow their steps closely.

Many jurists and authors of books of Islamic studies have dealt with the issue of the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. Among these works are both serious efforts as well as emotional attempts.

However, there are still some questions that need to be answered. Muslims today have to deal with new situations such as living as minorities in overwhelmingly non-Muslim communities. Muslim countries also have to deal with some new international environments, face new problems, which were non-existent during the Muslims' golden eras. The world now, interacts through a web of international laws and organizations leaving little room for isolation or real independence. There is also a great need to secure peace for the peaceful individuals and nations regardless of their faith. All these factors impose a need for a clear and broader understanding of the Islamic law concerning the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. This task can be accomplished only by resorting directly to the teachings of the Holy Quraan and the Prophetic Traditions guided by the Muslim scholars' works throughout history.

Among these urgent questions are:

- 1.What is the original rule for the relation between Muslims and non-Muslims? And what is the exceptional rule and Jihad?
- 2.Where does Islam stand from the innate ties and the acquired ones?
- 3.What do the words: *al-walaa* and *al-baraa* mean?

4. What are the forms of cooperation between Muslims and the others?

The purpose of this book is to answer these questions briefly, departing from the first research in Arabic for the author, titled “The Reality of the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims”, the first , and the second edition of this book and other related papers.

All thanks are due to Allah, and then to those who contributed to this work directly or indirectly, either by enlightening the author by their writings, comments or by providing ideas for discussion. I would like to extend my special appreciation to my daughter Amani for editing this English edition.

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Chapter One

The Basic Rule

Islam does not leave any aspect of the human life without setting its required guidelines. For each aspect it sets a basic rule, which goes in harmony with the basic rules of the other aspects, to indicate in the end, that there is but one creator and one perfect legislator. The basic rule usually functions as an axis around which the secondary rules and exceptions revolve. The relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is no exception.

Before we embark on the concerned topic, we should keep in mind that this life is only a test to determine the kind of life an accountable creature (a human or a jinni)⁽¹⁾ would live in the eternal life. The final accounting will take place only when the test is completed. This test is based on three major factors or gifts: the natural guidance, which is renewed by the messengers of God, the reasoning faculty, the relative freedom of choice. Furthermore, God bestowed on his servants gifts that have different ranges, the ready to be used or the ones to be acquired, utilizing the natural gifts. God’s justice made the **final result of the test based on dividing the exerted efforts by the gifts, which were provided.**⁽²⁾

Life test is similar to the achievement test except that:

1. The time when the test is terminated is unknown; it could take place at any moment.

(¹) Jinn are some invisible creatures but could appear under various forms, both human and animals. They are qualified to be responsible for their decisions and have special powers, such as: moving very fast from one place to another and they were created from fire free of smoke.

(²) Ismaeel, Pre-Recording Not Fate.

2. The full form of cooperation among those taking the test, during the test to grant the best grades for all, is encouraged and rewarded.

Speaking about the basic rule of the relationship between Muslims and the others, we should not ignore the difference between the original rule, and the exceptional one, imposed by reality.

The Original Rule:

The original rule for the relation between Muslims and non-Muslims is based on few verses. The first is: {We have not sent you except as a mercy for the Universe}.(³) This verse clearly assures that Islam is a message for all accountable beings, (Jin and Humans). Islam is a mercy because it guides to felicity and happiness in both this world and in the Hereafter. But, Islam is a mercy only for those who choose it as their guidance.

The second verse comes to clearly confirm that: {There is no compulsion in religion. The truth stands out clear from error}.(⁴) For Allah has granted the Humans and the Jin the freedom, in this life, to choose between the right path and the wrong path to the eternal felicity. He delayed their account for misusing this freedom to the end of the testing period i.e. after death, provided that they do not cause injustice to other creatures. Allah says: {But if they are averse We have not send you as a warder over them. Yours is only to convey the message}, {But if you deny, then nations have denied before you. The Messenger is only to convey the (massage) plainly,

(³) Glorious Quraan, 21: 107; and see for the commentary of Ibn Taimiyah on this verse in Majmooa: vol 1: 305-306.

(⁴) Glorious Quraan, 2: 256.

and {...If your Lord willed, all who are in the earth would have believed together}.(⁵)

Departing from this fact, Allah made the basic rule in dealing with the non-Muslims who are peaceful or supportive to Muslims and the hostile in the following verses, which read:

{Allah does not forbid you from those who did not fight you and did not drive you out of your homes, to deal with them justly or to do them favors, for Allah love those who are just. Allah forbids you only from taking guardians of those whom have fought you on account of the religion and have driven you out of your homes or helped in driving you out of your homes, for those who take them, as guardians are wrongdoers.}(⁶)

In verse eight, Allah, glorified be He, assures that He does not forbid Muslims doing favor to the non-Muslims.(⁷) Obviously, doing favor is more than to deal justly, for doing a favor could mean to give people more than they deserve or to initiate an act of favor.

The verse also commands us to deal justly with all disbelievers, because Justice in Islam has only one face; it is unlike the justice practiced by some democratic superpowers today. Allah says: {O you who believe, be steadfast witnesses for God in equity, and let not hatred of any people seduce you that you deal not justly.}(⁸)

Verse nine following, confirmed the same ruling in an affirmative way, leaving no room for confusion and, at the same time, forbidding Muslims to take guardians from among those who fought them, driven them out of their homes or helped the oppressors, who are not better than the oppressors

(⁵) Glorious Quran, 42: 48, 29: 18, 10: 99.

(⁶) Glorious Quraan, 60:8-9; and see the commentary of as-Saieedi on other related verses pp. 20-24.

(⁷) See for example: at-Tabari for his commentary on this verse.

(⁸) Glorious Quraan 5: 8.

themselves. We also notice that verse two in the same Chapter does not leave the word "enemy" vague. It clarifies it by describing the enemies, as in: {If they get the better of you they would treat you as their enemies and use their hands and tongues against you with evil, and they desire that you become disbelievers}. So, the enemies are those who are characterized by one or more of these behaviors: harassing Muslims by action, by tongue, or by indicating the desire for Muslims to become disbelievers and are ready to do anything that fulfills their desire. ⁽⁹⁾

Verse seven of the same Chapter introducing verses eight and nine reminds that the enmity mentioned above may not be an everlasting one. Allah says: {It may be that Allah creates mutual love between you and those whom you took as enemies.} ⁽¹⁰⁾ The verse was open concerning the reason for the removal of enmity. For it could occur by the enemies becoming Muslims, taking a supportive stand, or a neutral stand.

In other words, verses: eight and nine confirm that Muslims should not force others to embrace Islam. They came after verse one that forbids taking guardians and trustees among the enemies of Allah, and encourages Muslims to follow the example of Prophet Abraham (pbuh) who boycotted the enemies of Allah. These facts confirm the everlasting validity of the ruling given in verses eight and nine.

The two verses confirm that the original relationship is a peaceful one, not fighting with each other. For the original relationship among the Humans is a relation of knowing each other and cooperation. Allah says: {O people We created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Lo the noblest of you, in the sight

of God, is the most pious. (fear and love God) Lo! God is Knower Aware.}. ⁽¹¹⁾

Islam invites both Jinn and humans to a comprehensive peace that encompasses this life and the Hereafter life. Even if some of them refuse this comprehensive peace, Muslims are still encouraged to cooperate with them, to realize prosperity for all in this temporary life at least, within the limits that does not endanger Muslim' destiny in the eternal life.

Thus, it becomes clear that Islam did not come to break the ties between relatives and human beings, or to instill hatred and enmity between them, or to encourage blood shedding. Nor did Islam come to eliminate the freedom of choice during the life test, which was secured for them by God.

Indeed, even, Satan was granted the freedom to choose between obeying and disobeying his Lord, but he miss used this gift and by his own will chose to disobey. Not only that, but Satan, also, at his own request was granted the opportunity to mislead the others as one components of the test during this temporary life. ⁽¹²⁾ This basic rule is also confirmed by the fact that the Opening Chapter in the Glorious Quraan is a very short chapter. Even though it distinguished between two groups of non-Muslims: the neutral (miss guided) and the hostile (who deserve the wrath).

This is where the duty of Muslims to share Islam with the others comes from. Those who believe that they are on the right track should exert some sincere efforts to save the others, but not by using force or deception. For, there is a great reward for a Muslim who saves a brother or a sister. This reward is unmatched by the best reward of the mundane life. ⁽¹³⁾ Therefore, the true Muslim is careful not to miss this reward by

⁽⁹⁾ Glorious Quraan, 60: 2..

⁽¹⁰⁾ Glorious Quraan, 60: 7; look for Ibn Taimiyah's comments on this verse, Majmoo', vol.1:305-306.

⁽¹¹⁾ Glorious Quraan, 49: 13.

⁽¹²⁾ Ismaeel, Prerecording pp.29-33.

⁽¹³⁾ al-Bukhari: The virtues of the Companions, virtues of Ali.

avoiding anything that may drive people away from Islam, rather he will treat non-Muslims in a way that maintains a friendly relation to provide them with a suitable environment to think about Islam. However, he should balance between maintaining this kind of relation and not risking his own distention in the Hereafter life.

So, the basic rule in the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, as a starting point, is a peaceful relation, and this situation is to be maintained even if the non-Muslims continue to reject Islam for themselves.

However, if he causes injustice to any one he should be disciplined and punished in this life and in the Hereafter. But if he does good deeds, the Prophet (pbuh) said: “God does not treat a believer unjustly in regard to his virtues. He will reward him for them in this world and in the Hereafter. Regarding the disbeliever he will be rewarded for his good deeds in this life. So when he dies there will be nothing for him to be rewarded for.”⁽¹⁴⁾

Concerning the mercy of Allah for all His servants, the Prophet (pbuh) said “Indeed, Allah is more merciful to His servants than this woman to her child”, The Prophet was referring to a captive woman who found her child after losing him and embraced him to suckle him, and who would never throw him in the fire if she can.⁽¹⁵⁾ The Prophet also said: “Indeed, Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His servant than a man who finds his lost camel, in a barren desert, currying his food and drinks”.⁽¹⁶⁾ Therefore, God gave his servant a chance to repent at the very last moment of his life.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Ibnal Qayyim, zad vol. 3:5-9; Sieny, Hageegat al-“alagah pp. 50-54.50-54.; كتاب صفة الجنة، صبح أنعم مسلم، كتاب See Siddiqi translation v.: 1469.

⁽¹⁵⁾ البخاري: الأدب، من ترك صبيبة؛ Muhsin Khan, v: 8: 19.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Siddiqi translation vol, 4: 1434. مسلم: سقوط الذنوب، سعة رحمة الله ؛

The Prophet said: “Allah accepts repentance to the last moment”⁽¹⁷⁾

As a matter of fact, there are many who embraced Islam late in their life, but served Islam and Muslims better than thousands of those who were born as Muslims.

Putting these facts in mind it is hard to believe that there is a Muslim who dare to say: O Allah we have to account the disbeliever for rejecting Islam, even if he is a peaceful one or supportive to Muslims. A Muslim who says that is not only opposing his Lord, Allah, but also contradicting himself, because he, for example, cannot account his students for their mistakes during the test time, but only after the test is finished. In other words, it is not logical to dictate the correct answers and force the student to write them during the test.

But, if a person, willingly, chooses Islam he has to comply with its teachings or he would be subject to punishment, because accepting Islam means signing a life long contract with God.

This original rule goes in harmony with the fact that the peaceful environment is more suitable for preaching any religion, including Islam. The treaty of al- Hudaibiyah was considered by the companions of the Prophet as the real victory, not the opening of Mecca. It helped people to mingle, freely, with each other and communicate, providing the opportunity to teach Islam, to learn it, and to know about its reality, instead of its distorted picture.

The Exceptinal Case and Jihad:

The primary rule for the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is a peaceful cooperative one. If they take a hostile position from Islam and the Muslims for their faith, it is

أحمد: سند المكثرين من الصحابة (17)

the duty of Muslims to defend their religion and themselves. And this is only one form of jihad in Islam. For the word Jihad in Arabic means to struggle i.e. a response to, not an initiative. A Muslim should make jihad with his personal whims, first, to force it to comply with the commandments of Allah and to avoid what Allah Has made forbidden.⁽¹⁸⁾ Even to make jihad against the oppressors does not necessarily mean to wage war, but it includes resorting to courts, to the fair media and fair influential figures or organizations.⁽¹⁹⁾

Perhaps one of the very effective types of jihad against the aggressors is praying to Allah. Many miracles happened as a result of resorting to God with sincere prayers. The fire became cool and harmless to prophet Abraham (pbuh), after he prayed to God, ⁽²⁰⁾ and the bolder, which blocked the cave entrance was removed, after the three blocked people prayed to God.⁽²¹⁾ No wonder Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: “Nothing can prevent *“al-Qadaa”* (the imminent result of laws of nature law) except prayer.”⁽²²⁾ However, to secure a good result a Muslim should abstain from eating, drinking or using forbidden things or money to meet his needs. He has to be sincere, and humble himself before his Lord, and choose the right times for praying such as: before dawn, during prostration and between the call for prayer (Athan) and the call to start praying (Iqaamah)...

However, some claim that Muslims should fight those who stand as obstacles in the path of preaching Islam. This claim is not supported sufficiently by any Quraanic verse, Prophetic tradition or practices of the Guided Caliphs. On the contrary, the

ابن القيم، زاد ج3: 5-9 (18)

صحيح البخاري: الإجازة. (الترمذي: القدر) (19)

Glorious Quraan 21: 69. (20)

البخاري، الإجازة. al-Qadar. at-Tirmithi. (21)

الترمذي، القدر (22)

prophet (pbuh) accepted the provision of not preaching Islam to get the permission to perform Umrah (minor pilgrimage) from Quraish who were in control of Mecca.⁽²³⁾ It seems that the ruling in this issue depends on other factors such as the mutual agreements and the legality of the government preventing preaching in its country.

In fact, a thorough review of the reports of the expeditions during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) shows that the Prophet had never lead a group of Muslims initiating a raid or never sent Muslims to do so. Most of these reports confirm plainly that the battles that the Muslims were engaged in during the time of the Prophet were either in self-defense or retaliation. In general, the cause of these battles could be classified under the following categories: ⁽²⁴⁾

1. Self defense, such as the battles of *Uhud* and *al-Khandaq*.
2. Retaliation for oppression and continuous hostility. This is true in the case of all major battles, including the battles with the tribe of *Quraish* such as *Badr*.
3. Following in the tracks of the enemies who carried out a raid on Medina such as the expedition of *as-Saweeq* and the expedition of *thee Qarad*.
4. Taking by surprise enemies who were preparing themselves to attack Muslims, such as the expedition of *banil-Mustaliq* and the expedition of *Dowmatul-Jandal*.
5. Punishing betrayers or traitors, as in the case of *bani Qinuqaa'*, *banin Nadeer*, *bani Quraidah* and the conquest of Mecca...

There are scholars who claimed that this basic rule had been abrogated, depending on two verses from the Glorious Quraan⁽²⁵⁾. In fact, numerous evidences in the Glorious

البخاري، الجزية والموادعة (23)

Ibn Hisham, trans. Guillaume pp 281-624; 3 ج3: 3, vol. 3. (24)

Glorious Quraan 9: 5, 29. (25)

Quraan, the Prophetic Traditions, the biography of the Prophet(pbuh) and the Islamic history refute this claim. Even a casual scanning of the first thirteen verses of the concerned Chapter reveals that the concerned verses are confined to the hostile non-Muslims who were used to break their oaths and betray Muslims. By no means whatsoever do they include all non-Muslims.⁽²⁶⁾ This rule is applicable to all related texts, when read within their proper contexts.

Even If War was Declared:

It became clear that some of the non-Muslims declared war against Muslims openly and some of them secretly, and all efforts of peace failed with them. Facing this situation Muslims were forced to take the necessary procedures to defend them selves and retaliate to secure a peaceful environment for all in the future.

However, it is natural that this decision is not left for individuals or unofficial groups, regardless of their sincerity and good motivations. The unofficial acts are usually based on insufficient awareness of the real situation. They are marked with emotion and do not have the sufficient facts to take such critical decisions. Therefore, it is natural that they go off of the right track or even contradict the Islamic principles. These opinions may cause the Muslim nation or part of it a great danger, which some times even those who made them, themselves, regret it, at least, because the loss was greater than the benefit.

This is natural because the most appropriate legal opinion is based on two things: perfect or close to perfect diagnosis of the reality, and the good knowledge of the Islamic teachings.

Perhaps the best example for this kind of situation is the Battle of Uhud, when the youth suggested going out for the enemies who were attacking Medina, out of enthusiasm,

⁽²⁶⁾ For the detailed argument see Ismaeel, The relation. pp. 11-15; the original research in Arabic (حقيقة العلاقة ص 26-50).

courage and readiness to sacrifice themselves for Islam. On the other side, the Prophet's opinion to defend Medina from inside, was based on his evaluation of the Muslims' power against the non-Muslims' power and the future of Islam and the security of the Muslims' community forever.

In general, war, in Islam, is not a chaotic means and procedure to beat the enemy and to destroy it for joy. It is regarded as an unavoidable reaction to stop oppression, and to secure a peaceful world to live in, especially for the weak and the oppressed humans. Therefore Islam has set some strict rules to be adhered to, firmly, among the major ones are the following:

- 1- No killing for women, children, elders, the helpless, religious men, unless they participate in war.⁽²⁷⁾
- 2- Concerning the captives they are treated decently and kindly within the existing international norms or laws.⁽²⁸⁾
- 3- If the enemy asked for peace, Muslims should respond, even if they intend to trick Muslims. Allah says: {And if they incline to peace then incline you also to it, and trust in Allah. And if they intend to deceive you then sufficient for you is Allah. It is He Who supports you with His help and with the believers.}⁽²⁹⁾
- 4- To be cautious always, for Allah says: {O you who believe, take your precaution, then advance the proven ones or advance all together.}⁽³⁰⁾

⁽²⁷⁾ 419-417 ج2: أحكام أهل الذمة، ابن القيم، al-Bukhari, v4: 159-60.

⁽²⁸⁾ Qutub, Islam the Misunderstood pp. 62-111.

⁽²⁹⁾ Glorious Quraan, 8: 61-62.

⁽³⁰⁾ Glorious Quran, 4: 71 and see 102.

Chapter two

The Islamic Bond

and the Other bonds

Some people think that Islam neglects the importance of the natural and the acquired relationships between human beings unless they belong to the same faith. However, whoever scrutinizes the Holy Quraan and the Prophetic Traditions carefully will soon discover the error in this understanding.

In fact, Islam encourages strengthening these relations and helps Muslims to do so and to fulfill their duties, according to their relative importance as long as that realizes the felicity of man in this life and in the Hereafter or at least in this world without sacrificing the rights of those who seek success in the Hereafter as well.⁽³¹⁾ The evidences are numerous in the major sources of Islam.

The Bond of Humanity:

As a matter of fact, God has honored Man above the other creatures, regardless of their beliefs. Allah says: {We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and have made good provisions of good things for them, and have preferred them above many of those whom We created with marked preferment.}⁽³²⁾

Honoring the Humans also extends to honoring the dead disbelievers. For “the Prophet (pbuh) stood for a funeral. Then he was told it is a Jewish funeral. He said: Isn’t it a soul?”⁽³³⁾ Um al-Haarith, a Christian woman died and the Companions of

the Prophet attended her funeral.⁽³⁴⁾ Also, Allah recognized the brotherhood between the prophets of God and their folks, including the disbelievers, in case of Noah, Heber, Methuselah, Jethro, and Lot and their folks.⁽³⁵⁾ God also certified the innate love between people connected to each other with some types of bond, regardless of their faith, languages, living places, and time of existence. Among these cases are the love between the married couples, parents and their children, members of the family, and the love of the receiver of a favor towards the giver. And because these types of love are innate love i.e. essential components of the humans, they come before the love, which is based on acquired affiliations.

It is true that recognizing the unity of God is an innate knowledge, for the Prophet said: “a child is born pure, then his parents convert him to Judaism, Christianity or to Maginism”. However, the detailed version of religion is an acquired attribute i.e. Judaism, Christianity and Islam...

All human beings are but brothers in humanity and in being accountable beings. They all come from one father and one mother, multiplied in the same way, and share the same basic components of humanity: the physical, the spiritual, the mental, the psychological, and the behavioral components, as well as the motivations and the needs. Every one of these brothers and sisters should care for the others, and invite them to what secures them prosperity in both lives.

Therefore, it is the duty of Muslims to share with the others the gift of Islam, and not to monopolize it by any means. Among the means of monopolization is to do anything that might drive the others away.

⁽³¹⁾ see for example الطريفي ص 31-23

⁽³²⁾ Glorious Quran, 17: 70.

⁽³³⁾ al-Bukari, Funerals.

⁽³⁴⁾ القرضاوي ص 43-54.

⁽³⁵⁾ Glorious Quraan, 26: 106, 124, 142, 161.

Everyone should try to save the others, but by employing tender approaches such as begging them to listen sometimes. For this is the tradition of all messengers of God (may peace be upon them). Among these tender approaches is to call a non-Muslim: my father, my son, my folks, people of the book, and my uncle.⁽³⁶⁾

In other words, Muslims should address non-Muslims with names that they like, such as Christians, in lieu to *Nasara*, which is mentioned in the Quraan. As a matter of fact, if some names were given in the Glorious Quraan for the non-Muslims, it does not mean that Muslims are obliged to use them. There is even no evidence, which says that they are preferred. The names given in the Holy Quraan, are usually descriptions of reality, such as: *mushric* (who believe in more than one God), *ahlul kitaab* (People of the book), *kaafir* (disbeliever). We all know that to be a disbeliever is a relative matter e.g. a Muslim is a disbeliever to a Hindu and vice versa.

The Kinship Bond:

The difference in faith did not prevent Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) from advising Muslims to take good care of the people of Egypt in general predicting: "You are going to conquer Egypt, be good to them. They have the right of kinship."⁽³⁷⁾ The Prophet was referring to his great grand mother Hagar, wife of Prophet Abraham, and to his wife Maaryah, may Allah be pleased with them. It should be kept in mind that according to the Quraan the wives of the Prophet are entitled to the title: "Mother of the Believers."⁽³⁸⁾

Acknowledging the rights of kinship in spite of difference of

⁽³⁶⁾ الترمذي، 64؛ 64؛ 3؛ 28-44؛ 40؛ 61؛ 6؛ 42؛ 11؛ 42؛ 19؛ Glorious Quraan، (36)

⁽³⁷⁾ Muslim, virtues of the Companions, the kinships of the Prophet.

⁽³⁸⁾ Muslim, trans. Siddiqi vol 4: 1450.

religion, the Prophet (pbuh) was reported to say: "The family of X is not my guardians and trustees because my guardians and trustees are Allah and the pious believers, but they have kinship rights which I should fulfill."⁽³⁹⁾ Acting on this principle the Prophet (pbuh) fulfilled this right even in the case of one of the worst enemies of Islam then, Quraish, during the peace treaty period. When the chief of Bani Haneefah tribe became a Muslim he swore that he would prevent his tribe from selling wheat to Quraish unless the Prophet (pbuh) gave his permission. The Prophet gave his permission upon the request of Quraish.⁽⁴⁰⁾

On another occasion, the Prophet approved his daughter's expression of love or special sympathy for her husband, Abal al-'As, even though at that time, he was not a Muslim. She sent a precious necklace, which she had inherited from her deceased mother, to free her husband from captivity. The Prophet was moved by love for his daughter and the memory of his deceased wife, and asked the Muslims to give permission to free his daughter's husband, which was granted.⁽⁴¹⁾ So, Abul-'As was released under the promise that he would send the Prophet's daughter to her father in Medina, which he fulfilled. No wonder the Prophet, on one occasion praised him for what he did, even though abul 'As was still a non-Muslim, by publicly attesting: "Abul 'As promised me and he fulfilled his promise."⁽⁴²⁾ The Prophet also approved the asylum that Um Hani (a niece of the Prophet (pbuh) granted to two disbelievers who were kin of her husband, during the conquest of Mecca.⁽⁴³⁾

Acting on the same principle the second Guided Caliph,

⁽³⁹⁾ al-Bukhari, trans. Khan vol 8: 14.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ ابن القيم، زاد ج3: 277؛ 464-465؛ 5؛ al-Bukhari, trans. Khan vol 5:

⁽⁴¹⁾ العسقلاني ج7: 107؛ ابن القيم، زاد ج3: 283؛

⁽⁴²⁾ al-Bukhari, trans. Khan vol 5: 56-57.

⁽⁴³⁾ al-Bukhari, trans. Khan vol 8: 82.

Umar, sent his non-Muslim brother a piece of clothing as a present.⁽⁴⁴⁾ As a matter of fact, Umar was known to be very strict in implementing the Islamic teachings, to the degree that Satan always avoided his path. ⁽⁴⁵⁾

Indeed, the Glorious Quraan clearly confirms the rights of kinship of non-Muslim relatives, for Allah says: {We have enjoined on man kindness to parents, but if they strive or force you to worship with Me things which you have no knowledge, do not obey them.}⁽⁴⁶⁾ In another verse Allah says: {And We have enjoined on man to be good to his parents. His mother bore him, in travail upon travail. And in two years was his weaning. Show gratitude to Me and to your parents. To Me is the final destiny, and If they strive to make you worship with Me things which, you have no knowledge, do not obey them. Yet, bear them company in this life with kindness...}⁽⁴⁷⁾

For this reason the Prophet (pbuh) granted permission to Asmaa to take care of her mother, who was a non-Muslim, during her visit to her daughter, in Medina. ⁽⁴⁸⁾ Also, a weighty legal opinion of Muslim jurists says it is compulsory for a Muslim to provide his non-Muslim parents with sustenance.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Another legal opinion states that a non-Muslim's relative can have his share from the endowment of his Muslim relative,⁽⁵⁰⁾ but non of them has the right to claim a share from the other. Even a non-Muslim slave girl who gives birth to a child from her Muslim master is automatically freed after the death of her

⁽⁴⁴⁾ al-Bukhari trans. Khan vol.8: 9-10.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ al-Bukhari:, trans. Khan vol 8: 10.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Glorious Quraan, 29: 8.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Glorious Quraan, 31: 14-15.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ al-Bukhri, trans. Khan vol 8: 8.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ ابن القيم، أحكام ج2: 417-419.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ ابن القيم، أحكام ص 203-205.

master.⁽⁵¹⁾

According to the Islamic law a Muslim male can marry a Jewish or a Christian female. Therefore, if both couples were Christians or Jews and the husband became a Muslim, he is still permitted to maintain the marriage bond. This exception was granted for a female from the People of the Book because all three religions, originally, come from God according to Islam. This fact secures the wife her husband's respect. For the same reason Islam does not allow a Muslim to marry females from other sects or religions and Islam does not permit a female Muslim to marry any non-Muslim male because the female is usually the weaker partner in the marriage bond. This fact jeopardizes the destiny of the children in the hereafter, especially because the non-Muslim is not governed by clear cut or stable laws concerning the wife's rights as it is the case with the Muslim husband.

Regardless of the difference in faith the couple can share a mutual love and concern for each other, for this is a matter of laws of nature. Allah says:{And among His signs is that He created for you mates from among yourselves that you may dwell with in tranquility, and He has put love and mercy between you.}⁽⁵²⁾

Rights of the Acquired Bonds:

Embarking from this principle the Prophet (pbuh) out of hospitality permitted his Christian guests to say their prayer in the mosque ⁽⁵³⁾, The Prophet also encouraged doing good, regardless of who benefits from it. He said: "Any Muslim who plants any kind of a plant shall be rewarded for it each time a

⁽⁵¹⁾ ابن القيم، أحكام ص 317.

⁽⁵²⁾ Glorious Quraan, 30: 21; see الاستعانة ص 31-23.

⁽⁵³⁾ ابن القيم، أحكام، زاد ج3: 629.

human being or an animal eats from it."(⁵⁴) Here the Prophet encourages doing good regardless of who will benefit from it. This principle is applicable to all kinds of contributions that realize the public welfare in the country where a Muslim is a citizen or a resident, as far as they are permissible in Islam.

Islam also honored the bonds of community belonging and neighborhood regardless of the difference in faith. Islam made it clear that Muslims should take good care of their neighbors. Allah, glorified be He, says: {Worship Allah and do not join any partners with Him and do good to your parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbors who are relatives, neighbors who are strangers, companions by your side, wayfarers and slaves.}(⁵⁵)

The Prophet also emphasizing the neighbor's rights, said: "Whoever believes in Allah and in the Hereafter should take good care of his neighbor,"(⁵⁶) and said: "Gabriel kept reminding me of the neighbor's rights till I thought he would tell me that the neighbor inherits his neighbor."(⁵⁷) Al-'Asqalaani, commenting on this tradition and quoting the above verse said:(⁵⁸)"A Companion of the Prophet (pbuh) understood the verse as setting a general rule. Therefore, when a sheep was slaughtered for him he ordered his family to send some of it to his Jewish neighbor." Al-Asqalaani added that at-Tabarani reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said: " There are three types of neighbors: a neighbor who has one right, the non-Muslim neighbor, a neighbor who has two rights, the Muslim neighbor, a neighbor who has three rights i.e. the Muslim who is also a relative".

(⁵⁴) al-Bukhari, trans. Khan vol 8: 26.

(⁵⁵) Glorious Quraan, 4: 36.

(⁵⁶) al-Bukhari, trans. Khan vol 8: 29.

(⁵⁷) al-Bukhari. trans. Khan vol 8: 27.

(⁵⁸) Glorious Quraan, 4: 36.

The Prophet also said: "By Allah, he is not a true believer. By Allah, he is not a true believer. By Allah, he is not a true believer." the Companions asked: "Who?" The Prophet said: "The One whose neighbor is not safe from his evils."(⁵⁹)

1. Al-Qaradaawi gave numerous examples from both the Prophetic Traditions and the Islamic history of fairness and magnanimity in dealing with the non-Muslims. Among his examples was: Regardless of Quraish's hostility, the Prophet sent gifts to the Meccans to be distributed among the poor when they had a drought,
2. The Prophet assigned an annual charity for a Jewish family,
3. The Prophet stood for a Jewish funeral that was passing by.

The second Caliph Umar ordered charity for some leper Christians, and although one of the non-Muslims assassinated him, he recommended that *thimmis* (non-Muslims living in the Muslim country) should be treated justly.(⁶⁰) Al-Qaradaawi added that some of the Muslim scholars held the opinion that the *zakat* (the obligatory charity) could be given to a *thimmi* and among these scholars are: Ikrimah, and ibn Sireen. He assured that this magnanimity departs from the Islamic teachings that emphasize respect of human being in general, recognition of his freedom of choice in religion in this life and that Muslims are not required to judge prejudicially the non-Muslims because of not believing in Islam.

Thus, it becomes clear that Islam respects all sorts of bonds and gives each bond its rights according to its relative importance.

(⁵⁹) al-Bukhari. trans. Khan vol 8: 28.

(⁶⁰) القرضاوي ص 43-54.

The Quraan and Generalization:

When reviewing the Quraanic style we notice that the Quraan avoids generalizing the negative attributes of non-Muslims. This principle is well demonstrated in the verses describing the People of the Book or the polytheists. There are basically two techniques that have been used to avoid generalization: the special words and the direct or indirect context.

First. The special word:

There are certain words in Arabic that give clear indications that only part of a group is meant by a specific description. Among these words are: فريق *fareeq* (a group) ⁽⁶¹⁾ طائفة *taayfah* (a group), ⁽⁶²⁾ كثير *katheer* (many) ⁽⁶³⁾، or من *min* (some). ⁽⁶⁴⁾

Secondly. The special context.

Sometimes, a verse may seem to contain a general judgment. But once the context is examined the generalization is removed. Contexts could be direct and appear in different forms. It can appear before the judgment or directly after the judgment. For example, verses (9: 97-98) read: {The Arabs of the desert are the worst in unbelief and hypocrisy, and most fitted to be in ignorance of the command which Allah has sent down to His Apostle, but Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. Some of the desert Arabs look upon their payments as a fine, and watch for disasters for you. On them is the disaster of evil, for Allah hears and knows all things}. These two verses are followed immediately by verse (9: 99) which reads: {And among the

desert Arabs are those who believe in Allah and the Last day and look on their payments as pious gifts bringing them nearer to Allah and obtaining the prayers of the Prophet. Indeed, these deeds bring them nearer to Allah, and soon Allah will admit them to His mercy, for Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.} ⁽⁶⁵⁾ If we quote only verses 9: 97 or 98, we definitely come to understand that the description given is true for all Arabs. However the true meaning appears only if we read verse 9: 99 too.

The context could be a lengthy one and is interspersed with appropriate teachings and comments, such as in the case of verses (5: 51-52) that read: {O You who believe, do not take the Jews and the Christians as your guardians and trustees. They are guardians and trustees of each other. And whoever takes them as guardians and trustees is but one of them, Allah will not guide those who choose misguidance. You will see those in whose hearts is a disease- how eagerly they run about among you saying: "our fortune changes and disaster falls on us". Perhaps Allah brings you victory or a decision according to His will. Then they will repent of the thoughts, which they secretly harbored in their hearts.} The context of this verse begins from verse (5: 12) in which Allah, glorified be He, tells the story of some Jews and Christians, who rejected, mocked at their prophets or altered their messages, and plotted against Islam. So, the reference is not to all Jews or all Christians, but only to those who participated in or approved these evil deeds.

The context, sometimes, is not included in the text but exists in the reason or the specific event behind the revelation of the verse or the judgment. And without referring to the event itself the verse cannot be interpreted properly, such as in the case of the verse which reads: {Soon We shall cast terror into the hearts of the disbelievers, because they worshipped other

⁽⁶¹⁾ Glorious Quraan, 2: 75, 100, 101; 3: 100; 24: 47-49.

⁽⁶²⁾ Glorious Quraan, 3: 69, 72; 4: 81.

⁽⁶³⁾ Glorious Quraan, 2: 109; 5: 66, 71.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ Glorious Quraan, 3: 75, 113; 9: 98-99.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ See also Glorious Quraan, 3: 110-115.

things with Allah, for which He had sent no authority. Their abode will be Fire, and evil will be the home of the wrong doers.}(66) Although the reason for the mentioned threat seems to be sufficiently declared in the verse, the complete meaning is not clear till we read from verse (3: 139), where the description and the comment on the battle of Uhud begins. In other words, the threat was given not just because they worshipped other things with Allah, but because of their aggressive acts against Muslims.

Similarly, when we look at the following verses without their contexts, they seem to be passing generalized judgment. These verses read: {Never will the Jews or the Christians be satisfied with you unless you follow their religion...}(67) and {Even if you bring to the People of the Book all signs, they would not follow your Qiblah or religion...}(68) If we try to understand those two verses without their contexts, we will certainly end up with accusing the Glorious Quraan of contradiction. The generalized meaning of these verses contradicts numerous verses, Prophetic Traditions, legal opinions of the majority of Muslim jurists and valid historical reports. All of which assure the existence of the neutral non-Muslims, the supportive, or those who accepted Islam among the People of the Book. For example, Allah says: {Among the people of the Book are some who if entrusted with a hoard of gold will pay it back...} (69) and Allah says: {... and you will find that the nearest among them in love to the believers are those who say: we are Christians. Because among them there are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the

(66) Glorious Quraan, 3: 151.

(67) Glorious Quraan, 2: 120 and its context begins from verse 2: 40.

(68) Glorious Quraan, 2: 145 and it is a continuation of verse 2: 120.

(69) Glorious Quraan, 3: 75.

world and they are not arrogant.}(70) Allah also says: {Not all of them are alike. Of the People of the Book are portions that stand for the right. They rehearse the Signs of Allah all night long, and they prostrate themselves in adoration. They believe in Allah and the Last Day. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and they hasten in emulation in all good works. They are in the ranks of the righteous}(71)

Therefore, to understand any verse properly we cannot ignore its direct or indirect contexts. Unfortunately, very often intentionally or unintentionally some people strip the holy texts of their proper contexts to come up with outrageously wrong interpretations and conclusions.

It is also worthy of mentioning that to generalize the wickedness is similar to generalizing the goodness of someone. They are both wrong and contradicting to Islamic justice. They only distort facts and may damage the friendly cooperative interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims at both the popular and the official levels.

In addition to that all human beings, naturally, share great similarities in values such as: disliking evil and injustice and loving good and justice. So, it is no wonder that people, regardless of their faith, nationality and language, cooperate in the fight against evil. There are many among the non-Muslims who maintain this natural disposition and their religions support these natural inclinations.

Departing from the original rule, Islam in general granted numerous rights for the non-Muslim minorities in the Muslim countries. In fact some of the non-Muslims became high officials in Muslim countries, and in few cases represented their Muslim country, in Islamic conferences, attended by the foreign ministers of the Muslim countries, a status, which no

(70) Glorious Quraan, 5: 82.

(71) Glorious Quraan, 3: 113-114.

Muslim reached in any secular countries. For example, Judaism and Christianity have survived and flourished in the areas subsequently reigned by Muslims throughout centuries although the opposite is not true.

It is relatively true that when the secular system took charge and handed legislation to the majority, it granted more freedom of believe and worship to all religions. Concerning the civil rights and personal affairs, even such as what to wear, has been lifted for the majority to decide.

The Islamic law being realistic as any realistic system, gives the majority more rights, a principle that is also practiced by the secular systems. For example, Muslim minorities who live in non-Muslim countries cannot apply some of the very basic parts of the Islamic law. And because Islam is a practical religion it pardons those Muslims from applying these laws. Among these laws are: capital punishment, cutting of the hand of the thief and lashing who commit adultery. In fact, Islam encourages these Muslims to be good citizens of high moral values.⁽⁷²⁾

Supportive and Neutral Non-Muslims:

When we review Muslims' experience with the non-Muslims throughout history, we find many examples of neutral or even supportive non-Muslims. Yes, there are some fierce enemies of Islam and Muslims, but this is not always the case.

We all know of the protection and the support rendered by Abu Talib to his nephew, the Prophet (pbuh), although Abu Talib was not a Muslim and chose to die as such.⁽⁷³⁾ We cannot ignore that during the battle of Hawaazin, Safwaan son of Umayyah who was not a Muslim lent Muslims a large amount

of weaponry. ⁽⁷⁴⁾ The Prophet was visiting a Jewish boy who was sick and asked him to accept Islam. Then the boy's father encouraged his son to respond to the request of the Prophet. ⁽⁷⁵⁾ The clan of Bani Hashim, although not Muslim, voluntarily joined their cousins, the clan of Bani Abdul Muttalib, in the siege imposed by the Tribe of Quraish on the Prophet, and his clan bani Abdul Muttalib.⁽⁷⁶⁾

Some non-Muslims also aided the Muslims during this siege by providing food secretly, while others worked on abolishing the siege document signed by Quraish. ⁽⁷⁷⁾ After the death of the Prophet's uncle he went to Taif to call its people to Islam but they only encouraged their children to throw stones at the Prophet. The Prophet felt deeply hurt and humiliated, but al-Mut'am bin 'Adyi helped him return to Mecca under his and his sons protection. The Prophet was grateful for his help and after the victory of the battle of Badr -although al-Mut'am died as a disbeliever- the Prophet said: "if al-Mut'am bin Adyi were alive and asked me to free the captives, I would have freed them for him."⁽⁷⁸⁾ Indeed, this is the kind of gratitude that suits the excellent character of the Prophet (pbuh).

It is also suitable, in this respect, to mention the story of Abu Bakr who was going to leave Mecca to save himself from the harassment of Quraish. But Ibn ad-Doghonnah, a non-Muslim, persuaded him not to leave Mecca by offering him his protection, saying to Abu Bakr: "A person like you should not be driven out of his home. You help the needy, take care of kinship, feed the poor, honor the guest, and extend your help

⁽⁷²⁾) Fiqeh Congregation, Declaration of Mecca, MWL.

⁽⁷³⁾ Ibn Hisham, trans. Guillaume pp. 238-243.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ Ibn Hisham, trans. Guillaume vol 118-9.

⁽⁷⁵⁾ al-Bukhari, trans. Khan vol. 2: 246; 202-200 ابن القيم، أحكام ص 202-200

⁽⁷⁶⁾ Ibn Hisham, trans. Guillaume pp. 172-5..

⁽⁷⁷⁾ Ibn Hisham, Guillaume pp. 172-5.

⁽⁷⁸⁾ al-Bukhari, trans. Khan vol 4: 239-240; and see انظر تعليق العسقلاني على الحديث

when disaster befalls." ⁽⁷⁹⁾

The Prophet (pbuh) trusted Abdullah ibn al-Oraiqit, a non-Muslim, as a guide in his secret migration to Medina. This is a strong indication that not all non-Muslims are alike, especially when we know that the non-Muslims in Mecca offered a very big reward for the one who would bring the Prophet to them. ⁽⁸⁰⁾ On another occasion, the prophet (pbuh) also trusted ibn Abi Hadrad, a non-Muslim, to spy on the army of Thaqeef, which was a very critical situation. ⁽⁸¹⁾

The advice of the Prophet (pbuh) to the oppressed Muslims to immigrate to Ethiopia, a Christian empire, is another strong proof of the existence of neutral non-Muslims. ⁽⁸²⁾ The Prophet's advice proved to be more than appropriate, for the Christian emperor refused to send the refugees back to Mecca, even when tempted by gifts presented to him by the delegate of Quraish. ⁽⁸³⁾ The tribe of Khoza'ah (Muslims and non-Muslims) joined the Muslim party in the Treaty of al-Hudaibiyah, they also helped the Muslims in the conquest of Mecca. ⁽⁸⁴⁾

Islamic history also reports the assistance rendered to the Muslim armies by some of the Christians against other Christians, the Romans in Syria and in Egypt. ⁽⁸⁵⁾ Even today, when we look at the help rendered by the non-Muslims to the oppressed Muslims in Bosnia and Somalia, compared to the help coming from the Muslims we find good examples of the

⁽⁷⁹⁾ al-Bukhar, trans. Khan: vol 5: 158-9.

⁽⁸⁰⁾ al-Bukhari, trans. Khan vol 5: 157-66.

⁽⁸¹⁾ Ibn Hisham, trans. Guillaume pp. 166-7.

⁽⁸²⁾ Ibn-Hisham, trans. Guillaume pp. 146-55.

⁽⁸³⁾ al-Bukhari: vol 4: 237; 291-280: ابن هشام ج 1: 230-227; العسقلاني ج 7: 230-227.

⁽⁸⁴⁾ Ibn-Hisham, trans. Guillaume p. 504; 47: المدخلي ص 395; ابن القيم، زاد ج 3: 47.

⁽⁸⁵⁾ 81-30: أبو يوسف ص 81-30; Arnold p. 44-50, 87; A recent example is

what we see in Bosnia and in Somalia, the help coming from the

Muslims is not comparable to the help coming from the non-Muslims.

humanitarian bond bypassing the religious bond.

This is not to say that these non-Muslims loved Islam but rather to say that being a non-Muslim does not always mean dislike or hatred for Muslims or plotting against Islam. Rejecting Islam for one's self is one thing and hatred for Islam is another thing. In fact there are non-Muslims who appreciate Islam but have no courage to change their religion and what they are used to. Perhaps, the difference is not visible to many people, but there is a critical difference. Non-Muslims may not like the Muslims' religion, but they may appreciate their treatment or the benefits they get from true Muslims. In other words, Muslims and non-Muslims could share the same interest, but with different motivations. This fact does not out rule the existence of wicked or hostile non-Muslims, whose hatred for Islam has blinded them from not only the truth but also from justice.

The Dues of Objectivity and Justice:

A basic rule of justice is to avoid generalizing some of the others' negativities to all their behavior or the negativities of some members to the whole group. Among the basics of justice is also to avoid blaming others for our own faults, completely or partially. For Allah, glorified be He says: {Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of what men have done.} ⁽⁸⁶⁾ Allah also confirms that He will not bring calamity to people unless they deserve it. He says: {Allah will never change the grace that He has bestowed on a people until they change what is in their own souls, and verily Allah is He who hears and knows all things.} ⁽⁸⁷⁾ In fact, the common trend among many Muslims today of blaming others for their own problems is not only a

⁽⁸⁶⁾ Glorious Quraan, 30: 41.

⁽⁸⁷⁾ Glorious Quraan, 8: 53.

violation of the Islamic teachings, but an acknowledgment that they are but chess pieces, played by others.

Another basic of the Islamic justice, is the injunction to avoid misinterpretation of others' good deeds based on suspicion of their intentions, as if knowing what was in their hearts.

Also among the basics of the Islamic justice, is to be grateful for the help rendered by the others, and to express appreciation to those who rendered the help, as the Prophet (pbuh) used to do and to readily reward them.⁽⁸⁸⁾ This principle includes exchanging permissible help and gifts between Muslims and the others. But, if the Prophet, in one case or two, told the disbeliever that he cannot accept his gift or help, it is because he was more concerned about their becoming Muslims and the possibility is there.

Similarly, among the basics of objectivity and wisdom is that Muslims should realize that the difference in religion is not the major criteria in our dealings with others in all affairs. This was the tradition of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).⁽⁸⁹⁾

Finally, among the most important basics of justice and obedience to Allah and His messenger is that Muslims should wish guidance for others as they wish it for themselves. Not only that but they must spend time, money, and make necessary efforts to realize this wish.

Classes of non-Muslims:

In the light of the basic rules we can today classify the non-Muslims into the following groups:

First. The non-Muslims who live in a Muslim country and were called *thimmi*. In fact, this term which was used by the Muslim states refers to only a part of the term “minority” today.

⁽⁸⁸⁾ 147-143: ج1: الحلي; and see for example footnotes: 226..

⁽⁸⁹⁾ See al-Bukhari, vo.; 5:157-166; 64: 4: ابن هشام ج4.

The term *thimmi* is based on the difference of religion only, while the term minority is based on race, language or religion,.. etc. Therefore, it is logical that Muslims living with non-Muslim majority are called minorities.

Secondly. The non-Muslim individuals or groups, who know nothing or little about Muslims or Islam, and have no dealings with Muslims. Usually they have no particular stand towards Islam or Muslims.

Thirdly. The non-Muslims who are independent and have a mutual agreement with Muslims to live peacefully, on an equal basis.⁽⁹⁰⁾ This group encompasses all members of the UN. However, we should notice the difference between the principles and the practice. Also all independent neutral or friendly organizations and individuals are included under this category.

Fourthly. The non-Muslims who are hostile to Islam or Muslims, because of their religion, and this situation does not rule out the possibility of having some kind of temporary peace agreement which eventually may turn into permanent peace.⁽⁹¹⁾ This is so because the peace situation is to the advantage of the truth and all concerned parties more than the hostile environment.

It is true that the original relation is peace and cooperation but this does not mean submission. Indeed, there is a big difference between peace and submission. A Muslim should be proud of his religion and should express this feeling by suitable means that do not intimidate or provoke the just non-Muslim as much as possible. And the least expression of pride is to implement Islam in his own life and the life of those whom he is responsible for. The Muslim is required to always follow the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and invite people to

⁽⁹⁰⁾ Ibn Hisham, trans. Guillaume pp. 231-5, 281.

⁽⁹¹⁾ See for example the Hudaibiyah treaty between the Muslims and Quraish, Muslim, trans. Siddiqi 3: 979-82.

guidance. Even if they reject the invitation he should pray for their guidance, and his feelings towards them should be the petty, not hatred or disdain.

He is required to make some effort in sharing Islam with the others within his means. He is also required to defend his religion utilizing the means that his enemy may impose upon him. A person can defend his religion by writing, by resorting to law or, if necessary, by using weapons in a proper way.

The Muslim, in calling others to Islam, should balance pride in his religion with kindness, which goes in harmony with the nature of Islam as a merciful religion and a blessing for the whole universe. This can only be done by implementing religious teachings openly, with sincere appreciation of the guidance that Allah has granted him, and with sincere sympathy for those who are deprived of it. The Muslim should remember the great difference between pride and arrogance and between sympathy and submission.

Even regarding the hostile ones a Muslim should not lose hope in their guidance and should pray for their guidance or, if necessary, for God to protect the peaceful ones from their evil.

Fifthly. The non-Muslims, who pretend to be Muslims, but secretly, plot against Muslims and fight them and their religion.

As it is clear the existence of the second and the third categories refutes the concept that divides the world into only: *darul harb* (country of war) and *darul Islam* (country of Islam).

In other words, there are different types and grades of peaceful relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Chapter Three

Al-Walaa and al-Baraa

Very often the words: *الولاء* *al-walaa* and *البراء* *al-baraa* are mentioned when speaking about the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. In this chapter, we will discuss the real meaning of both words based on their usage in the Glorious Quraan and the Prophetic Traditions.

Al-Walaa:

Usually there is no critical difference between the common usage of a term and its utilization in the Glorious Quraan or in the Sunna (Prophetic Traditions). But does this hold true in the case of the word *al-Walaa* (the walaa)?

There are several meanings for the word *al-Walaa* and its derivations in the Arabic dictionaries. Among these derivations are *الولي* *al-walyi* or *المولى* *al-mawla*, both of which mean the supporter, the ally, the inheritor, the guardian and the trustee. It is also noticeable that both derivations can be used for both the person who provides guardianship and the one who receives it.⁽⁹²⁾

The same meanings appear in the Glorious Quraan and the Prophetic Traditions. Both sources distinguish between two major categories:

First. The *Wilaayah* for Allah alone. This *ولاية* *wilaayah* defines the relationship between the Creator and His creation and it is divided into two types:

1 - The natural sovereignty where there is no difference between the believers and the disbelievers. For Allah is the Master who has the absolute sovereignty over all His creatures.⁽⁹³⁾ Allah says:

ابن منظور، لسان العرب، ولي؛ وأنيس وآخرون، الموالاته ومواليا (92)

(93) Glorious Quraan, 7: 3.

{Who is the Lord and the Sustainer of the heavens and the earth? say it is Allah. Say, then do you take other than Him masters who do not have power to harm or benefit themselves?}(94) This *wilaayah* (sovereignty) is only for Allah.

2. The special *wilaayah* for the believers. This *wilaayah* is granted only to whom Allah is pleased with. This meaning comes from the verse that reads: {That is because Allah is **مولى** The Guardian of the believers but those who reject the Faith have no **مولى** guardian to care for them}.(95)

This type of *wilaayah* could be granted by the Creator to the created who truly believe in His messages, for Allah says: {Your Guardians, are Allah, His apostle and the believers who establish obligatory prayers and pay the obligatory charity, and they bow humbly in worship. It is the fellowship of Allah that certainly triumphs.}(96)

Second. The *wilayah* between the creatures and this category can be classified into three types:

1 - Mutual *wilaayah* between the creatures. In other words both parties, voluntarily, have taken each other as guardians and trustees. (97) The *wilaayah* could be between the believers, in accordance with Allah's teachings,(98) or between the disbelievers. (99)

2 - *Wilaayah* from one side between the creatures; one party voluntarily takes the other party as a guardian and trustee. This

(94) Glorious Quraan, 13: 16; and see 11: 20,113; 17: 97; 18: 44. It should be noticed that there is actually no original difference in meaning between *al-Walayah* and *al-Wilayah*. (see ابن الفراء، وسيبويه. منظور، يستشهد بابن سيدة، والأزهرى)

(95) Glorious Quraan, 47: 11; see also 6: 127; 8: 34; 10: 62.

(96) Glorious Quraan, 5: 55 and see 5: 54.

(97) Usually the voluntary guardianship is accompanied by trust.

(98) Glorious Quraan, 9: 71; and see 8: 72.

(99) Glorious Quraan, 45: 19; and see 6: 129; 8: 73.

type is mentioned in the verse that reads: {Some He has guided. Others have deserved misguidance because they took devils for guardians and trustees, in lieu of Allah, believing that they are guided.}(100)

3 – Non-voluntary *Wilaayah* between the creatures. It could be imposed by a partial superiority of one above the other, such as father to son or an employer to his employee. Examples of this came in a few Quraanic verses as well as in the Prophetic Traditions. (101)

However, the word *wilaayah* does not necessarily include love **المحبة** or support **نصرة**. They are not essential parts of the word **ولاء** *walaa* because Allah says: {Those who believed and adopted exile and fought for the Faith, with their property and their person, in the cause of Allah as well as those who gave asylum and aid, these are guardians and trustees of each other. As to those who believed but did not come into exile you owe them nothing of the rights of guardianship until they come into exile. But if they seek your aid in religion, it is your duty to help them except against people with whom you have a treaty and Allah sees all that you do.}(102) The verse verifies the existence of a situation between two groups of believers where no rights of guardianship are due between them i.e. the independent Muslim majority and a Muslim minority, which lives under the rule of a non-Muslim majority. However, if the minority requests help, the independent group should extend their help, which means *wilaayah* (guardianship) and *nasr* (support) are completely independent things. Love between Muslims is a must all in all cases. If support or love is an essential part of *wilayah* then denial of *wilayah* completely means complete denial of support or love between the two

(100) Glorious Quraan, 7: 30; and see 3: 175; 4: 176; 6: 121; 22: 3-4; 16: 100.

(101) Glorious Quraan, 2: 282; and see 16: 76; 33: 6.

(102) Glorious Quraan, 8: 72. And see 2: 107, 120; 4: 45, 75, 89, 123, 173; 9: 74; 22: 78; 29: 22; 33: 17; 65: 42; 8, 31

Muslim groups, which is not logical at all. The verse also separates support from guardianship, because the denial of the latter does not necessitate the cessation of the first and vice versa.

Also, it does not include intercession,⁽¹⁰³⁾ protection,⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ guidance⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ or being a close friend.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Reviewing the Prophetic Traditions we will reach the same conclusion.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

Thus it appears quite clear that the essence of the meaning of the word *wali* means the “guardian”, who has some sort of authority over another, or a person who takes someone to be his guardian.

Al-Baraa:

The verb form *برأ* of the word *al-Baraa* ‘in the Arabic dictionaries and in the Glorious Quraan and the Prophetic Traditions’¹⁰⁸ (shows that *برأ* *baraa* (past tense of *al-Baraa*) and its derivations come with different meanings such as: created, overcome sickness, clear of debit and clear of faults or responsibility. The essence of all these meanings is to cut off the relationship with something or someone.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

It is evident that the word *baraa* does not necessarily include *al-baghdah* (dislike or hatred), or *al-adaawah* (enmity or hostility), because each of the three words are independent

⁽¹⁰³⁾ Glorious Quraan, 6: 51; and see 6: 70.

⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Glorious Quraan, 13: 37.

⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Glorious Quraan, 18: 17.

⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Glorious Quraan, 22: 13.

⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ see for example the word “wali” in Wensinck.

⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ See for example the word “baraa” in Wensinck.

⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ See for example: Ibn Manzoor, the word *Baraa*; Glorious Quraan, 57: 22; and see 2: 54; 59: 24; 3: 49; and see 5: 110; 33: 69; 2: 166-167 and see 8: 48; 9: 114; 28: 63; 59:16; 60: 4; 4: 112; 6: 19; 11: 35; 24: 26; 26: 216.

concepts and were added to each other, in the following verse: {there is a goodly pattern for you in Abraham and those with him, when they told there folks, Lo! We are *براء* *guiltless of you* and *all that you worship beside God*... And there has arisen between us and you hostility and hate forever until you believe in God only...}.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ We should not by pass the fact that this exchanged hostility is not to last forever, Allah says: {It may be that God will ordain love between you and those of them you are at enmity. God is Mighty, and God is Forgiving Merciful.}.⁽¹¹¹⁾ The verse left the reason for reconciliation open, because the enemy may become neutral or supportive or become believers. But Prophet Abraham specified it by becoming believers, because the hostility began from the other party as a reaction to prophet Abraham’s invitation to his message.

Its core meaning lies in the word "cut off" i.e. to separate. This is so, even when the word is used to indicate the relationship between accountable beings.⁽¹¹²⁾ However, clearing responsibility from a thing does not necessitate cutting of the relationship with the person who does it or vice versa. This fact is manifest in the verse {If they charge you with falsehood say: ‘my work to me and yours to you. You are *برئ* *free from responsibility for what I do* and I am *برئ* *free from what you do*}.⁽¹¹³⁾ (Here, emphasis is on the deeds rather than on those who do the deeds. In other words, it is possible that one may dislike or abhor a deed (such as disbelieving), but may have sympathy or pity for the one who commits it. He may even have some kind of love for him or her, as it was the case between Prophet Muhammad (pubh) and his uncle Abu Taalib who was a disbeliever, or between a Muslim husband and his

⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Glorious Quraan, 60: 4.

⁽¹¹¹⁾ Glorious Quraan, 60: 7.

⁽¹¹²⁾ Glorious Quraan, 8: 48.

⁽¹¹³⁾ Glorious Quraan, 10: 41.

Jewish or Christian wife.⁽¹¹⁴⁾

In general, we can notice that the Quraan or the Sunnah, rarely use the word *baraah* or its derivation to indicate clearing of responsibility or cutting off relations between one person and another. Most of the time it is between a person and the beliefs or behavior of another person. The exceptional cases are: declaration of "immunity" against the hostile non-Muslims⁽¹¹⁵⁾ and the declaration of clearance of responsibility between those whom have been worshipped and the worshippers, on the day of Judgment.⁽¹¹⁶⁾

It is true that sometimes *baraah* is declared where there is some kind of hostility. But in general even when the difference of religion is concerned, the word *baraah* and its derivations are used to announce clearing of responsibility of the beliefs or the conduct of the concerned person, but not necessarily, of the person himself.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

Regardless of the above countless evidences, some claim that the word *al-braa* (disconnection) includes hatred and hostility. However faced with clear-cut evidences confirming that Allah does not forbid Muslims to deal justly and do favor to a disbeliever, they claimed the possibility of joining the contradicted attributes together i.e. hatred and hostility, from one side, and doing favor, on the other side. This claim neglects the fact that *al'adaawah* (hostility) cannot be hidden and joining it with doing favor, at the same time is impossible, because it is joining tow contradictory acts together. As far as joining nice treatment with hatred is an abhorred attribute, which is completely rejected by Islam and the natural deposition.

(¹¹⁴) Glorious Quraan, 18: 6; 35: 8; 28: 56; 30: 21.

(115) Glorious Quraan, 9: 1, 3.

(¹¹⁶) Glorious Quraan, 60: 4; , 9:114; , 8: 48, 59: 16; , 2: 166, 167; 28: 63.

(117) See for example: Glorious Quraan, 6: 19, 78; 10: 41; 11: 35, 54; 26: 216; 43: 26.

Even, if a person is compelled to hide his hatred to avoid aggression from the other party, over playing the game, by doing exactly the opposite thing, is considered hypocrisy i.e. a mean conduct.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ The Muslim is always requested to be truthful and act accordingly.

Putting together what was mentioned in chapter one and what was said in the definition of *al-Walaa* and *al-Baraa*, it becomes clear that merely being a non-Muslim does not induce boycotting. However, if other factors interfere such as hostile acts of any sort, then boycotting is necessary and it becomes forbidden to take disbelievers as trustees or guardians even in the limited sense.

In other words, as long as the non-Muslim does not take a hostile stand he should be treated normally, justly and nicely and one can even do favor to him. The Muslim can help the non-Muslim to lift oppression or remedy an injustice within reasonable means suitable to a particular situation or according to a mutual agreement, because Islam is strict about justice and fulfilling agreements. ⁽¹¹⁹⁾

Thus we can conclude from the practices of the Prophet, the Guided Caliphs and Muslim scholars till the present day that *al-baraa* does not include the following things concerning the neutral or friendly non-Muslims: ⁽¹²⁰⁾

1. Cooperating with them to realize mutual lawful benefits e.g. engaging in lawful business.
2. Eating their food, unless specified by Islam as unlawful.

(¹¹⁸) see for example: Glorious Quraan, 2: 28 and Ibn Katheer commentary.

(¹¹⁹) See for example Glorious Quraan: 5: 8; 6: 152; 17: 34.

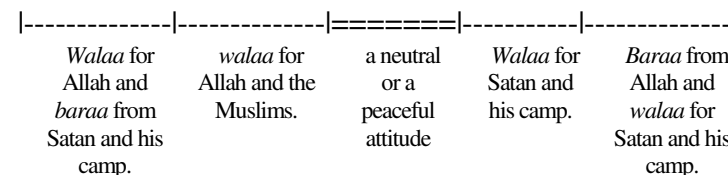
⁽¹²⁰⁾ See for example: Glorious Quraan, Chapter 5: 1; Chapter 6: 152; Chapter 17: 90-92; 4: مجموع ج 116-114; 400-277 أحكام ص ; ابن القيم، أحكام ص 90-92؛ الترمذي، الاستئذان والأداب ؛ ابن القيم، أحكام ص 24: 61; 92-90 Glorious Quraan, ; See al-Bukhari, trans. Khan vol. 5: 157-66; Ibn Hisham, 305-299 271-270 trans. Guillaume pp. 567.

3. Living in their country.
4. Benefiting from their knowledge in worldly affairs such as medicine...
5. Wearing their clothes and benefiting from their products unless specified by Islam as unlawful. Treating non-Muslims nicely includes greeting them with "Peace be on you" or any common greeting.⁽¹²¹⁾ The tradition narrated by Muslim which says that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Do not start them with greeting..." was, mistakenly, generalized by some out of ignorance of its proper context. The Prophet said it, only, when he was going to Bani Nadeer to punish them for betraying Muslims, breaking, secretly, the treaty between the two parties, and plotting with the enemy against the Muslims.

Between al-Walaa and al-Baraa:

In the light of the evidence presented previously, we can construe that absence of *al-walaa* does not mean, automatically, the existence of *al-baraa*. For there could be a situation where there is neither *walaa* nor *baraa*, i.e. there is a neutral attitude or stand.

On the other hand, Muslims' *walaa* is required for Allah, His messenger and the believers. Muslims' *walaa* is forbidden for Satan and the hostile disbelievers. Muslims must boycott Satan and his camp. As far as the neutral or supportive non-Muslims, they could be taken as trustees and be given some kind of authority over a Muslim, concerning matters of mundane needs and could be loved within the permitted limits.⁽¹²²⁾ The following diagram may better demonstrate the relationship between *al-walaa* and *al-baraa*:



In other words, on one side of the continuum falls any accountable creature that takes Allah and the believers as his guardians and trustees, in a general sense. This creature should sever his relations with Satan and his camp. On the other side of the continuum falls any accountable creature that takes Satan and his camp as his guardian and trustees and fights Allah and His camp. Any accountable creature can fall in any of these five categories. A hypocrite, who pretends to be a Muslim and in reality he is not, usually, falls in the fifth category.

The Forbidden Walaa:

By reviewing the Quraan and the Sunnah carefully we can conclude that:

1. It is forbidden for a Muslim to take any disbeliever as a general guardian or trustee because this kind of guardianship will affect the worldly affairs as well as the affairs of the Hereafter.
2. It is forbidden to take as a guardian or a trustee any of those who fight Islam and the Muslims by any means,⁽¹²³⁾ bearing in mind that this hostile situation may come to an end and the ruling will change accordingly.⁽¹²⁴⁾
3. It is forbidden to take the non-Muslims as guardians and trustees at the expense of Islam or the rights of another Muslim.⁽¹²⁵⁾

⁽¹²¹⁾ Muslim:trans. Siddiqi vol. 3: 185 ; 42-41 : 11 ج ابن القيم، ; العسقلاني ج 11 : 426-424 . زاد ج 2 :

⁽¹²²⁾ See the Islamic Bond and the other Bonds in Chapter one.

⁽¹²³⁾ Glorious Quraan, 60: 1 and see to the end of verse six.

⁽¹²⁴⁾ Glorious Quraan, 60: 7-9 and see 5: 51, 57; 3: 118-120; 4: 141-4.

⁽¹²⁵⁾ Glorious Quraan, 9: 23-24 and see 3: 28.

Chapter Four

Forms of Cooperation

Allah says: {O people We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know each other. The noblest of you is the most pious (fear God and love)}. Therefore it is natural that the humans communicate with each other and cooperate. Among the forms of cooperation between Muslims and the others are: living with each other, working with non-Muslim government, seeking help from others, helping the others, and dialogue across religions.

Immigration to a non-Muslim Country:

The Prophet has made it clear after the conquest of Mecca when he declared: "No migration but strive in the path of Allah and intention to do so. If you are called to fight for the cause of Allah then answer it".⁽¹²⁶⁾ Therefore, ibn Taimiyah said it is permissible for a Muslim to live in a non-Muslim country.⁽¹²⁷⁾ Some scholars elaborated more by stating that there are three rulings regarding living in the non-Muslim country: ⁽¹²⁸⁾

1 - Not permissible for whose commitment to Islam is not strong enough.

2 - Permissible for whose commitment to Islam is strong enough.

3 - Obligatory for whose commitment to Islam is strong enough and is capable of inviting to Islam and willing to teach it.

But if it is impossible or difficult to worship Allah, then the

⁽¹²⁶⁾ al-Bukhari, trans. Khan vol 4: 199.

⁽¹²⁷⁾ ابن تيمية، مجموع ج4: 113-115.

⁽¹²⁸⁾ Among these scholars Saleh al-Fouzan, Imam University.

Muslim should migrate to wherever he can practice his religion and be accepted as a citizen or a resident. It is not necessary to migrate to an Islamic country because it is sometimes difficult to get admission and sometimes it is because some non-Muslim countries offer more freedom for a Muslim to practice and preach his religion. ⁽¹²⁹⁾

Working for a non-Muslim Government:

It is not prohibited to hold official positions in the non-Muslim majority government regardless of the nature of the position i.e. legislative, consultative or executive as long as the position does not necessarily force the Muslim to violate the Islamic teachings. The Muslim should prove that he is an active member of his community, at large, and that his religion encourages him to cooperate to establish justice and welfare for all, and to fight vice and evil activities.

It is imperative that Muslims participate in the legislative committees in order to make others aware of the Muslims' needs, opinions and interests. It is needless to say that the chance to present their cases and to defend them from both inside and outside is always better than doing so from outside these committees or counsels only. Since not all non-Muslims are prejudice, few Muslims can persuade the neutral majority to adopt their point of view. Muslims may be able to contribute in making decisions that match Islamic teachings not because they are Islamic but because they best serve the public interest. One Muslim member in a committee may make the difference for another Muslim when consensus is required, or the majority is neutral.

⁽¹²⁹⁾ The early Muslims migrated to Abbyssenia which was not a Muslim country; and see الطريقي وتعليقاته على وضع الهجرة في عالمنا المعاصر ص 181-185.

As a matter of fact, if a person studies the laws in the non-Muslim countries he will find but a small portion of those laws and regulations that, actually, violate Islamic teachings.

Even concerning the executive aspects Muslims' participation could contribute to recognizing or acknowledging Muslims needs by the government. Working together with others breaks the ice, removes misunderstandings, and develops understanding and mutual friendly relations. In other words, the intelligent Muslim, by serving the majority's government can help in realizing the Muslims interests as well as the majority's interests.

Seeking Help from Non-Muslims:

Seeking the non-Muslims help is but a form of cooperation, which is encouraged provided that the benefit of this cooperation is greater than the risk, or the cooperation is a necessity.

It should be clear also that in some cases it is even permissible to conclude a dealing to buy out the hostile enemy to avoid an imminent danger. Sometimes, the situation could be bad enough to make this kind of deal even compulsory. An example of this is to buy out one party of the enemy to remove an imminent danger, which cannot be removed without this kind of partial submission.

The prophet, in the battle of al-Ahzab, offered one third of the dates of Medina to the tribe of Ghatafan, a section of the attacking enemy, in return for lifting the siege on Medina. However, the Prophet canceled the deal because the owners of the dates suggested taking the risk of war instead of humiliating themselves before the enemy.⁽¹³⁰⁾ Muslims in that particular situation were capable of taking the risk of war because at that

⁽¹³⁰⁾ Ibn Hisham, trans. Guillaume p.454;273:3. ابن القيم، زاد ج3:273:454. p. Guillaume, trans. Ibn Hisham.

time all adults were trained to fight. But today, if a group of Muslims, who do not have enough training for the required weapons, claim to be ready to defend their selves, instead of seeking the help of non-Muslims, it would be illogical to accept this alternative.

Helping non-Muslims:

The primary rule is that Muslims should stay out when a war breaks up between non-Muslims. However, Islam does not prevent Muslims from extending help to the oppressed when asked for it or a deal of this nature exists. In fact, sometimes Islam encourages joint efforts to relieve grievances. Prophet Muhammad praised Hilf al-Fudool (the confederacy of the Fudool) held by few tribes in Mecca to help the oppressed, before Islam. He said "If I am called to join it after Islam I will answer the call."⁽¹³¹⁾ The Prophet also helped a non-Muslim (al-Irashi) to get his money back from another non-Muslim (abu-Jahl).⁽¹³²⁾

In fact Islam refuses oppression even if the oppressor is a Muslim. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "Support your brother whether he is the oppressed or the oppressor". A man asked "I can understand that I should help him if he is oppressed, but how can I help him if he is the oppressor? The Prophet answered: "You should stop him. To stop him from aggression is to support him."⁽¹³³⁾ However, it all depends on the circumstances such as: existence of mutual treaties and balancing between the advantages and the risks.⁽¹³⁴⁾

⁽¹³¹⁾ Gullaume p. 57.

⁽¹³²⁾ Gullaume pp. 177-178.

⁽¹³³⁾ al-Bukahari: al-Adab.

⁽¹³⁴⁾ صيني، حقيقة العلاقة ص 50-52.

Creation of Friendly Relations:

We can safely conclude from all above-mentioned principles that Islam encourages developing a friendly relationship between human beings, especially those who live in the same country or deal, intensively, with each other. Islam employs many means for this purpose and makes them permissible as long as they do not lead the Muslim to deviate from the well-established Islamic beliefs or behaviors.

For example, Allah granted a special status for the People of the Book (the Jews and the Christians). He made it permissible to eat their food, including what they slaughter, unless specifically forbidden; and made it permissible to marry their chaste females. Allah permitted Muslims to face Jerusalem in their prayer before commanding them to face Mecca, and did not denounce Muslims' happiness for the victory of the Romans, who were Christians, against the Persians who worshiped fire.⁽¹³⁵⁾ Islam gave a share from Muslims' obligatory charity to help developing a friendly relation between Muslims and Non-Muslims. Among the best demonstrations is when the prophet permitted the Najrani Christian delegation to perform their prayer in his mosque i.e. a Muslims mosque.⁽¹³⁶⁾ The Prophet stood up for a Jewish funeral ⁽¹³⁷⁾ and condemned cursing the deceased non-Muslims by commanding: "Do not call names our deceased; it hurts those who are living."⁽¹³⁸⁾

All these are not indications that Allah and His messenger were approving Judaism and Christianity as valid religions after revelation of Islam.⁽¹³⁹⁾ They are only means to establish the mental and psychological environment appropriate

⁽¹³⁵⁾ Holy Quraan 5: 5; 2: 144; 30: 2-5.

⁽¹³⁶⁾ ابن القيم، زاد ج 3: 629.

⁽¹³⁷⁾ al-Bukari, Funerals.

⁽¹³⁸⁾ أحمد، مسند أحمد: (2737)

⁽¹³⁹⁾ From a Muslims perspective.

to make a person think open-mindedly about Islam, free from hostility and prejudice.

Departing from these facts and principles some Muslim scholars had the opinion that it is permissible to congratulate a non-Muslim on the occasions they celebrate. ⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ Also to attend these celebrations, in response to friends' or neighbors' invitations out of curtesy, as long as these celebrations do not include religious rituals or do not cause a Muslim to commit things that deviate from the well established Islamic teachings.

Naturally, this is different from Muslims celebrating the non-Muslim religious occasions for entertainment, whether he is an individual, a Muslim group or an official body. The Prophet commented on the days celebrated by the people of Medina, before Islam said: "Allah has assigned better alternatives for your two days: Eid ul-Adha and Eidul Fiter." It is also reported that Umar said: "Do not learn the non-Arabic languages and do not inter churches on their religious celebration days..." However if Umar said that, what he said should be understood within the fact that participation is different from curtsy attendance. Regarding not learning non-Arabic languages, it should be understood in the light of the Prophet's request of Zaid to learn Hebrew.⁽¹⁴¹⁾ Furthermore, there is no evidence discouraging that, in the Holy Quraan or the Prophetic traditions. And if Arabic is the language of the two sacred sources of Islam and the language of the people of Paradise, a person who wants to qualify himself to induce legal opinions from the two sacred sources should be well versed in Arabic. And for sure a Muslim who deserves Paradise does not need to learn it in this life.

انظر: قيس آل مبارك، المنيع؛ أبو مليح؛ الخطيب. ⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

اليهقي ج 9: 234. ⁽¹⁴¹⁾

Cross Religious Dialogue: ⁽¹⁴²⁾

By scrutinizing the meanings of the word *yuhawir* (to have a dialogue with) in the Glorious Quraan, the Prophetic sayings and the Arabic dictionaries, we come to a conclusion that the comprehensive meaning of this word is: to exchange opinions of a contradictory nature or to have a discussion between two dissimilar parties. This exchanging process could be between two or more parties, where each party exchanges with the other feelings, needs, opinions, ideas and beliefs.⁽¹⁴³⁾ The means of expression is usually not confined to the verbal but includes all means of communication.

However, dialogue does not include issuing a command and complying with the command. It also differs a little from arguing, which is more comprehensive, and from discussion, which includes one party arguing, and debate, which aims at defeating one of the involved parties.

Major Classes of Dialogue:

Dialogue is a form of communication loaded with content and purpose. It could be classified into:

1. Dialogue to achieve a compromise between the two religions, plainly or latently.
2. Dialogue where each participant tries to persuade the other participant to accept his own religion.
3. Dialogue which aims at informing the other about his religion (the basics of faith, rituals and other teachings), and the ultimate goal of this dialogue is to achieve mutual understanding and develop cooperation.

⁽¹⁴²⁾ Sieny, Dialogue and the Islamic Perspective.

⁽¹⁴³⁾ ابن منظور، وأنيس وآخرون.

4. Dialogue that automatically takes place between the followers of two or more different religions, during the daily activities.

Perhaps, the fourth type of dialogue is more effective and articulate in developing mutual understanding and cooperation among the people of different religions, cultures or nationalities than any of the other three forms.

This is so, because this type of dialogue is casual and automatic. It takes place directly in reality not in the minds of the opinion leaders or on papers first to be publicized later. Furthermore, it relies on human natural sociability and mutual interests.

Dialogue and the Islamic Legal Opinion:

The Islamic legal opinion in general differs according to the context of the dialogue, especially its content and purpose. Below we shall discuss the legal opinion of the aforementioned classes.

As far as the forms are concerned, Islam supports all forms of dialogue because it is a natural disposition and human life cannot flourish without it. In other words, Allah has created man from one origin to share countless natural attributes, but made them different to encourage interaction and communication between them and dialogue is one of the most effective means of interaction and communication. ⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

Interaction and communication usually removes negligence and misunderstanding, and motivates cooperation and competition for a better life for all, in this world and in the eternal life.

Thus it becomes evident that some type of difference is vital for the happiness of human beings, in this life and in the eternal life. For example, the difference in capabilities, proficiency and interest are among the major factors that

⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ Glorious Quraan, 49: 12.

motivate competition to provide better services or products to meet the human needs. It also, provides greater variety for them to meet the different tastes. Multiplicity of habits and traditions are among the factors that make life more colorful and enjoyable. As far as the content and purpose of dialogue is concerned the legal opinion is as follows:

1. There is no doubt that the followers of all religions of a missionary nature claim that their religion is the one that secures felicity and peace for mankind, in the mortal and the immortal lives. Therefore, they are keen to invite all the humans to accept it to save themselves in the eternal life.
2. To Muslims, Islam is the last version of the divine message which was, first, brought by Adam, renewed by the other prophets of Allah such as: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and was concluded by Prophet Muhammad as the seal of the messengers of Allah,⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ may peace and blessings be upon them all. They all called to what brings felicity for all humanity in the temporary and eternal lives. Each of these messages was suitable to the circumstances of a specific geographical area or a specific period of time. However, Islam came as a mercy for all accountable beings and for all times to come. Departing from this fact, Islam has its vivid opinion concerning the four types of cross religious dialogue: dialogue for compromise, dialogue to convince each other, dialogue for a better understanding and the automatic dialogue built-in the daily dealings.

⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ Glorious Quraan, 2: 213,

Dialogue for Compromise:

This type of dialogue –as previously mentioned– requires that both parties are willing to give up some of their beliefs or teachings to reach a middle solution. In other words, all parties accept multiplicity of religion, believing that all religions equally secure felicity in both lives, and choosing among them is a matter of preference only.

Therefore, the adherents of all religions of missionary nature reject this kind of dialogue as long as they are concerned with the felicity of all mankind in the temporary and eternal life. The Islamic legal opinion is no exception because this kind of dialogue is different from the dialogue that accepts multiplicity of religion as a reality and both have to deal with it in a way that secures peace and welfare for all, without distorting any religion.

Any effort, even though unintentional, where both parties jointly promote the teachings of the two religions falls into this category.

However, the joint efforts to help each other practice their own religion may fall into the mutual efforts to help each other realize their own goals. For the Prophet Muhammad permitted the Christian guests to perform their prayer in his mosque.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ and Abdullah bin Umar, a Companion of the Prophet, sometimes prayed in a Jewish or a Christian chapel unless there were pictures of living things.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾

Preaching Dialogue:

We might not be wrong if we say that all religions of missionary nature encourage the preaching dialogue as long as it is guided by fair rules. Christians today as well as Muslims are keen to save humanity in their way.

. ابن القيم، زاد ج3: 629⁽¹⁴⁶⁾

⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ al-Bukhari: The prayer.

In fact, preaching is only a step in the process of this kind of dialogue. In other words, the efforts of all prophets of Allah are but initiatives of this kind of dialogue with the disbelievers in order to convince them with the divine messages. So, it is natural that Islam encourages the preaching dialogue and sets a few rules in that respect. The following are among the major rules:

1. All adults regardless of their sex are free in this world to choose the religion they want and are responsible for the results of their choice.⁽¹⁴⁸⁾
2. To avoid deception or any means that may infringe upon the other's rights, because fairness is one of the major principles of Islam. Allah says: {Verily Allah commands justice, the doing of good...and He forbids all indecent deeds, and evil and aggression.}⁽¹⁴⁹⁾
3. To use wisdom, for Allah commands: {Invite to the way of your lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best.}⁽¹⁵⁰⁾
4. To avoid provocative means. Allah commands: {Do not revile those whom they worship instead of Allah, lest they out of spite revile Allah.}⁽¹⁵¹⁾
5. To be tender and sincere.

A believer should know that he has an opportunity for the greatest investment. For the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) promised that the reward of whoever helps a disbeliever to become a believer is greater than the greatest gift in this world.⁽¹⁵²⁾ In this investment his capital is the disbeliever and he can ignore the

opportunity or use it. Also he can be clever enough to value his capital, be kind to him, exerts sincere efforts, within the permitted range, to persuade him to accept Islam. At the same time he could misuse the opportunity and derive the disbeliever away from Islam, as a result of lack of sincerity, hypocritical conduct or arrogance.

Probably among the most prominent efforts of Prophet Muhammad in this concern is his letters to the kings of his time, the Arabs and the non-Arabs.⁽¹⁵³⁾

Also among the dialogues of this nature are the famous dialogues of Prophet Muhammad with some non-Muslims on different occasions such as: the dialogue with his uncle Abu Talib, ⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ with Utbah bin Rabee'ah ⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ and with the Christian delegation of Nejrán. ⁽¹⁵⁶⁾

This kind of dialogue is usually terminated in a friendly way, unless the dialogue is transformed into a debate. Usually even though none of the involved parties succeed in convincing the other, this kind of dialogue may leave some latent tracks, which may have their influence later.

Dialogues to realize Mutual Interests:

The Islamic legal opinion concerning all dialogues aiming at developing understanding, friendly relations, and cooperation stems from the same stand of Islam concerning dialogue in general. Islam encourages this kind of dialogue because it is one of the effective means for achieving felicity for all in this temporary life.

Prophet Muhammad said: "Spirits are soldiers ready at work, those who get to know each other will develop mutual

⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ Glorious Quraan, 6: 164.

⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ Glorious Quraan, 16: 90.

⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ Glorious Quraan, 16: 125.

⁽¹⁵¹⁾ Glorious Quraan, 6: 108.

⁽¹⁵²⁾ صحيح البخاري: الجهاد، فضل من أسلم.

⁽¹⁵³⁾ ibn Hisham trans. Guillaume pp. 652-9.

⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ ابن هشام ج 1: 240.

⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ ابن القيم، زاد ج 3: 646-629.

⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ ابن هشام ج 1: 261.

understanding, and those who remain strangers to each other are more likely to dispute.”⁽¹⁵⁷⁾

These kinds of dialogue usually revolve around issues that are not subject to strict religious teachings or laws of the involved parties. Thus, the issues of basics of faith or the worshipping rituals are not involved in these dialogues. This kind of dialogue does not –at all- mean to change ones religion or to give up part of its obligatory teachings. Its purpose is to help each party secure maximum happiness in this world.

From the Islamic point of view, refusing each other’s religion should not prevent people from cooperating to maintain a peaceful environment for all. The peaceful environment here means that every one is able to work for his happiness from his own perspective without interference from the other except to help realize this goal or a better one, but without compulsion from either side. This is so because the relationship between adults is the relationship between equals and not between a guardian and a person who receives guardianship.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾

However, there are a few major provisions for the dialogue to be fruitful, among these are:

1. To be plain,
2. To be truthful,
3. To be sincere,
4. The participants are among the active opinion leaders or officials, who have some power to publicize, influence their followers or communities to adopt and to implement the resolutions of these dialogues.

⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ al-Bukhari: stories of prophets.

⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ Ismaeel, the relation. Pp. 107-112

Summary And Conclusion

Islam did not leave any aspect of life without basic rules to guide the Muslims to lead a successful life in this world and in the Hereafter. The relationship between the Muslims and the non-Muslims is no exception.

In general, the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims could be summarized in the following points:

Firstly, The basic rule in this matter is that all men and jinn are granted a certain degree of freedom to enjoy in this world including freedom to choose their own religion while being accountable for this choice in the Hereafter. This means that Muslims should maintain a peaceful relation with non-Muslims. On the other hand, this should not mean that Muslims have to be submissive, but to deal with every situation justly and efficiently, within the range of the basic rule.

In other words, Islam does not compel anyone to accept it, but encourages and persuades, to be saved in the eternal life. For freedom of choice during the test is granted as one of the factors for accountability. The three main factors are: provided guidance, the gift of reasoning, and the relative freedom of choice.

Secondly, Jihad in Arabic means to struggle. A Muslim should make jihad with his personal whims to force it to comply with the commandments of Allah and against the oppressors. Even to make jihad against the oppressors does not, necessarily, mean to wage war, but it includes resorting to courts, to the fair media and the fair influential figures or organizations.

Thirdly, The non-Muslims, according to Islam, range between supportive non-Muslims and hostile ones, and between the two there are numerous grades, inclining towards either

direction. In the middle there are who knew nothing about Islam, not enough, or has no dealings with Muslims.

Fourthly, Based on the basic rule, Islam encourages strengthening all innate and acquired bonds between the Humans or the Jinn, within their relative importance, including the religious bond.

Furthermore, we should not always conceder it either love or enmity. There is always varying grades between the two.

Fifth, Emerging from the basic rule and principle, Islam makes it compulsory for Muslims to be objective and fair, and to avoid generalizing some negatives of a person to his entire behavior or generalizing the negatives of some members to the entire group.

According to the Quraan and the Sunnah, *al-walaa* does not automatically include love, support, intercession, protection or guidance, contrary to the common understanding. It means to take someone as a guardian; it could be mutual or one sided. It could be accompanied with any grade of love or no specific feeling.

On the other hand, *al-Baraa*, does not automatically include hatred for a person. It could be any grade of dislike of a behavior and sometimes of the person who does it too, but not always. In fact, sometimes *al-Baraa* can be accompanied with sympathy and pity for the person who has an abhorred conduct. The essence of its meaning is to cut off the relationship with something or someone. It is also important to note that *al-Baraa* does not prohibit fair dealings with others.

It is also true that *al-walaa* for one party or group does not automatically necessitate *al- baraa* from the opposing party, or vice versa. The ruling regarding living in the non-Muslim country depends on the qualities of the Muslim and his

commitment to Islam and his knowledge, and the kind of political environment.

Also, it is not prohibited to hold official positions in the non-Muslim majority government as long as the position does not, necessarily, force the Muslim to violate the Islamic teachings. The Muslim should prove that he is an active member of his community, at large, and that his religion encourages him to cooperate to establish justice and welfare for all, and to fight vice.

Seeking the non-Muslims help is but a form of cooperation, which is encouraged provided that the benefit of this cooperation is greater than the risk, or the cooperation is a necessity. Islam also does not prevent Muslims from extending help to any oppressed, especially if they were asked for it or a deal of this nature exists.

Islam has its vivid opinion concerning the four types of cross religious dialogue: dialogue for compromise, dialogue to convince each other, dialogue for a better understanding and the automatic dialogue built-in the daily dealings. It rejects the first type but it encourages the three other types provided that no deception or compulsion of any sort is utilized.

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